



PM/85/86

PRIME MINISTERSouth Africa at CHOGM

1. We agreed that I would let you have a note on the action being taken to manage the South African issue in the run-up to CHOGM and at the meeting itself.

2. We have already taken a series of steps to prepare the ground. I saw Ramphal on 17 September, and you have of course seen him today. While in New York, I discussed South Africa with Shultz, Perez de Cuellar, with the Singapore Foreign Minister, the Indian Minister for Commerce, and Geoffrey Palmer, as well as having a brief word with Nyerere, and a further discussion in the Ten. I had useful talks with Mulroney and Clark in Ottawa on 27 September, and here with Eugenia Charles and Geoffrey Palmer on 2 October. I have also had a meeting with all the Commonwealth High Commissioners to explain carefully our approach to CHOGM.

3. We are clearly right to have no illusions about the extent to which events in South Africa and changing attitudes elsewhere have radically altered the terrain on which the debate will take place. A key feature of course has been the shift in the US position. A prime purpose in my discussion with Shultz was to buttress the assurances we have had from the US Administration that President Reagan would still veto the UN mandatory sanctions, even if they cover those measures which the Administration have accepted. At the same time, though the decision to associate ourselves with the Community statement was not an easy one, we have successfully held off Article 113 proposals. This joint position has strengthened our hand in the Commonwealth and more widely, as well as giving the lie to accusations that we are totally isolated among the industrialised countries.

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No we incorporate it into World Affairs not

*Prime Minister
Re Foreign Secretary's
Strategy for dealing
with South Africa at
CHOGM.*

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4. There is no doubt that the vast majority of Commonwealth countries will want to make South Africa the centrepiece of CHOGM. The strong underlying trend will be to press hard for the meeting to come out with some evidence of further pressure being exerted on South Africa, though some will be prepared for this pressure to be procedural rather than substantive. Within this general framework, however, there is a growing awareness that measures we have already taken are more extensive than was thought by many countries inside the Commonwealth and elsewhere. I have taken every opportunity to ram this point home. Eugenia Charles, Mulroney and Clark have said they accept that fullscale mandatory economic sanctions are not a feasible aim for CHOGM.

5. On the other hand, the Australians have told us that Bob Hawke will push for "full" mandatory sanctions and will propose that a group of experts should be set up to see how financial investment restrictions could be implemented effectively. Kaunda apparently told the Canadians that Zambia is proposing a "package of measures" to be debated at CHOGM. Mahathir has let it be known that he is attending CHOGM for the first time specifically to press for action against South Africa. Alexander's intervention at the meeting of Commonwealth High Commissioners, precisely echoing that of the Indian Commerce Minister in New York, indicated that the Indian delegation will adopt their usual moralising tone, though Rajiv Gandhi himself may be more amenable to sensible argument.

6. As regards some form of positive action, the Canadians have been looking at variants of the Commonwealth Contact Group idea. They have talked about sending delegations to the Front Line States or holding discussions with representatives of various groups from South Africa somewhere outside South Africa. They are also keen to work with us on encouraging businesses to use the Code of Conduct

/ to promote



to promote peaceful change. But Mulroney in his letter to you is seeking our views on some "minimal additional measures". The Australians are talking about setting up a group of "eminent persons" to promote plans for constitutional reform. At the same time, there is a constituency in the Commonwealth from whom we have received heartening support on a number of issues. Many of these will be looking for ways of working with us for a reasonable outcome on South Africa. They will want to avoid a dangerous split in the Commonwealth. But they will only be disposed to stay with us if they consider that their views on South Africa have been taken fully into account.

7. There are various further steps we will be taking before CHOGM. You of course are preparing a message^{*} to President Botha. We have now instructed all our posts to make one last round of lobbying in Commonwealth capitals to emphasise that we want and are ready to take part in a reasoned and constructive discussion, but that we are not going to be pressurised into any trade or economic boycotts. You will be able to reinforce this when you see Rajiv Gandhi next week. We are getting material ready to make the more positive presentation of our policy which we agreed on at your seminar. We shall be letting you have recommendations for a number of messages which you might send to selected Commonwealth Heads of Government shortly before CHOGM begins. And we are preparing a set of draft statements, and glossary of previous Commonwealth statements, to have up our sleeves.

8. Once we get to Nassau, I suggest that we will need to pursue our strategy on three fronts: in the Heads of Government meetings; in your bilaterals and at the Retreat; and in the discussions between Foreign Ministers and officials. Your conversations and bilaterals with key leaders like Rajiv Gandhi, Mulroney, Kaunda,

/ Lee Kuan Yew,

* Now despatched.



Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir and Hawke will be of crucial importance in shaping the way the discussions go. I think the task of Foreign Ministers and officials will be to try to absorb the polemics, and the idiocies of communique-drafting, in such a way as to leave you as clear a field as possible for a rational and realistic debate at the Heads of Government level. So we shall need to keep very closely in touch on all three fronts to make sure we are giving you the maximum support all round. As you know well, the key meetings are likely to be those at your Retreat where, after the initial skirmishing, the outlines of an acceptable outcome may well have to be hammered out.

9. At the Heads of Government discussions themselves, I suggest we should base our presentation on the following elements:

- (a) We want rational and realistic discussion, in the tradition of the Commonwealth, of our shared objectives: the establishment of a democratic and non-racial society in South Africa through peaceful change.
- (b) You can repeat - what I know is particularly effective - your profound condemnation of apartheid and your deep commitment to the principles and practice of racial harmony and equality.
- (c) You can rehearse the impressive list of measures which we have already taken and point out the strong, unflinching line you have taken with President Botha.
- (d) So the debate is not about ends, it is about means - and whether the means chosen will be effective. Each Member State must make up its own mind in accordance with its own circumstances and policies what further measures it thinks would help achieve the agreed ends, without driving the South African Government in the opposite direction.

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- (e) Market forces have a key role to play. We should not shield South Africa from these pressures. They are much more effective than Government-imposed sanctions from outside, since the resulting pressures can be seen to have been caused directly by the actions of the South African Government themselves.
- (f) So CHOGM should focus on the wide measure of agreement already existing on objectives, the impressive list of voluntary national measures which have already been taken - and the progress so far achieved in persuading President Botha to move towards reform - leaving the choice on further means of influencing the South African Government to the judgement and conscience of each nation.
- (g) The Commonwealth can be assured that we will live up to our promises to the letter: there is no gap between rhetoric and reality in our case.
- (h) The next step is clearly to incorporate black South Africans into the process of government, though a lot of thought is needed on the precise mechanism. We have a number of positive measures which we think would help to promote peaceful change.
10. As I explained on Tuesday, I suggested that we should be cautious about putting forward all the specific ideas set out below, until we have had a chance to see how the discussion develops. The possibilities, taking account of some of the Canadian ideas, include:
- (i) A special liaison group between those Commonwealth Foreign Ministers whose Governments have diplomatic representation in South Africa (the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Malawi) and the Commonwealth Ministers of the Front Line States, together with Swaziland and Lesotho. This should function as a Commonwealth Contact Group. Its aim should be to encourage all communities in South Africa towards negotiation and peaceful change.

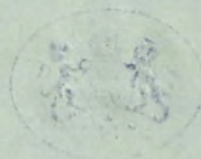
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- (ii) The establishment of Commonwealth-sponsored conferences, to which senior representatives of a wide spectrum of South African opinion from all communities would be invited.
- (iii) The commissioning and publishing of work by respected academics and constitutional experts on possible constitutional futures for South Africa, ways of promoting dialogue and other politically constructive themes.

11. If we can kick the debate off on these lines, we stand a chance of arriving in the end at an acceptable outcome for us. The discussions will be anything but easy, and some of the Commonwealth leaders will require careful handling. But I do not believe that, despite all the obvious difficulties, we should conclude that the chances are hopeless and that we are doomed to a sterile confrontation. You and I have both expended a great deal of time and effort in building up strong personal relations with Commonwealth leaders. These should prove a considerable asset on the day. These efforts are clearly worthwhile bilaterally, and they will be just as worthwhile when we have to deal with them collectively in Nassau.

13. I hope we will get a chance to discuss all this some time next week .



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 October 1985

SOUTH AFRICA AT CHOGM

B/F
The Prime Minister has read over the weekend the Foreign Secretary's minute of 4 October setting out the action being taken to manage the South African issue in the run up to CHOGM and at the meeting itself. I think it would now be helpful to have the gist of paragraphs 9 and 10 transformed into a full speaking note which the Prime Minister could draw on at the various points when the issue is raised during CHOGM. I realise that it is to some extent already covered in the statement on the World Political Scene. Nonetheless it would be useful to have all the points drawn together in one continuous and well argued statement.

(Charles Powell)

Len Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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