



BRITISH EMBASSY
PARLIAMENT STREET, CAPE TOWN

27 August 1987

C D Powell Esq
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London SW1

CDP
2/9

Dear Charles,

Denis Worrall has sent me a copy of his letter to you and the paper he enclosed with it. He is very keen to see you in London. I have given him your telephone number and he will be in touch direct.

2. I think he would have loved to see the Prime Minister again. But I do not think that a publicised meeting with him would be right at this stage, and I am not sure that a private meeting would remain private. It is much better if you pass on what he has to say to the Prime Minister. He probably also will see the Secretary of State.

/ 3. You might like to see the attached note of his remarks about
/ the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. You will have seen most
of our other reporting, but here are a couple of letters which might
also be of interest.

4. We are having a marvellous and very interesting time here. We shall be very disappointed if you do not extend your Nairobi trip to visit us, and we could, of course, arrange for you to see some interesting people while you are here!

Love to Carla

Yours ever,

Robin

R W Renwick

*P.S. I have just had a session with
Gen. Malan and will make sure
the report is whizzed over to you.*

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FROM: ROBIN RENWICK, CAPE TOWN

FOLLOWING FOR: KIERAN PRENDERGAST ESQ, SAFD,

WORRALL AND THE COMMONWEALTH EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

1. AS I MENTIONED IN MY TELELETTER OF 11 AUGUST, DENIS WORRALL GAVE ME AN ACCOUNT OF THE FINAL DEMISE HERE OF THE COMMONWEALTH EPG INITIATIVE.
2. WORRALL SAID THAT P W BOTHA HAD BEEN PERSUADED, AGAINST THE JUDGEMENT OF SOME OF HIS ADVISERS, TO GO ALONG WITH THIS EXERCISE INITIALLY LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S INTERVENTIONS, SUPPORTED BY PIK BOTHA. THE IDEA HAD BEEN SOLD TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE BASIS THAT THIS GROUP MIGHT HELP TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE WHICH, DEPENDING ON ONE'S DEFINITION OF CHANGE, WAS IN LINE WITH PW'S STATED POSITIONS. NEVERTHELESS, WORRALL WAS WELL AWARE THAT THE STATE PRESIDENT'S POSITION ON MANDELA AND THE ANC ALWAYS HAD BEEN THAT THEY MUST 'RENOUNCE' VIOLENCE BEFORE THEY COULD PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. WORRALL, THEREFORE, WAS VERY PLEASED WHEN, AS HE HAD HOPED AND ARGUED, PIK BOTHA REPLIED TO THE GROUP ON 24 APRIL THAT THE KEY TO THE RELEASE OF MANDELA AND UNBANNING OF THE ANC WAS A 'SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE'. WORRALL QUERIED THIS WITH CARL VON HIRSCHBERG, WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THIS OPERATION WITHIN THE DFA, AND WAS TOLD THAT THE LETTER HAD BEEN SEEN BY THE STATE PRESIDENT, WHO HAD NOT COMMENTED: THEREFORE IT SHOULD BE HANDED OVER.
3. WHEN, FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING WITH MANDELA, THE GROUP MET PIK BOTHA ON 16 MAY, PIK GAVE THEM A VERY ENCOURAGING IMPRESSION TO THE GROUP, AND STARTED COACHING THEM IN HOW TO DEAL WITH THE WIDER MEETING WITH HIS COLLEAGUES DUE TO BE HELD THE FOLLOWING WEEK.
4. THE ISSUES WERE PUT TO THE PRESIDENT THAT WEEKEND AND WORRALL IS CONVINCED THAT IT IS ONLY AT THIS POINT THAT P W BOTHA REALLY FOCUSED SHARPLY ON THEM. IT WAS CLEAR TO HIM THAT ALL THIS HAD CLEARLY BEEN ALLOWED TO GO A LONG WAY BEYOND 'PROMOTING DIALOGUE', AND THAT HE WAS BEING ASKED TO SUBSCRIBE TO SOMETHING GOING FAR BEYOND ANYTHING HE HAD EVER CONTEMPLATED. THIS PRODUCED AN EXPLOSION OF RAGE ABOUT INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDE. WORRALL (WHO DID NOT, HOWEVER, TALK DIRECTLY TO PW BOTHA) HEARD THAT HIS REACTION WAS: 'GET RID OF THESE PEOPLE'.

5. I ASKED WORRALL AT WHAT POINT PIK BOTHA AND OTHER MINISTERS HAD LEARNED OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RAIDS ON LUSAKA, GABORONE AND HARARE ON THE EVE OF THE FORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS WITH THE EPG. WORRALL CONFIRMED THAT PIK BOTHA KNEW NOTHING OF THESE RAIDS IN ADVANCE. VAN HEERDEN WAS SUMMONED TO THE DEFENCE MINISTRY EARLY ON THE MORNING OF 19 MAY TO BE TOLD OF THE RAIDS AND TO HELP DRAFT A COMMUNIQUE. WHEN HE PROTESTED ABOUT THE ACTION THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN, HE WAS TOLD THAT THE DEFENCE MINISTRY HAD CARRIED OUT THESE RAIDS ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT. WITH NO OBVIOUS MILITARY JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RAIDS, WHICH WERE UNSUCCESSFUL IN HITTING THEIR TARGETS, WORRALL HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE RAIDS WERE ORDERED BY THE PRESIDENT AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE HE WANTED TO PUT A STOP TO THE COMMONWEALTH NEGOTIATING EFFORT. HEUNIS WAS GIVEN HIS MARCHING ORDERS BY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE MEETING ON 19 MAY AND PIK LISTENED IN GLOOMY SILENCE THROUGHOUT.

6. WHAT CONCLUSIONS SHOULD WE DRAW FROM ALL THIS? I SAID TO WORRALL THAT I THOUGHT THAT THE EPG NEGOTIATING CONCEPT WAS AN IDEA WHOSE TIME WOULD COME, BUT NOT IF IT WAS DISHED UP FROM OUTSIDE. THE CENTRAL IDEA OF A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE WHILE NEGOTIATIONS TOOK PLACE WOULD RETURN, BUT ONLY WHEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN DRIVEN TO CONTEMPLATE THAT THEMSELVES, AS A RESULT OF THEIR OWN INTERNAL DEBATES. WORRALL AGREES WITH THIS, BUT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE DAY IS LIKELY TO COME UNDER P W BOTHA. THAT WAS ONE OF THE REASONS FOR HIS RESIGNATION.

7. ESSENTIALLY, HOWEVER, WORRALL AS YOU WILL KNOW IS AN INDABA (LAST WORD UNDERLINED) MAN. HE DOES NOT REALLY BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO START NEGOTIATION WITH THE ANC NOW, AS THE WHITE COMMUNITY ARE NOT READY FOR IT, AND WHAT THE ANC IS INTERESTED IN IS A TRANSFER OF POWER, WHICH WILL NOT BE ON OFFER NOW OR LATER. WORRALL SHARES THE VIEW GENERALLY HELD BY ALMOST ALL SERIOUS OBSERVERS I HAVE MET AROUND HERE, THAT WE ARE STILL IN A SITUATION IN WHICH BOTH SIDES BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN WIN. WORRALL, SLABBERT, HELEN SUZMAN, GILICMEE AND OTHERS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT EITHER SIDE CAN WIN, BUT IT IS GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME FOR BOTH OF THEM TO FIND THAT OUT. MEANWHILE WE ARE LIKELY TO WITNESS A PERIOD OF "VIOLENT EVOLUTION", WITH THE GOVERNMENT TRYING TO CO-OPT BLACKS, AND HAVING LITTLE SUCCESS IN DOING SO, AND THE ANC TRYING TO CHALLENGE THE STATE MILITARILY, ALMOST CERTAINLY WITH EQUALLY LITTLE SUCCESS.

SIGNED,..... ROBIN RENWICK

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