

CONFIDENTIAL

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OCMIAN 2097
CONFIDENTIAL
DD 140800Z PRETO
PP NEDEL
PP HARAR
PP LUSAK
PP LAGOS
PP DAESS
PP ROMEE
FM FCOLN TO PRETO
132030Z DEC
GRS 790

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FM FCO
TO DESKBY 140800Z PRETORIA
TELNO 334
OF 132030Z DECEMBER 85
INFO PRIORITY CANBERRA, OTTAWA, NEW DELHI, HARARE, LUSAKA,
INFO PRIORITY NASSAU, LAGOS, DAR ES SALAAM, WASHINGTON, PARIS,
INFO PRIORITY BONN, ROME, UKMIS NEW YORK, LUXEMBOURG, THE HAGUE,
INFO PRIORITY BRUSSELS, UKREP BRUSSELS

EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

1. THE EPG MET FOR THE FIRST TIME ON 12/13 DECEMBER, CONCLUDING AT LUNCH-TIME TODAY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE. THE GROUP CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER THIS MORNING.
2. WE HAVE HAD A PRELIMINARY ACCOUNT FROM LORD BARBER, WHO WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THE WAY IT HAD GONE. HE SAID THAT THE CHEMISTRY WITHIN THE GROUP WAS VERY GOOD. FRASER HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. HE HAD FULLY SUPPORTED THE UNCONTENTIOUS TERMS OF REFERENCE WHICH LORD BARBER HAD PUT FORWARD AND HAD ALSO AGREED WITH LORD BARBER'S SUGGESTION THAT THE GROUP SHOULD AVOID PUBLIC STATEMENTS. THE ONLY POTENTIAL DIFFICULTY LORD BARBER MENTIONED WAS THAT OBASANJO HAD INDICATED THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY

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NOT 'BE ALLOWED' TO VISIT SOUTH AFRICA UNLESS THE GROUP WERE GIVEN PERMISSION TO SEE MANDELA.

3. THE GROUP'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO WENT WELL. SHE STRESSED THAT SHE SAW THEIR MISSION AS AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO TURN THE TIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND END ITS ISOLATION. THE GROUP HAD A DIFFICULT AND SENSITIVE TASK. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS AND DISLIKED BEING TOLD BY OUTSIDERS HOW TO RUN ITS AFFAIRS. THE GROUP WOULD NEED TO EXERCISE GREAT TACT AND DISCRETION. THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE WHICH SHE ATTACHED TO MAINTAINING SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMIC STRENGTH WHILE SOLVING ITS POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

4. THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP RESPONDED HELPFULLY. OBASANJO ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S SENSITIVITIES AND TO PRESERVE THE STRENGTH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY. THE GROUP DID NOT EXPECT APARTHEID TO BE DISMANTLED OVERNIGHT. IT WOULD TAKE YEARS. BUT ONCE THE PROCESS WAS INITIATED, FEARS MIGHT GRADUALLY DIMINISH. (MALECELA ADDED THAT ONE OF THE GROUP'S TASKS WOULD BE TO CONVEY THE COMMONWEALTH'S FEELINGS THAT IT WAS STILL POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION). THE GROUP WAS ANXIOUS TO VISIT SOUTH AFRICA AND HAD PREPARED A LETTER FOR THE UK, CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADORS TO DELIVER FOR PRESIDENT BOTHA. HE HOPED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD USE HER INFLUENCE WITH THE STATE PRESIDENT TO ACHIEVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE.

5. FRASER STRESSED THAT THE GROUP WOULD BE CONDUCTING ITS MISSION AS DISCREETLY AS POSSIBLE AND WOULD SAY NOTHING TO THE PRESS. THEY WERE NOT GOING TO SOUTH AFRICA WITH THE INTENTION OF EMBARRASSING THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. THE GROUP WISHED TO MOVE QUICKLY HOWEVER. THERE HAD BEEN SOME SUGGESTION THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD PREFER THEM NOT TO GO THERE UNTIL AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT HAD MET AT THE END OF JANUARY. THE GROUP WANTED TO GO SOONER THAN THIS AND HOPED THAT THE GENERALLY RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PUBLICITY THAT THEY WERE DISPLAYING WOULD HELP PERSUADE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO THIS. THE GROUP'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT BOTHA WAS DESIGNED TO ELICIT A SIMPLE, POSITIVE RESPONSE. IT WOULD MAKE

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CLEAR THAT THE GROUP WERE WILLING TO CARRY OUT WHATEVER PROGRAMME THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT PROPOSED AND THAT THEIR FIRST PRIORITY WOULD BE TO MEET GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES. BUT OBVIOUSLY THERE WOULD BE OTHER GROUPS TO SEE WITH WHOM ARRANGEMENTS WOULD NEED TO BE MADE SEPARATELY. THE GROUP HOPED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT TRY TO NEGOTIATE IN ADVANCE PRECISELY WHO THE GROUP COULD AND COULD NOT SEE. THIS WOULD GET THE GROUP'S WORK OFF TO A BAD START.

6. THE PRIME MINISTER WARMLY WELCOMED THE GROUP'S APPROACH AND OFFERED TO GIVE IT ALL THE HELP POSSIBLE INCLUDING INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHOM THE GROUP MIGHT LIKE TO MEET, AND HELP WITH NEGOTIATIONS. SHE UNDERTOOK TO WRITE IMMEDIATELY TO PRESIDENT BOTHA WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HER FAVOURABLE IMPRESSIONS OF HER MEETING WITH THE GROUP.

7. THE GROUP HAVE NOW FORWARDED TO ME A LETTER TO PRESIDENT BOTHA, THE TEXT OF WHICH IS IN MIFT (TO PRETORIA ONLY). THE TEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT BOTHA WILL BE TELEGRAPHED TO YOU AS SOON AS IT IS AVAILABLE AND WE SHOULD LIKE YOU TO DELIVER IT IMMEDIATELY, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE YOU AND YOUR AUSTRALIAN AND CANADIAN COLLEAGUES HAND OVER THE FRASER/OBASANJO LETTER ON 16 DECEMBER.

8. INFORMATION ADDRESSEES SHOULD KEEP THE DETAILS OF THE GROUP'S MEETING AND OF ITS CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER CONFIDENTIAL. IN KEEPING WITH THE GROUP'S OWN MORATORIUM ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS THEY SHOULD AVOID MAKING ANY PUBLIC COMMENT. IN CONFIDENCE WITH THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS, THEY MAY CONFIRM THAT THE GROUP APPEARS TO HAVE GOT OFF TO A GOOD START AND DRAW ON THE LINE TAKEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN PARA 3 ABOVE.

HOWE

SOUTH AFRICA

LIMITED

S AF D

C AF D

UND

ECD(E)

NEWS D

LEGAL ADVISERS

PLANNING STAFF

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR RIFKIND

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR FERGUSSON

MR JOHNSON

CABINET OFFICE

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OCMIAN 2096
CONFIDENTIAL
DD 140800Z PRETO
FM FCOLN TO PRETO
131800Z DEC
GRS 714

CONFIDENTIAL
FM FCO
TO DESKBY 140800Z PRETORIA
TELNO 335
OF 131800Z DECEMBER 85

MIPT: EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO ME FROM COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARY-GENERAL DATED 13 DECEMBER.

BEGINS

THE GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS CONSTITUTED UNDER THE NASSAU
ACCORD ON SOUTHERN AFRICA HAS JUST COMPLETED ITS FIRST MEETING
HERE IN MARLBOROUGH HOUSE. THEY HAVE AGREED TO SEND TO HE THE
STATE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA A LETTER SIGNED BY THE TWO CO-
CHAIRMEN OF THE GROUP INTIMATING THEIR WISH TO VISIT SOUTH
AFRICA AT AN EARLY DATE IN PURSUANCE OF THEIR MANDATE AND
INVITING THE CO-OPERATION OF THE AUTHORITIES IN PRETORIA FOR THIS
PURPOSE. THEY HAVE AGREED THAT I SHOULD INVITE THE GOVERNMENTS
OF AUSTRALIA, BRITAIN AND CANADA THROUGH YOUR EMBASSIES IN
PRETORIA TO CONVEY THIS LETTER AND I WRITE TO DO SO, ENCLOSING
THE ORIGINAL LETTER.

NEW PARAGRAPH

I SHOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP, THE THREE
MISSIONS IN PRETORIA COULD CO-ORDINATE THEIR ACTION TO
ENSURE DELIVERY OF THE MESSAGE TO THE STATE PRESIDENT AT THE
EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT SHOULD
BE POSSIBLE FOR THIS TO BE DONE ON MONDAY NEXT I AM, AT THE
REQUEST OF THE GROUP, MAKING A COPY OF IT AVAILABLE DIRECTLY

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TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY IN LONDON ON MONDAY, WITH AN INDICATION THAT IT IS BEING FORMALLY TRANSMITTED IN PRETORIA BY THE THREE COMMONWEALTH MISSIONS.

NEW PARAGRAPH

IT IS THE SPECIFIC WISH OF THE GROUP THAT I SHOULD INVITE ALL THREE GOVERNMENTS TO USE THEIR GOOD OFFICES AND INFLUENCE WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN PRETORIA TO ENCOURAGE AN EARLY AND POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THEIR LETTER. THEY ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO AVOID A PROTRACTED PROCESS OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH REGARD TO DETAILS AND FEEL VERY KEENLY THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR MEETING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. I AM SURE YOU WILL AGREE THAT THERE IS VERY GOOD REASON FOR AVOIDING SUCH A PROCESS AND ON THE GROUP'S BEHALF I INVITE YOUR ASSISTANCE IN YOUR GOVERNMENT'S CONTACTS WITH PRETORIA.

END OF TEXT

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER (DATED 13 DECEMBER) FROM THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE EMINENT PERSONS GROUP TO PRESIDENT BOTHA.

BEGINS

DEAR MR STATE PRESIDENT

WE ARE WRITING ON BEHALF OF THE SEVEN MEMBER GROUP ESTABLISHED BY COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT PURSUANT TO THEIR NASSAU 'ACCORD ON SOUTHERN AFRICA'. YOU MAY RECALL THAT THE TEXT OF THE ACCORD TOGETHER WITH THE COMPOSITION OF OUR GROUP WAS TRANSMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL TO YOUR GOVERNMENT ON 25 NOVEMBER BY THE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES OF AUSTRALIA, BRITAIN AND CANADA. THE ACCORD CONSTITUTES THE BROAD MANDATE UNDER WHICH WE ARE WORKING.

NEW PARAGRAPH

WE HAVE TODAY CONCLUDED OUR FIRST MEETING IN LONDON. WE ARE ANXIOUS TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IN A SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS AND WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED, WORKING QUIETLY AND ESSENTIALLY IN NON-PUBLIC WAYS. WE THEREFORE ATTACH THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO VISITING SOUTH AFRICA FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT AND ALL WHO ARE IN A POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR OBJECTIVE. THIS WE PERCEIVE AS BEING ESSENTIAL FOR

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ENCOURAGING AND FACILITATING THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE
ENVISAGED IN THE ACCORD.

NEW PARAGRAPH

CONSISTENT WITH OUR PURPOSE, WE WOULD NEED WHILE IN SOUTH AFRICA
TO MEET WITH THE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE TRUE REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE BLACK POPULATION AS WELL AS WITH OTHERS WHOSE VIEWS WOULD
BE RELEVANT TO SUCH A PROCESS. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WE WILL
SEEK TO CLARIFY ATTITUDES TOWARDS BEGINNING THE DIALOGUE ENVISAGED
AND TO ELICIT VIEWS ON WAYS OF ADVANCING IT.

NEW PARAGRAPH

WE HAVE NOTED WITH APPRECIATION THE STATEMENT BY YOUR
FOREIGN MINISTER, THE HON PIK BOTHA, ON 26 NOVEMBER. SINCE
IT IS OUR CLEAR WISH THAT OUR FIRST CONTACTS SHOULD IF
POSSIBLE BE WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD VERY MUCH HOPE
THAT A VISIT ALONG THE LINES OUTLINED ABOVE COULD BE ARRANGED
AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE, PREFERABLY BEFORE THE END
OF JANUARY 1986.

YOURS SINCERELY

SIGNED MALCOLM FRASER (CO-CHAIRMAN) AND OLUSEGUN OBASANJO (CO-
CHAIRMAN)

END OF TEXT

3. THE SIGNED ORIGINAL OF THE LETTER FROM THE TWO CHAIRMEN TO
PRESIDENT BOTHA WILL BE SENT TO YOU IN THE NEXT AVAILABLE
CLASSIFIED BAG.

HOWE

SOUTH AFRICA

LIMITED

S AF D

C AF D

UND

ECD(E)

NEWS D

LEGAL ADVISERS

PLANNING STAFF

PS

PS/LADY YOUNG

PS/MR RIFKIND

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR FERGUSSON

MR JOHNSON

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