

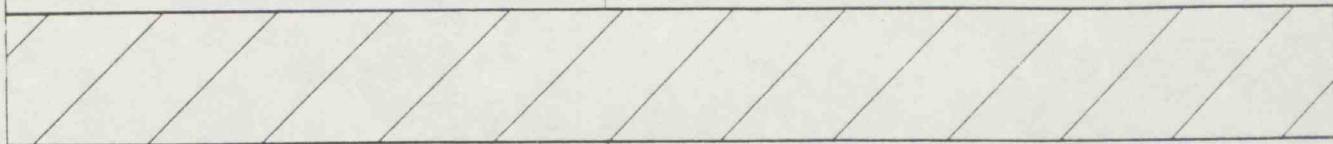
OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification CONFIDENTIAL	Caveat	Precedence DESKBY110700Z
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1	ZCZC
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4	FM FCO
5	TO DESKBY 110700Z CAPE TOWN
6	TELNO
7	OF 101945Z MARCH 86
8	INFO IMMEDIATE PRETORIA

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11 MIPT: COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS
12 1. Following is the text of my letter to Pik Botha:
13 BEGINS I am writing to you urgently because the Prime Minister
14 and I have learned in confidence from Lord Barber that the
15 mission of the Commonwealth Group may be reaching a critical
16 stage.
17 We have been much impressed by the courteous and helpful way in
18 which your government has received the Group and facilitated
19 their two visits to South Africa. This and the Group's decision
20 to avoid all publicity have allowed them to begin their work in
21 the most favourable possible circumstances. The endorsement
22 which they received from both the Front Line States and members
23 of the European Community last month in Lusaka will also have
24 added to their international credibility and importance.
25 We understand from Lord Barber that the Group have put certain
26 proposals to your government which they plan to discuss with
27 Ministers in the course of this week. ~~My Government~~ ^{we} would not
28 presume to advise ~~the South African Government~~ ^{you} on how far ~~they~~ ^{you}
29 should be prepared to go in meeting the substance of these



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		Catchword: PROPOSALS	
File number	Dept SAFD	Drafted by (Block capitals) C T W HUMFREY	Telephone no 233 4954
Authorised for despatch by: _____		Initials	Date/time
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OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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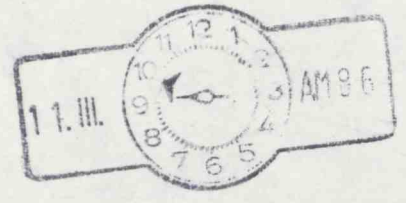
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 2 proposals at this time. I note that one of the points, the
 3 lifting of the State of Emergency, has already been met and that
 4 most of the detainees held under emergency powers have been
 5 released. The other points no doubt involve differing
 6 considerations for the South African Government and you will know
 7 to what extent they are negotiable.
 8 I should like, however, to let you know that in the opinion of
 9 Lord Barber - for whose judgement both the Prime Minister and I
 10 have much respect - both the tenor and substance of your
 11 government's response to the Group this week is likely to have a
 12 significant influence on the future course of the Group's
 13 mission. I am sure that you will agree that it is very much in
 14 the interests of both our Governments that the Group should be
 15 encouraged to try to develop their mission in a constructive way
 16 and not rush into making a hasty and negative report which would
 17 have very unfortunate international repercussions. We very much
 18 hope therefore, that ~~South African~~ ^{you} Ministers will feel able to
 19 reply to the Group in terms which leave open the possibility of
 20 further movement on their proposals and encourage them to
 21 continue their mission in an imaginative and flexible way.
 22 For ~~my Government's~~ ^{our} part, ~~we shall~~ ^{the Prime Minister and I will} be prepared to encourage
 23 maximum flexibility on the part of all others concerned and to
 24 stress to them the crucial importance of a suspension of violence
 25 as part of any future understanding.
 26 ~~May I take this opportunity to extend to you my~~ Best wishes.
 27 Geoffrey Howe. ENDS
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 29 HOWE
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 32 YYYY
 33 MAIN
 34 SOUTH AFRICA LIMITED

Communication desk wish
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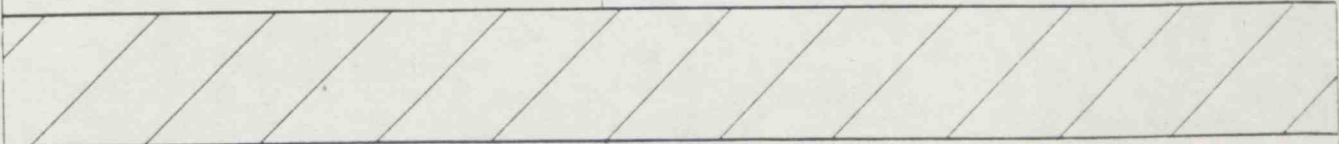
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YYYYY MAIN ADDITIONAL NNNN	Catchword: YYYY		
File number	Dept SAFD	Drafted by (Block capitals) C T W HUMFREY	Telephone no 2323 4954
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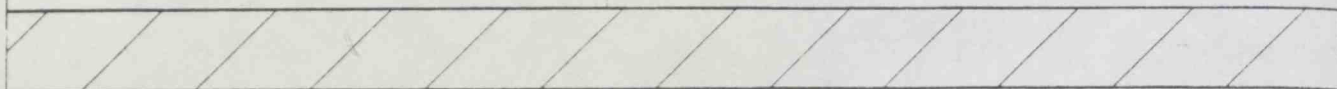
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