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to attach  
text enclosure



file DSG  
SEWAAR  
cc FCO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 March 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T57/84

Dear Ron,

I promised to write further to you about South Africa.

The Group of Eminent Persons appointed by Commonwealth Heads of Government last October completed a fortnight's visit to South Africa and some of the Front Line States last week. Our nominee on the Group, Lord Barber - who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Conservative Government between 1970 and 1974 and is now Chairman of the Standard and Chartered Bank - has given me a detailed account of the Group's work. The members have specifically asked me to brief you fully on the outcome.

The Group's composition, representing all sides of opinion within the Commonwealth, gives it a unique character and a solid basis of international support. Its members clearly got on well together and were sincere in their desire to find a peaceful way through South Africa's problems by doing all they could to promote a dialogue between the South African Government and black South Africans. They worked hard in South Africa, seeing representatives of all political groups and shunning all publicity. They have gradually built up their credibility both with the South African Government and more widely. The South African Government's decision to allow the whole Group to meet Nelson Mandela secretly shows that they take this initiative seriously.

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I regard as particularly significant the fact that the Group has engaged the South African Government in a serious exchange of ideas on how the conditions for dialogue can be established. At the end of last week the Group left with South African Ministers a paper which they carefully described as "a possible negotiating concept". We have been shown the paper in strict confidence and I enclose a copy for your information. It takes account of comments made by South African Ministers and is intended to encourage both sides to move forward. The Group's proposal would require the ANC to suspend violence and to commit themselves to negotiations.

I am acutely conscious that the steps proposed by the Group represent very difficult political decisions for the South African Government and that it must be doubtful that they can accept the paper as it stands. The proposal for lifting the ban on the ANC will be particularly hard for them. But the steps which the paper proposes are those for which both of us and many within South Africa itself have repeatedly called. They do not represent hard-and-fast demands and the Group is ready to discuss them further. But it is vital that the South African Government's reply should be sufficiently forthcoming to enable the Group to continue their difficult and delicate task. It would be tragic if their ideas were rejected outright.

I am under no illusions: but I believe that the Group's initiative does offer an opportunity to end the violence and provide an alternative of negotiation to the present confrontation within South Africa. It could also diminish South Africa's international isolation, which would be welcome to both of us. It is certainly the only conciliation effort in existence or prospect at present which offers any possibility of making headway. I fear that if this chance is lost there may not be another such opportunity.

It is the earnest hope of the members of the Group - and one I share - that you might agree to add your support to

their efforts at what could prove to be a critical moment. I therefore hope that you will feel able to use your great personal influence with President Botha to persuade him not to reject the Group's proposal but to be sufficiently open in his response to allow discussions on it to continue. I have written to him in this vein myself.

My officials in London will be able to brief yours fully on the details of the proposal and the background. The Group hope that the South African Government will reply by early April in a way that will allow the Group to return to Southern Africa later in the month.

Y  
Lomwe  
Margaret  

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The President of the United States of America

Already T'd  
(T 57/86.)

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INFO IMMEDIATE CAPE TOWN, PRETORIA

1. GRATEFUL YOU DELIVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN.

BEGINS DEAR RON, I PROMISED TO WRITE FURTHER TO YOU ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA.

THE GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS APPOINTED BY COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT LAST OCTOBER COMPLETED A FORTNIGHT'S VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA AND SOME OF THE FRONT LINE STATES LAST WEEK. OUR NOMINEE ON THE GROUP, LORD BARBER LONG HYPHEN WHO WAS CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER IN THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN 1970 AND 1974 AND IS NOW CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARD AND CHARTERED BANK LONG HYPHEN HAS GIVEN ME A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE GROUP'S WORK. THE MEMBERS HAVE SPECIFICALLY ASKED ME TO BRIEF YOU FULLY ON THE OUTCOME.

THE GROUP'S COMPOSITION, REPRESENTING ALL SIDES OF OPINION WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH, GIVES IT A UNIQUE CHARACTER AND A SOLID BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. ITS MEMBERS CLEARLY GOT ON WELL TOGETHER AND WERE SINCERE IN THEIR DESIRE TO FIND A PEACEFUL WAY THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA'S PROBLEMS BY DOING ALL THEY COULD TO PROMOTE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS. THEY WORKED HARD IN SOUTH AFRICA, SEEING REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL POLITICAL GROUPS AND SHUNNING ALL

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PUBLICITY. THEY HAVE GRADUALLY BUILT UP THEIR CREDIBILITY BOTH WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND MORE WIDELY. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ALLOW THE WHOLE GROUP TO MEET NELSON MANDELA SECRETLY SHOWS THAT THEY TAKE THIS INITIATIVE SERIOUSLY.

I REGARD AS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT THE FACT THAT THE GROUP HAS ENGAGED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IN A SERIOUS EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ON HOW THE CONDITIONS FOR DIALOGUE CAN BE ESTABLISHED. AT THE END OF LAST WEEK THE GROUP LEFT WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTERS A PAPER WHICH THEY CAREFULLY DESCRIBED AS 'A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT'. WE HAVE BEEN SHOWN THE PAPER IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND I ENCLOSE A COPY FOR YOUR INFORMATION. IT TAKES ACCOUNT OF COMMENTS MADE BY SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTERS AND IS INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE BOTH SIDES TO MOVE FORWARD. THE GROUP'S PROPOSAL WOULD REQUIRE THE ANC TO SUSPEND VIOLENCE AND TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO NEGOTIATIONS.

I AM ACUTELY CONSCIOUS THAT THE STEPS PROPOSED BY THE GROUP REPRESENT VERY DIFFICULT POLITICAL DECISIONS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND THAT IT MUST BE DOUBTFUL THAT THEY CAN ACCEPT THE PAPER AS IT STANDS. THE PROPOSAL FOR LIFTING THE BAN ON THE ANC WILL BE PARTICULARLY HARD FOR THEM. BUT THE STEPS WHICH THE PAPER PROPOSES ARE THOSE FOR WHICH BOTH OF US AND MANY WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF HAVE REPEATEDLY CALLED. THEY DO NOT REPRESENT HARD-AND-FAST DEMANDS AND THE GROUP IS READY TO DISCUSS THEM FURTHER. BUT IT IS VITAL THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S REPLY SHOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY FORTHCOMING TO ENABLE THE GROUP TO CONTINUE THEIR DIFFICULT AND DELICATE TASK. IT WOULD BE TRAGIC IF THEIR IDEAS WERE REJECTED OUTRIGHT.

I AM UNDER NO ILLUSIONS: BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE GROUP'S INITIATIVE DOES OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO END THE VIOLENCE AND PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE OF NEGOTIATION TO THE PRESENT CONFRONTATION WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA. IT COULD ALSO DIMINISH SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION, WHICH WOULD BE WELCOME TO BOTH OF US. IT IS CERTAINLY THE ONLY CONCILIATION EFFORT IN EXISTENCE OR PROSPECT AT PRESENT WHICH OFFERS ANY POSSIBILITY OF MAKING HEADWAY. I FEAR THAT IF THIS CHANCE IS LOST THERE MAY NOT BE ANOTHER

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SUCH OPPORTUNITY.

IT IS THE EARNEST HOPE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP LONG HYPHEN AND ONE I SHARE LONG HYPHEN THAT YOU MIGHT AGREE TO ADD YOUR SUPPORT TO THEIR EFFORTS AT WHAT COULD PROVE TO BE A CRITICAL MOMENT. I THEREFORE HOPE THAT YOU WILL FEEL ABLE TO USE YOUR GREAT PERSONAL INFLUENCE WITH PRESIDENT BOTHA TO PERSUADE HIM NOT TO REJECT THE GROUP'S PROPOSAL BUT TO BE SUFFICIENTLY OPEN IN HIS RESPONSE TO ALLOW DISCUSSIONS ON IT TO CONTINUE. I HAVE WRITTEN TO HIM IN THIS VEIN MYSELF.

MY OFFICIALS IN LONDON WILL BE ABLE TO BRIEF YOURS FULLY ON THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE BACKGROUND. THE GROUP HOPE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WILL REPLY BY EARLY APRIL IN A WAY THAT WILL ALLOW THE GROUP TO RETURN TO SOUTHERN AFRICA LATER IN THE MONTH.

YOURS EVER, MARGARET ENDS

2. TEXT OF THE QUOTE POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING PAPER UNQUOTE IS CONTAINED IN CAPE TOWN TELNO 158, NOW COPIED TO YOU.

3. SIGNED ORIGINAL FOLLOWS BY 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/MRS CHALKER

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR FERGUSSON

MR JOHNSON

CABINET OFFICE

-3-  
CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

Top Secret

The Rt Hon Ronald Reagan

Secret

Copies to:

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

SRWAAR

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

*I know that the situation in South Africa causes us both much concern. The complexities of the problem and the strong feelings on both sides make the task of reconciliation extremely difficult.*

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CAVEAT.....

*In the search for ways to assist that process the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by Commonwealth Heads of Government last October completed a visit to South Africa and some of the Front Line States last week. The British nominee, Lord Barber, has just given me a detailed account of the Group's work. They have specifically asked me to brief you fully on the progress they have achieved.*

*Group's*  
The composition of the Group, representing all sides of opinion within the Commonwealth, gives it a unique character and a solid basis of international support.

Moreover, I believe that the West's best interests would

*They* be served if their efforts proved successful. The members of the Group have worked hard, *in South Africa (being) representatives of all political groups* shunning all publicity, and have gradually built up their credibility. They

*both with the South Africa Govt /have a more widely*

*and demonstrated a serious desire to promote dialogue.*

Enclosures—flag(s).....

*dialogue.*

*/Re*

have now made considerable progress in the difficult task of winning <sup>the</sup> cooperation of both the South African Government and the leaders of black opinion. Both the ANC and the leaders of the Front Line States believe that the Commonwealth mission should be given an opportunity to explore ways of bringing the two sides together and of fostering the climate for the dialogue about the future that is so urgently needed.

The South African Government's decision to allow the whole Group secretly to meet Nelson Mandela shows that they take this initiative seriously. ~~But of~~ <sup>greater significance is the fact that the Group has engaged the ~~Government~~ <sup>South African Ministers</sup> in a serious exchange of ideas on how the conditions for dialogue can be established. At the end of last week the Group left with ~~South African Ministers~~ a paper which they carefully described as "a possible negotiating concept". We have been shown the paper in strict confidence and I enclose a copy for your information. It takes account of comments made ~~on an earlier draft~~ by South African Ministers and is intended to encourage both sides to move forward. The Group's proposal would require the ANC to suspend violence and to commit themselves to negotiations.</sup>

I am acutely conscious that the steps proposed by the Group represent very difficult political decisions for the South African Government. <sup>steps</sup> But they constitute confidence building measures for which both of us and many within South Africa have repeatedly called.

/They

ad that there is no serious prospect that they will accept it  
stand.



They do not represent hard-and-fast demands and the Group is open to further discussions of them. But it is vital that the South African Government's reply should be sufficiently forthcoming to enable the Group to continue their difficult and delicate task.

I believe that the Group's initiative might just conceivably offer an opportunity to break the cycle of violence and provide an alternative to increasing confrontation within South Africa and internationally. It is certainly the only conciliation effort in existence or prospect at present which offers any possibility of making headway. I very much fear that if this chance is lost there may not be another such opportunity.

It is the earnest hope of the members of the Group - and one I share - that you might agree to add your support to their efforts at what could prove to be a critical moment. I very much hope that you will feel able to use your <sup>personal</sup> influence with President Botha to persuade him not to reject the Group's proposal and to be prepared to continue discussions on it. I am writing to him in this vein myself.

My officials in London will be able to brief yours fully on the details of the proposal and the background. The Group hope that the South African Government will reply by early April in a way that will allow the Group to return to Southern Africa later in the month.

I am  
under no  
illusions: but

LPC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 March 1986

Eng 4/3.

*Dear Charles,*South Africa: Commonwealth Group

Thank you for your letter of 17 March giving an account of Lord Barber's meeting with the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister agreed that she would send messages to both President Botha and to President Reagan in support of the Group's initiative. She would ask President Reagan to add his influence to persuade the South African Government to avoid reacting to the Group's paper in a negative way.

I enclose two draft letters which have been approved by the Foreign Secretary. We are showing them also to Lord Barber, in confidence, since he wished to be consulted. I will let you know whether he has any comments on them.

I understand that Mr Fraser and General Obasanjo will not be going to Washington until next month, but the sooner President Reagan can be persuaded to act with President Botha the better.

*Yours ever,**Len Appleyard*

(L V Appleyard)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

SOUTH AFRICA : Relations PE 9

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

