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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 June 1986

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Dear Charles,

COMGEP: Background Papers for Members of the Cabinet

The Foreign Secretary has asked that all members of the Cabinet should be given copies (enclosed) of (a) the conclusions of the COMGEP Report (contained in the attached message to Commonwealth Heads of Government) and (b) the correspondence between the Commonwealth Group and the South African Government.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to all other members of the Cabinet.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

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MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA

REPORT OF THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

MESSAGE TO ALL COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

From the Secretary-General

9 June, 1986

At their meeting which concluded in London on Saturday, June 7, the members of the Group of Eminent Persons have prepared a unanimous Report on their efforts, an advance copy of which I am sending to you today via your High Commission in London, with a request to get it to you at the earliest possible opportunity. The Co-Chairmen will hold a press conference in London on Thursday, June 12 and I would ask that the Report itself and this message be treated as confidential until then. In view of the very wide international interest in the Report and the importance of minimising speculation and distortion, I am arranging for its release at the earliest practicable opportunity, and will try to ensure the widest possible circulation. Meanwhile, I am sending you, herewith, advance information on the Group's principal conclusions. These are, in the language of the Report, as follows:

- "Our mandate was to foster a process of negotiation across lines of colour, politics and religion, with a view to establishing a non-racial and representative government. It is our considered view that, despite appearances and statements to the contrary, the South African Government is not yet ready to negotiate such a future - except on its own terms. Those terms, both in regard to objectives and modalities, fall far short of reasonable black expectations and well accepted democratic norms and principles.
- We draw the conclusion that while the Government claims to be ready to negotiate, it is in truth not yet prepared to negotiate fundamental change, nor to countenance the creation of genuine democratic structures, nor to face the prospect of the end of white domination and white power in the foreseeable future. Its programme of reform does not end apartheid, but seeks to give it a less inhuman face. Its quest is power-sharing, but without surrendering overall white control.
- It is not for us to prescribe or advise who the parties to a genuine negotiation might be; but we noted as significant

the Government's allergy to our proposal that they should be the "true", "authentic" or "acknowledged" leaders of the people.

- There can be no negotiated settlement in South Africa without the ANC; the breadth of its support is incontestable; and this support is growing. Among the many striking figures whom we met in the course of our work, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo stand out. Their reasonableness, absence of rancour and readiness to find negotiated solutions which, while creating genuine democratic structures would still give the Whites a feeling of security and participation, impressed us deeply. If the Government finds itself unable to talk with men like Mandela and Tambo, then the future of South Africa is bleak indeed. If, therefore, the Government is serious about negotiations, it must create conditions in which free political activity becomes possible, and political parties and leaders are able to function effectively and test the extent of their popular support. Tragically, the whole thrust of Government policy has been to thwart such legitimate leadership from emerging and destroy it where it does. Even non-violent organisations like the UDF have been subjected to harassment and persecution.
- Behind these attitudes lurks a deeper truth. After more than 18 months of persistent unrest, upheaval, and killings unprecedented in the country's history, the Government believes that it can contain the situation indefinitely by use of force... South Africa is predominantly a country of black people. To believe that they can be indefinitely suppressed is an act of self-delusion.
- While right-wing opposition cannot be ignored, it would be fatal to give it a veto. Indeed, we gained the impression that white opinion as a whole may be ahead of the Government in significant respects, ready to respond positively if given a bold lead.
- Put in the most simple way, the Blacks have had enough of apartheid. They are no longer prepared to submit to its oppression, discrimination and exploitation. They can no longer stomach being treated as aliens in their own country. They have confidence not merely in the justice of their cause, but in the inevitability of their victory... The strength of black convictions is now matched by a readiness to die for those convictions. They will, therefore, sustain their struggle, whatever the cost.
- The writ of the Government will be increasingly circumscribed. Inter-black rivalry and violence, partly encouraged and fomented by the Government, will grow, making the task of negotiating a settlement even more difficult. Political upheaval and social unrest will accelerate the flight of capital and professional skills and the economy's downward spiral.

- The Government faces difficult choices. Its obduracy and intransigence wrecked the Commonwealth's initiative, but the issues themselves will not go away, nor can they be bombed out of existence. It is not sanctions which will destroy the country but the persistence of apartheid and the Government's failure to engage in fundamental political reform.

- In our Report we have addressed in turn the five steps which the Nassau Accord called on the authorities in Pretoria to take "in a genuine manner and as a matter of urgency"... our conclusions with regard to them are as follows:

- (a) We have examined the Government's 'programme of reform' and have been forced to conclude that at present there is no genuine intention on the part of the South African Government to dismantle apartheid.
- (b) The state of emergency, although technically lifted, remains substantially in force under the ordinary laws of the land which, even now, are being further strengthened in this direction.
- (c) Nelson Mandela and other political leaders remain in prison.
- (d) Political freedom is far from being established; if anything, it is being more rigorously curtailed. The ANC and other political parties remain banned.
- (e) The cycle of violence and counter-violence has spiralled and there is no present prospect of a process of dialogue leading to the establishment of a non-racial and representative government.

- Overall, the concrete and adequate progress looked for in the Nassau Accord towards the objectives of "dismantling apartheid and erecting the structures of democracy in South Africa" has not materialised.

- Indeed, in recent weeks, the Government would appear to have moved consciously away from any realistic negotiating process. It is not just their communications with us which have indicated a hardening of attitude. The same message has been clear in the State President's speech in May, the bombing of three neighbouring Commonwealth countries even while we were in discussion with senior Ministers, the denigration and smearing of the ANC, the retreat from the earlier readiness to accept 'suspension' as opposed to 'renunciation' of violence, the seeking of greater security powers for the police and military on top of the massive powers they already have, the renewed determination to

suppress public meetings and free speech and to harass black leaders, and not least the more recent raids on Angolan ports.

- For all the people of South Africa and of the sub-region as a whole, the certain prospect is of an even sharper decline into violence and bloodshed with all its attendant human costs. A racial conflagration with frightening implications threatens.
- What can be done?... There may be no course available that can guarantee a significantly more peaceful solution. But against the background in which ever-increasing violence will be a certainty, the question of further measures immediately springs to mind. As the Nassau Accord makes clear, Commonwealth Heads of Government have agreed that, in the event of adequate progress not having been made in South Africa within a period of six months, they would consider further measures.
- While we are not determining the nature or extent of any measures which might be adopted, or their effectiveness, we point to the fact that the Government of South Africa has itself used economic measures against its neighbours and that such measures are patently instruments of its own national policy. We are convinced that the South African Government is concerned about the adoption of effective economic measures against it. If it comes to the conclusion that it would always remain protected from such measures, the process of change in South Africa is unlikely to increase in momentum and the descent into violence would be accelerated. In these circumstances, the cost in lives may have to be counted in millions.
- The question in front of Heads of Government is in our view clear. It is not whether such measures will compel change; it is already the case that their absence and Pretoria's belief that they need not be feared, defers change. Is the Commonwealth to stand by and allow the cycle of violence to spiral? Or will it take concerted action of an effective kind? Such action may offer the last opportunity to avert what could be the worst bloodbath since the Second World War."

With deep respect,

Shridath Ramphal



COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

Established pursuant to the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa. Nassau. October 1985

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Telex: 27678

Telephone: 01-839 3411

Marlborough House

Pall Mall

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13 December, 1985

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.

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 encouraging and facilitating the process of political dialogue envisaged in the Accord.

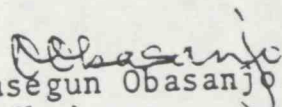
Consistent with our purpose, we would need while in South Africa to meet with the Government, with the true representatives of the black population as well as with others whose views would be relevant to such a process. In our discussions we will seek to clarify attitudes towards beginning the dialogue envisaged and to elicit views on ways of advancing it.

HE Mr. P.W. Botha,
State President,
Republic of South Africa.

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,


Malcolm Fraser
Co-Chairman


Olusegun Obasanjo
Co-Chairman



Union Buildings
Pretoria

24 December 1985

Gentlemen

I acknowledge your letter of 13 December 1985 as conveyed to the Department of Foreign Affairs by the Ambassadors of Canada, United Kingdom and Australia on 16 December 1985.

I am encouraged by your positive reaction to the statement issued by my Minister of Foreign Affairs on 26 November 1985 setting out the South African Government's attitude with regard to the Commonwealth initiative.

I am prepared to approach this initiative constructively. I hope that you will be equally constructive in your approach. The Commonwealth Group can do incalculable harm if it sees itself as a pressure group charged with the task of extracting concessions from the Government and generally engaged in prescribing solutions to problems which are the sole concern of South Africans.

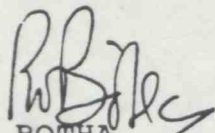
If, on the other hand, it wants to be informed of the situation in South Africa and confines itself to promoting peaceful political dialogue and, moreover, can be seen to be unbiased in this respect, it could serve a useful

purpose. I agree that a suspension of violence is a requirement for dialogue. I would hope, therefore, that the Commonwealth Group will discourage violence and avoid action or comment which might be seen or interpreted as encouragement to those promoting or supporting violence.

To ensure that there is no misunderstanding concerning the policies and objectives of my Government, let me state that we are determined to proceed with our reform programme which has already reached an advanced stage, whatever the obstacles we have to contend with; and we want to get moving with the negotiations. The sooner this can be done the better for this is the key to the solution of our problems. Our political programme provides for power sharing, subject only to the protection of the rights of all minorities, and we are reconciled to the eventual disappearance of white domination. All our communities must have a fair say in Government and this is what we shall be striving to achieve in the course of the negotiations. It presages the end of racial discrimination. But we need the co-operation of all our communities in constructing an alternative system of Government for South Africa. I trust that the Group will ensure that it does nothing which might impede the creation of a climate conducive to such co-operation.

You are welcome to visit South Africa and to consult with my Government and the representatives of the various population groups on the basis of the foregoing considerations. The modalities and timing can be arranged to our mutual satisfaction at functional level in the course of January 1986.

Yours sincerely



P W BOTHA
STATE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mr Malcolm Fraser
General Olusegun Obasanjo
Co-Chairmen
Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group
LONDON



COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

Established pursuant to the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa, Nassau, October 1985

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Cape Sun Hotel
Cape Town

13 March 1986

The Hon Pik Botha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
H F Verwoerd Building
CAPE TOWN

My dear Foreign Minister

...
We are enclosing a copy of a note that the Group has left with Minister Heunis. We wish once more to thank you for the courtesy and help which you personally and your Ministry have extended to us throughout our visit and discussions in South Africa.

We would wish to emphasise once again that we are advancing a concept. We really do believe, as a result of all our discussions in South Africa and outside, that there is a real chance of establishing productive negotiations about the future of South Africa. We have also indicated that if the Government believes there is some future role for this Group we stand ready to advance the cause of negotiations.

Again many thanks for your courtesy and for the time that you spent with us.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Fraser

Olusegun Obasanjo

Members:

The Rt.Hon. MALCOLM FRASER (Co-Chairman); General OLUSEGUN OBASANJO (Co-Chairman)
The Rt.Hon. LORD BARBER; Dame NITA BARROW; Mr. JOHN MALECELA; Sardar SWARAN SINGH; The Most Rev. Archbishop EDWARD W. SCOTT DD.

A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT

The South African Government has declared its commitment to dismantling the system of apartheid, to ending racial discrimination and to broad-based negotiations leading to new constitutional arrangements for power sharing by all the people of South Africa. In the light of preliminary and as yet incomplete discussions with representatives of various organisations and groups, within and outside South Africa, we believe that in the context of specific and meaningful steps being taken towards ending apartheid, the following additional action might ensure negotiations and a break in the cycle of violence.

On the part of the Government:

- (a) Removal of the military from the townships, providing for freedom of assembly and discussion and suspension of detention without trial.
- (b) The release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and detainees.
- (c) The unbanning of the ANC and PAC and the permitting of normal political activity.

On the part of the ANC and others:

Entering negotiations and suspending violence.

It is our view that simultaneous announcements incorporating these ideas might be negotiated if the Government were to be interested in pursuing this broad approach.

In the light of the Government's indication to us that it

- (i) is not in principle against the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and similar prisoners;
- (ii) is not opposed in principle to the unbanning of any organisations;

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- (iii) is prepared to enter into negotiations with the acknowledged leaders of the people of South Africa;
- (iv) is committed to the removal of discrimination, not only from the statute books but also from South African society as a whole;
- (v) is committed to the ending of white domination;
- (vi) will not prescribe who may represent black communities in negotiations on a new constitution for South Africa;
- (vii) is prepared to negotiate an open agenda,

the South African Government may wish to give serious consideration to the approach outlined in this note

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Tel: 45-5848
Ref.: MB 11/31

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24 April 1986

Dear Mr Fraser and General Obasanjo

The South African Government has been giving serious consideration to the salient features of the "possible negotiating concept" attached to your letter of 13 March 1986 which I have been asked to respond to.

You will be aware, from previous statements which the South African State President and other members of the South African Government have made on the issue of the release of Mr Nelson Mandela, that the South African Government's basic concern is that his release should not be accompanied by or result in further violence.

It must be clear that the key to the release of Mr Mandela and similar prisoners, withdrawal of the Security Forces from certain urban areas and lifting of the ban on the ANC and PAC is a suspension of violence.

The question which arises is how this can be put into effect. In your "possible negotiating concept" you suggest that, "in the context of specific and meaningful steps being taken towards ending apartheid", certain additional action by the South African Government and the ANC and others might ensure negotiations and a break in the cycle of violence. Moreover you will recall that during the Group's recent discussions with representatives of the South African Government, the influx control system and pass laws were highlighted by the Group as important issues affecting the daily lives of black people. At that stage the Group was aware of the State President's commitment, made during the opening of Parliament earlier this year, that this situation would be fundamentally altered by 1 July 1986. In line with this commitment the State President announced in Parliament on Friday 18 April 1986, that no further charges would be preferred in terms of the existing legislation; that people who have been convicted in terms of this legislation would be released forthwith, and that those who are being detained pending trial would likewise be released. The Government proposes to repeal or amend no fewer than 34 Acts

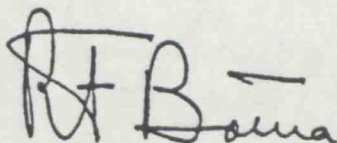
and Proclamations to ensure that the movement of people will not be subject to discrimination on the grounds of colour or race.

These additional reform measures testify to the Government's acceptance that no further forced removals in pursuit of a political ideology will take place. The Government has noted with satisfaction in this connection the Group's recognition that positive actions on the part of the South African Government should be matched by corresponding responses by those now opposed to negotiation and committed to violence.

The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons will understand that if the South African Government does move along the lines suggested in its "possible negotiating concept" and violence continues or increases, the Government may have no alternative but to take appropriate measures to control the violence. The Group will recall that I raised this issue with them during their visit. It is my recollection that it responded that it recognised the responsibility of the Government to maintain order but the question arises whether such action on the part of the Government would not then result in further punitive action against South Africa. This is a most important issue which will require further discussion.

The South African Government continues to believe that the Group can serve a useful purpose and it accordingly proposes, in the light of the foregoing, that the whole Group or representative members of the Group meet with representatives of the South African Government to exchange views on how further to proceed, particularly on the modalities of achieving a suspension of violence and facilitating discussions.

Yours sincerely



R F BOTHA

The Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser
General Olusegun Obasanjo
Co-Chairmen of the Commonwealth Group
of Eminent Persons
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
LONDON SW1Y 5HX



COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

Established pursuant to the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa, Nassau, October 1985

→ Mr Rendinga ³¹²
~~South~~ (SAFO) 5
Handed to the SOPS
today by Lord Barber.

Alfudd
9/5

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Copy (SAFO rules) to Heads

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of Chancery at: Cape Town,
W'ron, UK Miss New York,
Harare, Lusaka, Dar Es Salaam, Lagos,
Nairobi, Canberra, Ottawa, 1 May 1986

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Delhi Done LD

2) Mr Humphrey Coetzee

Mr Curran 24/5
HP 13/5

My dear Foreign Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 25 April 1986 whose contents we have noted with care.

We are encouraged that the South African Government sees constructive possibilities in the negotiating concept which we left with you and Minister Heunis at the conclusion of our visit to South Africa and by the continuing role that we might be able to play in its furtherance. Mindful of the value of a more precise understanding of the position of your Government if real progress is to be made towards negotiation, it will be our endeavour to seek this during our next round of discussions in Southern Africa. We therefore welcome your invitation to come to Cape Town.

Arising from your letter, there are a number of important issues which require further discussion. We will want to take the opportunity to deliberate with you on these in furtherance of our mandate. We recognise that your letter highlights only some aspects of our own thinking and approach; these, of course, remain as set out in our negotiating concept, and elaborated more fully during our conversations with the South African Government.

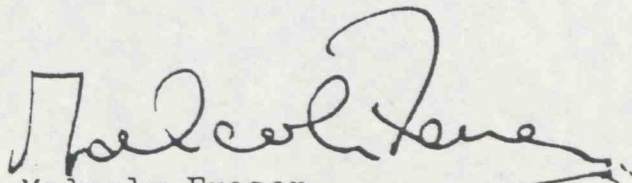
We much appreciate the opportunity we have had to begin the process of clarification in our conversations with Mr. von Hirschberg in London today. He has pinpointed your concerns on the question of violence, among others; we have drawn attention to the issues in our negotiating concept on which we will be seeking a more specific response. Mr. von Hirschberg will no doubt be reporting the details of these conversations to you. It is our belief that the best assurance against further measures by the international community,

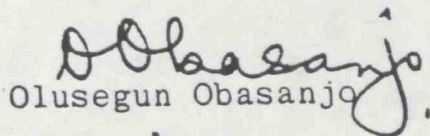
The Hon. Pik Botha,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

to which you refer, would be the early commencement and assiduous pursuit of genuine negotiations along the lines envisaged in our negotiating concept and involving the authentic leaders of the people of South Africa. We earnestly hope that, at the time of the Group's forthcoming visit to South Africa, it will be possible to clarify all these matters in a manner which will enable the process to be carried forward speedily on the basis of understanding and agreement among all concerned.

We look forward to seeing you again on 13 May.

Yours sincerely,


Malcolm Fraser


Olusegun Obasanjo



South African Embassy
Trafalgar Square
LONDON WC2N 5DP

29 May 1986

The Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser
General Olusegun Obasanjo
Co-Chairmen of the Commonwealth
Group of Eminent Persons
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
LONDON SW1Y 5HX

Dear Mr Fraser and General Obasanjo

I refer to the 'possible negotiating concept' attached to your letter dated 13 March 1986 and the recent discussions you held with Ministers of the South African Government. There are four major questions which are exercising the mind of the South African Government about the possible negotiating concept presented by your Group.

1. The concept of ending or suspending violence.

It is not the choice of a particular word but the concept of terminating violence as a means of achieving political objectives which is relevant. The South African Government cannot accept the suggestion that violence should be discontinued only for as long as negotiations take place. To use violence or the threat of violence as a bargaining counter is unacceptable to the South African Government.

2. Evidence of commitment to a peaceful solution.

The use of violence for political ends cannot be equated with the responsibility of Government to maintain law and order. The South African Government has committed itself to a constitutional dispensation which guarantees

- the removal of racial discrimination;
- sharing of power up to the highest level of government;
- democratic principles including an independent judicial system and the equality of all under the law;
- private property rights;
- private initiative and effective competition;
- fundamental human rights and civil liberties;
- the protection of minority rights in a manner which would ensure that there will be no political domination by any one community of any other;
- freedom of the press and of expression in general;
- freedom of religion and worship;

and is taking substantial steps to carry out this commitment. It would, therefore, be reasonable to expect evidence that the parties presently involved in violence are in principle willing to commit themselves to a peaceful solution through negotiation and in an environment free of violence. A substantial reduction in violence would help to create the atmosphere in which the additional steps could be taken.

3. Intimidation to be abandoned.

It is not only the Government which should permit 'normal political activity' and 'freedom of assembly and discussion'. Other parties need to respect these principles in practice and commit themselves to abandon all forms of intimidation.

4. The nature of the negotiations that are envisaged.

The South African Government is prepared to negotiate with South African citizens about a new constitutional dispensation which will provide for power sharing. It is not interested in negotiation about a transfer of power. The South African Government is committed to a negotiated democratic settlement which addresses the legitimate political aspirations of all South Africans. In contrast, others are on record as wanting a diminished democracy in the form of a one-party state with restricted personal and other freedoms.

The South African Government would welcome further discussions which could accommodate the concerns addressed above.

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the spirit in which we have been able to conduct our discussions.

Yours sincerely

R F BOTHA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

Established pursuant to the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa. Nassau, October 1985

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SW 385

5 June 1986

The Hon. R F Botha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of South Africa

My dear Foreign Minister

Thank you for your letter of 29 May 1986 following the discussions between Ministers of the South African Government and the members of the Commonwealth Group in Cape Town on 19 May.

We note that your letter provides a restatement of points which Ministers raised with our Group at the 19 May meeting. Essentially there are two key elements to the points raised by Ministers: that there should be a renunciation of violence and that a de-escalation in the level of violence was necessary before other action might be taken by the Government. The Group explained in some detail its position on these matters and the difficulties which they raised.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that it is possible to achieve negotiations about the democratic future of South Africa if that is the Government's genuine wish, and it is willing to create the circumstances in which co-operation would become possible with the acknowledged leaders of the people of South Africa who would speak and act for negotiation.

We strongly believe that the negotiating concept which we left with the Government is sound and would assist in achieving negotiations in a non-violent atmosphere. This would require acceptance by the South African Government

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Members:

The Rt. Hon. MALCOLM FRASER (Co-Chairman), General OLUSEGUN OBASANJO (Co-Chairman)
The Rt. Hon. LORD BARBER, Dame NITA BARROW, Mr. JOHN MALECELA, Sardar SWARAN SINGH, The Most Rev. Archbishop EDWARD W. SCOTT D.

of the spirit and reality of what we have said about violence and a recognition that this applied to all sides. It would also require a deliberate attempt on the part of the South African Government to repair the damage that has been done by its actions of the last few weeks.

We find it difficult to understand how the term suspension of violence provides difficulties for the South African Government particularly as our negotiating concept would involve black leaders arguing in support of the maintenance of peace during the negotiating process. We reiterate that the Lancaster House negotiations continued without the suspension of violence as have many others in situations of conflict.

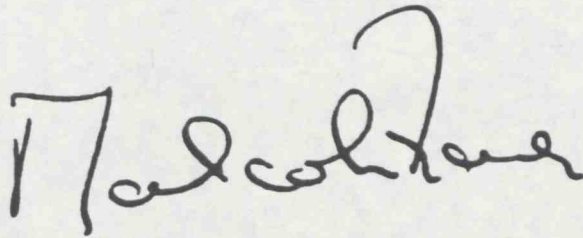
As to the second point, we reassert that a prior reduction in the level of violence before the Government itself takes specific action in regard to the concept would not be feasible. Acts of aggression were committed against neighbouring countries on the very morning when we discussed the concept with Ministers. This underlines the essential elements of the concept requiring a suspension of violence on all sides and highlights the unreality of asking others to de-escalate violence before action as proposed by the Group is taken by the Government. A suspension of violence or a commitment to non-violence, if in the Government's view the meaning is the same, would obviously in the present context require a commitment to suspend the violence arising from the administration of apartheid. In addition, in the light of recent events, the Government of South Africa would need to give a firm commitment to desist from further aggression against neighbouring states.

In your letter you mentioned two further matters. The first concerned intimidation. In our view the suspension of violence would necessarily involve the end of all intimidation. We emphasise it is only the Government that can establish the circumstances in which normal political activity and freedom of assembly and discussion can take place. This of course is an essential part of our concept.

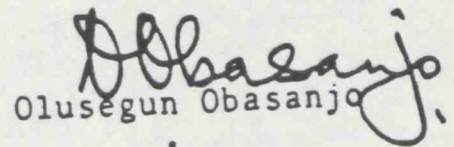
You then raised questions about the nature of the negotiations. All along we have said that the specific elements of a political settlement are for South Africans to determine. Our charter was never to prescribe the form of the democracy that should evolve in South Africa. That is for South Africans alone. We had noted your assurance that there would be an open agenda at the negotiations against the background of dismantling apartheid and with the objective of the establishment of a just democratic structure.

In the absence both of movement on the part of the Government on the first two major points and a positive response to the concept as a whole, we are unable to see merit in further discussions. This is especially so since actions of recent weeks have made the negotiating climate much more difficult.

Yours sincerely



Malcolm Fraser



Olusegun Obasanjo

Text of message from South African Foreign
Minister to co Chairmen of Commonwealth
Group, delivered 10 June

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER DATED 5 JUNE 1986.

IT IS OF GREAT CONCERN TO ME THAT WHILE WE ARE AD IDEM ON THE NEED TO CREATE CONDITIONS FREE OF VIOLENCE AS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR PURSUING NEGOTIATIONS, WE DIFFER ON HOW THIS IS TO BE ACHIEVED AND ALSO ON THE MEANING OF AN END TO VIOLENCE.

YOU APPEAR TO BE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT IT IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VIOLENCE AND YOU PROCEED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW THAT IT IS ONLY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT THAT MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE, BELIEVING THAT IF IT DOES, VIOLENCE WOULD BE REDUCED, NEGOTIATIONS COULD TAKE PLACE AND AGREEMENT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT THIS IS UNREALISTIC AS IT DOES NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FACTS AND MOTIVES UNDERLYING THE CONFLICT. FURTHERMORE YOU SEEM TO BASE YOUR PREMISE ON THE PRESUMPTION THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO OR THREE PARTIES INVOLVED WHEREAS IN FACT THERE IS A MULTIPLICITY OF VIEWS AND INTERESTS WHICH NEED TO BE TAKEN IN TO ACCOUNT. AFTER YOUR VISITS TO SOUTH AFRICA, YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT IT IS FAR MORE THAN OPPOSITION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WHICH LIES AT THE HEART OF THE CONFLICT AND THE TURBULENCE.

THE TENDENCY TOWARDS THE USE OF VIOLENCE FOR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA IS NOT LIMITED TO THOSE ON THE RADICAL LEFT BUT ALSO MANIFESTS ITSELF ON THE RADICAL RIGHT. AND YOU MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT ELEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA ON THE RADICAL RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM ALSO HAVE THE CAPACITY TO USE DESTRUCTIVE MEANS IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE THEIR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. THEY ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE RADICAL LEFT TO USE SIMILAR METHODS IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING AN END TO THE REFORM POLICIES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. DOES THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS BELIEVE THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF REJECTING VIOLENCE AS A MEANS FOR ACHIEVING POLITICAL OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE APPLIED SELECTIVELY?

THE PRINCIPLE IS CLEAR. NEGOTIATIONS TOWARDS A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING SOUTH AFRICA CAN ONLY TAKE PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE FREE OF VIOLENCE. IT IS A PRINCIPLE THAT APPLIES TO ALL. IT IS NOT ONLY FAIR BUT FEASIBLE GIVEN THE POLITICAL WILL OF ALL CONCERNED. BUT IT APPEARS TO BE ANATHEMA BOTH TO THE RADICAL LEFT AS WELL AS TO THE RADICAL RIGHT. BOTH HAVE DECLARED PUBLICLY THAT THEY WILL PURSUE THEIR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES BY VIOLENT MEANS. NO RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO ACCEPT THIS. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT CANNOT ABDICATE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT CAN, BY THE SAME TOKEN, EQUALLY NOT ACCEPT WHAT YOU IMPLY IN YOUR LETTER, NAMELY, THAT VIOLENCE WOULD ONLY BE SUSPENDED AS LONG AS NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE. AS I HAVE STATED TO YOU PREVIOUSLY, IT IS UNACCEPTABLE THAT VIOLENCE OR THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE SHOULD BE USED AS A BARGAINING COUNTER IN ANY NEGOTIATING SITUATION.

YOU ALSO STATED IT AS YOUR VIEW THAT A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE WOULD REQUIRE OF THE GOVERNMENT, IN YOUR WORDS, QUOTE A COMMITMENT TO SUSPEND THE VIOLENCE ARISING FROM THE ADMINISTRATION OF APARTHEID UNQUOTE. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS AT A LOSS TO KNOW TO WHAT PARTICULAR FORM OF QUOTE VIOLENCE UNQUOTE YOU REFER. PRESUMABLY THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT EXPECTED TO ABANDON ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER NOR ITS DUTY TO SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF ALL SOUTH AFRICANS. WHAT, THEREFORE, IS MEANT BY QUOTE VIOLENCE ARISING FROM THE ADMINISTRATION OF APARTHEID UNQUOTE? I ASK THIS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO MY PREVIOUS LETTER IN WHICH YOU WERE INFORMED OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO A NEGOTIATED CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER WHICH GUARANTEES FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND FREEDOMS FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICA'S CITIZENS.

IN YOUR LETTER YOU DRAW A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ENVISAGED NEGOTIATING PROCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TALKS AT LANCASTER HOUSE WHICH LED TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF ZIMBABWE. THE RELEVANCE OF THIS COMPARISON DEFIES UNDERSTANDING SINCE YOU WILL KNOW THAT THE TWO SITUATIONS ARE SO DIFFERENT AS TO BE ENTIRELY INCOMPARABLE. HISTORICALLY, FACTUALLY, AND LEGALLY THE TWO SITUATIONS SIMPLY CANNOT BE COMPARED.

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY YOU SHOULD INTRODUCE NEW ELEMENTS INTO YOUR LATEST LETTER. I REFER TO YOUR REFERENCE TO THE ATTACKS ON 19 MAY 1986 ON TERRORISTS BASES IN BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE. YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT DURING YOUR VISITS, THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTS OF VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA AIMED AT CIVILIAN TARGETS. I CANNOT RECALL THAT YOU HAVE CALLED UPON THE ANC QUOTE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE THAT HAS BEEN DONE BY ITS ACTIONS OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS UNQUOTE. ONE CANNOT BUT BE INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS HAS ALREADY TAKEN SIDES ON THIS QUESTION.

REGRETTABLY THE PERCEPTION PERSISTS THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S RECENT MILITARY ACTIONS CONSTITUTE AGRESSION AGAINST NEIGHBOURING STATES. SOUTH AFRICA'S MILITARY ACTIONS WERE, AS YOU KNOW, CONFINED TO TERRORIST TARGETS WHICH POSED A THREAT TO THE LIVES AND LIBERTY OF SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENS. IN ADDRESSING PARLIAMENT ON 31 JANUARY 1986 THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE PRESIDENT REAFFIRMED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL INTERNATIONAL CO-EXISTENCE THROUGH CO-OPERATION AND NEGOTIATION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THERE COULD BE NO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION AS LONG AS COUNTRIES KNOWINGLY HARBOUR TERRORISTS WHO PLAN AND EXECUTE ACTS OF TERROR AGAINST A NEIGHBOURING STATE. HE ONCE AGAIN EXTENDED A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO SOUTH AFRICA'S NEIGHBOURS.

THE STATE PRESIDENT WENT SO FAR AS TO PROPOSE THAT URGENT AND SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN BY THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT JOINT MECHANISM FOR DEALING WITH MATTERS OF SECURITY, PARTICULARLY THREATS TO THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SUB-CONTINENT.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT REMAINS ADAMANT THAT IT IS NOT PREPARED TO ALLOW ITS CIVILIANS TO BE MURDERED OR MAIMED BY ACTS OF TERRORISM WHICH ARE PLANNED AND PERPETRATED FROM ACROSS OUR BORDERS.

I AM ALSO SURPRISED AT YOUR REACTION TO THE SUBJECT OF QUOTE THE NATURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS UNQUOTE WHICH I RAISED IN MY LETTER TO YOU OF 28 MAY 1986. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALL ALONG BEEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOUR GROUP WOULD NOT INTERFERE IN THE QUESTION OF ANY FUTURE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT. WE ARE THEREFORE IN AGREEMENT THAT THAT IS NOT YOUR TASK. HOWEVER, IN MY LETTER OF 28 MAY 1986 I REFERRED TO A DIFFERENT MATTER, NAMELY, THAT THE ANC, IN TERMS OF ITS OWN OBJECTIVES, REJECTS NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT THE SHARING OF POWER, INSISTING THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE LIMITED TO THE HANDING OVER OF POWER. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT THEREFORE CONSIDERED IT IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH WHETHER YOU SHARE THE VIEW THAT THE ENVISAGED NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE ABOUT THE HANDING OVER OF POWER TO A PARTICULAR PARTY.

REGARDING THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF YOUR LETTER, I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT AFTER YOUR EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA YOU SHOULD REQUIRE FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT QUOTE A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE CONCEPT AS A WHOLE UNQUOTE. I REMAIN UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT WHEN IT WAS PRESENTED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ON 13 MARCH 1986, IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE QUOTE A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT UNQUOTE. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT MUST NOW APPARENTLY ACCEPT IT AS THE ONLY AND FINAL NEGOTIATING CONCEPT. IN MY PREVIOUS LETTER I INDICATED WHAT THE MAIN CONCERNS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WERE. I REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE MAJORITY OF SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERS WHO SEEK PEACE AND PROGRESS FOR ALL ON THE BASIS OF DEMOCRATICALLY ACCEPTABLE NORMS AND STANDARDS, DO INDEED WISH TO NEGOTIATE. I TRUST THAT THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS WOULD AGREE THAT THE CONCERNS RAISED IN MY PREVIOUS LETTER ARE REAL AND SERIOUS AND OUGHT TO BE CANVASSED FURTHER.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH ITS PROGRAMME OF REFORM WITH A VIEW TO MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS TO COME TOGETHER AND DECIDE JOINTLY ON A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE BASED ON FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND FREEDOMS TAILORED TO SOUTH AFRICAN CIRCUMSTANCES AND REALITIES.

IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF YOUR LETTER OF 5 JUNE 1986 AND YOUR QUOTE POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT UNQUOTE HAS APPEARED IN THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED, IN THE INTERESTS OF BALANCE, TO RELEASE THE CONTENTS OF MY PREVIOUS LETTER TO YOU AS WELL AS THIS ONE.

