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Union Buildings  
Pretoria

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Dear Prime Minister

I have noted the debate within the European Community on the action supposedly required in order to accelerate reform in this country. It is also no doubt a subject which will feature prominently in the forthcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government. It might be appropriate therefore if I share with you certain thoughts on the subject which I am also incorporating in a letter to President Reagan in response to a communication from him in which he too advocated an accelerated reform process in South Africa. You will be aware that he recently announced, as you have, certain action against South Africa apparently designed to produce a response in keeping with overseas perceptions of the requirements of the South African situation.

I should emphasize at the outset that internal considerations have provided far greater reason for reform in South Africa than any action which the outside world has already or could still generate against us. Indeed international punitive action is counter-productive. Even the action which your Government has taken and has defended as relatively mild has aggravated the problems which I face domestically in promoting reform.

Western leaders call for bold initiatives and decisive action. Internal circumstances have long since convinced me of the need for such action. It was this conviction which gave rise to my reform programme now approaching realisation. Whatever the perception of the outside world, in South African terms, the measures already adopted or announced are nothing short of dramatic; and yet the world at large still demands more of me and virtually overnight.

I do not deny that there is still much to be done but let us pause for a moment to review what we have already achieved:



We have publicly rejected

- political domination by any one community of any other;
- the exclusion of any community from the political decision-making process;
- injustice or inequality in the opportunities available for any community;
- racial discrimination and impairment of human dignity.

And we have already repealed or amended legislation which is not reconcilable with these ideals or given notice of intention to repeal or amend such legislation. We have launched investigations of other legislation or practices which might seem to us to be out of keeping with these principles.

May I list a few of the areas where reform, providing for the removal of discrimination, has taken place in recent years or is underway:

Sport	:	opened to all races;
Labour	:	modern, sophisticated trade union system opened to all races;
	:	job reservation removed;
Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act	:	repealed;
Immorality Act	:	Offensive racial provisions repealed;
Immigration	:	Provisions providing for White immigration only to be repealed;
Influx Control and Pass Laws	:	President's Council's recommendation for phasing out, under sympathetic consideration for action during the next Parliamentary Session;
Constitutional	:	Asians and Coloureds represented in Parliament;
	:	Asians and Coloureds holding Ministerial and Deputy-Ministerial positions in Government;



- Public Amenities : Many desegregated - e.g. hotels, restaurants, parks, trains, buses;
- Forced Resettlement : Discontinued;
- Property Rights for Blacks : Accepted as well as permanency of Black communities in urban areas;
- Local Government : Full participation of all population groups;
- Education : Parity for all population groups is the declared objective and action to this end underway.

This list is not exhaustive or in any specific order. I include it in this letter simply to indicate that we have not been dilatory in carrying our reform programme forward.

In addition we have also now announced our acceptance of the principle of political participation of all communities at all levels in matters of national or common concern. We have committed ourselves to the principle of joint decision-making and joint responsibility in respect of all matters of common or national concern coupled to the principle of the protection of the rights and interests of all minorities.

This means in practice that my Government is prepared to share the power of decision-making with all the other communities comprising the diverse South African society. For this purpose, all the groups and communities within the geographical area of the State of South Africa must obtain representation up to the highest level of government and in a manner which will ensure that there will be no political domination by any one community of any other. This presages the disappearance of white domination.

We have undertaken to create the structures required to give effect to the foregoing principles through negotiation with the leaders of all the communities of this country.

We have said that we shall not prescribe who may represent the other communities. The only condition we have stipulated is that those who participate in the



negotiations should renounce violence as a means of achieving political objectives. Traditional leaders, chosen leaders, political leaders, church leaders as well as leaders of specific interest groups such as business leaders, may join us in determining the future of this country.

As regards the envisaged negotiations, we shall not prescribe and we shall not make demands. Give and take will be the guiding principle. But we believe that any eventual constitutional dispensation satisfying the political aspirations of the different communities will have to take into consideration the multi-cultural nature of the composition of our population. Thus entities will have to be recognised on either a geographic or a group or community basis. Black urban communities would have to be recognised as political entities. Each entity or unit would have autonomy in matters directly affecting that entity or unit while joint management and responsibility in respect of matters of mutual concern would apply.

In the interim, if a need should exist among the leaders of the Black communities to participate within the President's Council (presently composed of White, Coloured and Indian representatives) in deliberations on matters that concern the Black communities with a view to submitting proposals to me as State President and to the Government, the structure and functions of the Council could be revised to provide for their participation. I have made this offer primarily to provide the Black leadership with an alternative forum through which they may establish their wishes and aspirations until such time as they may be accommodated in an agreed constitutional dispensation.

My Government and I are committed to the principle of a united South Africa, a single citizenship and a universal franchise within the structures chosen by South Africans jointly. The self-governing areas form part of South Africa. Independence will not be forced on them; the choice is theirs. By the same token, we shall respect the independence of the four states, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, which chose to detach themselves from South Africa and become sovereign independent states. Nevertheless we acknowledge the possibility of co-operation with them in an overall framework. Moreover, if any of these governments should wish to negotiate with us for the re-acquisition by their citizens of South African citizenship, we shall respond positively. Dual citizenship could eventuate. But I must make the point that none of the independent or self-governing states is prepared to relinquish their autonomy.



Have we not by these declarations and commitments some given as recently as my address before the Cape Congress of the National Party on 30 September 1985, made clear our intention to end inequality between South Africa's racial groups? I believe we have already in principle addressed most if not all the issues which the international community has considered important enough to raise with us, even to the extent of undertaking to release from prison those who are prepared to renounce violence.

While violence in South Africa continues, I earnestly request you not to call for the release of prisoners who refuse to renounce violence or, in the case of prisoners like Mr Mandela, have also specifically renounced negotiation as a process to pursue in the search for a solution to the problems of this country. Violence in South Africa is currently too emotional an issue and strikes too closely to the hearts and spirits of South Africans of all communities for me to take chances and toy with their lives and possessions by letting individuals who believe in and propagate violence lose on our society. I do not want to incarcerate them but while there is a civilised alternative to violence and they choose to reject that alternative, I have no alternative.

It has been further suggested that I should define the extent to which power will be shared in this country. We have long conceded the principle but the manner in which the different communities participate in the central government of this country in respect of matters of national concern, and the manner in which group or regional or ethnic autonomy can be guaranteed so as to protect the rights and interests of minorities must be the product of negotiation between the communities. We seek an agreed system not an imposed system of constitutional government.

Having clearly stated our ideals and intentions, we are now focusing our attention on providing impetus to the negotiation process. This is the key to the solution of our problems and it is the impact on this process of the international action against South Africa, which causes serious concern.

Consider the circumstances confronting South Africa at the present time:

- a government ready and committed to engage in negotiations with the various population groups with a view to meeting their political aspirations;



- a moderate majority of black people bound by a common will to seek a political solution by peaceful and constitutional means but embracing widely divergent political views and divided further by ethnic, cultural and other differences of a socio-economic nature;
- a group of revolutionaries and radicals opposed to negotiation and committed to a strategy of violence against the moderate black majority aimed at coercing them into backing away from negotiation and joining their ranks; their objective is total power.

As a consequence of this strategy, violence often of a revolting nature by Blacks against Blacks has broken out in many Black towns; there is general unrest, fear and uncertainty in these towns; Black schools are being boycotted and gutted; Black business premises are the target of arsonists and criminal opportunists are active.

These conditions are being deliberately instigated. By no stretch of the imagination can police action to counter the violence be described as responsible for it, an accusation which we frequently hear; and summarily to lift the State of Emergency would not contribute in any way to a de-escalation of the violence. Nonetheless I am conscious of the need to lift it, even if only partially or in certain areas, as soon as violence subsides sufficiently.

The point of my remarks is that the situation in South Africa at the moment is sensitive and delicate. The circumstances could hardly be less conducive to the process of negotiation which we urgently need to stimulate further. Black leaders across the political spectrum are reluctant to come forward and participate in the negotiations. To do so would place their lives, family and property at risk.

Any action which pushes up the temperature, undermines our economy or serves as an encouragement to any particular group in its opposition to others or as a symbol of solidarity with or support for their particular cause, thus further polarising opinion, further undermines the climate for negotiation. However well-intentioned Governments of the European Community might have been, I fear their recent action will have this negative effect. It will be seen or will be interpreted internally as a punitive measure; it will be seen as action against the Government and support for opposition groups; it must undermine overseas confidence in this country; it will certainly serve as an example for others to follow and the detrimental impact on the South African economy will escalate as others follow their lead; escalating unemployment and deprivation

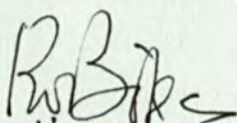


leading to further unrest must ensue. Negotiations become more and more complicated.

I might add that even visits of Church groups, trade unionists, politicians and others are proving problematic. Some of them are ostensibly on fact-finding missions, others are less well-intentioned but all are seen as supportive of one or other faction in this country or simply as anti-government. This is not constructive in present circumstances. We need to be left in peace so that we can all meet across the table, develop trust and confidence in each other and resolve our problems in our own way. The world should promote reconciliation not greater divisions within this country.

It is a tragic feature of our times that situations are often judged and action determined not according to their merits but on the basis of considerations which have more relevance in other contexts. History will judge whether the international community best served the cause of justice and equality in South Africa by embarking on its present course of punitive action. It is not as if my Government is against equal opportunities or equal rights for all or against negotiation or the creation of constitutional structures which will serve to enshrine the guarantees required in this respect. Nor are we seeking to delay the process which has begun. We need no persuasion, inducement or coercion to become involved in the process. We are actively promoting it. It would be helpful if the international community would join us in removing the current obstacles instead of regarding us as an adversary.

Yours sincerely



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