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POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Letter dated 7 June 1990 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. R. F. Botha, concerning the visit of your Special Representative, Mr. A. A. Farah, to South Africa. I should be grateful if it could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 34 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jeremy B. SHEARAR
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/45/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 7 June 1990 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-General

On the eve of Mr. Abdulrahim Farah's visit to South Africa, I wish to reaffirm my Government's position on the General Assembly's Declaration on Apartheid of 14 December 1989 so that there is no misunderstanding as to my Government's unequivocal rejection in principle of interference in South Africa's internal affairs. I enclose a copy of a media statement issued by me on 4 June 1990, on the forthcoming visit of Mr. Farah to South Africa (appendix I).

As set out in my letter to you of 7 December 1989 and repeated to you at our meeting at Windhoek on 20 March 1990, it is the inalienable and sole right of the citizens of South Africa to negotiate a new constitution for South Africa. The South African Government will under no circumstances agree to any attempt on the part of outside agencies to usurp this responsibility. In the light of the latest developments in South Africa, the General Assembly would be better advised to terminate its irregular interference in South African affairs. It is generally acknowledged world-wide that the process of reform initiated by President F. W. de Klerk cannot be reversed. This is the new reality in South Africa. It requires a fundamental re-evaluation by African and other Governments of their position towards this new reality. There is no need to monitor an irreversible process. What is required is encouragement - not interference.

Further evidence of the irreversibility of this process was today supplied by President de Klerk in his address to Parliament. I enclose excerpts from his statement (appendix II). Further interference by the General Assembly in the events in South Africa can only be counterproductive. It would be most unhelpful given our strenuous efforts to get negotiations under way. South Africa is a sovereign State and it is for South Africans to decide their own future.

There are pressing problems on the African continent urgently in need of attention. Africa is sliding into an economic abyss. Unless this process is stopped the peoples of the African continent will soon be faced with the frightening reality of permanent and irreversible poverty and degradation. My African colleagues may not agree with me, but in all seriousness I predict today that the point of no return in the process of economic retrogression for most African States will soon be reached unless bold and incisive initiatives are taken by their Governments. The time to do so is now. President de Klerk has done it in South Africa. I sincerely invite my African colleagues to persuade their leaders to follow his example. I advise them as a fellow African, take heed of the events in Central and Eastern Europe. Take heed of the new movement in Western Europe to create both economic and political unity. Then let us ask ourselves, we Africans, where are all those events going to leave us? Do we have a plan? How do we see our future? These are the matters with which we ought to concern ourselves. Continually sniping at South Africa will not save us. Apartheid is going in any event. We are preparing for a future without apartheid. I am asking my African colleagues: are you preparing yourselves for a future without apartheid?

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA

APPENDIX I

Statement made at Cape Town on 4 June 1990 by the
Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa

During the meeting at Windhoek on 20 March 1990 between the State President and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General expressed an interest in the political developments in South Africa. It was agreed that a representative of the Secretary-General could visit South Africa to acquaint himself first-hand with the latest developments in the same way and on the same basis as previous missions from other international organizations that had visited South Africa during recent years.

It was also made clear that such a visit is construed by the South African Government as a genuine desire on the part of the Secretary-General to obtain correct information on the internal situation of South Africa and not as an indication that the South African Government acquiesces in the uncalled-for interference by the General Assembly in the internal affairs of South Africa.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs in a letter dated 7 December 1989 set out the South African Government's attitude to the draft resolution before the United Nations General Assembly. The South African Government made it clear that it rejected the General Assembly's action. This remains the attitude of the South African Government. However, the South African Government has no objection to correct information on South Africa being made available to the Secretary-General on condition that the Secretary-General clearly understands that this is not to be construed as co-operation in the implementation of a General Assembly resolution that the South African Government rejects as ultra vires the Charter of the United Nations.

APPENDIX II

Excerpts from a statement made at Cape Town on 7 June 1990 by
the President of South Africa to a joint session of Parliament

Among the main objectives of the Government in respect of which we obtained a mandate have been the normalisation of the political process inside South Africa and the normalisation of international relations.

As far as our international relations are concerned, there can be little doubt after my recent visit to Europe that we have made substantial progress.

The prospect of once again playing a full and unrestricted role in the international community holds out the promise of immense economic and cultural benefits for our country and all its people.

We cannot live in isolation from the rest of the world. We need foreign trade and investment. We need technological, cultural and sporting interaction with other countries. We have a right to make our voice heard in the councils of the nations.

We cannot stop the world and get off as some people in South Africa would like us to do nor can we turn the clock back and take refuge in the past. Whether we like it or not, we must wrestle also with the international realities of the present and secure for our country its rightful place in the community of nations.

This the Government will continue to bring about.

Even more important, obviously, is the need to bring peace and stability to our country. This can only be done through a peaceful political process of negotiation, preceded by normalisation of the political process.

Here, also, we have made dramatic progress in the past nine months.

The fact is that there are today few or no restrictions on political activities in our country. Individuals and political parties can say what they like and write what they like. They can organise as they wish and they can participate in peaceful demonstrations.

For many of our people this has been a difficult process. Many South Africans preferred the situation when unpleasant political realities could be swept under the carpet. It was much less troubling to pretend that these realities did not exist and to continue to live in comfort and complacency.

However, the normalisation of the political process has on balance had a beneficial effect.

Many organisations, including the ANC, have now been stripped of the mythological status which they previously enjoyed. They now have to defend their policies in the open market-place of ideas. They have to endure the glaring light of accountability for their statements and their actions. Media which previously regarded them as sacrosanct are

increasingly questioning their politics and their programmes. Foreign audiences which listened sympathetically when they were perceived to be suppressed, question them with increasing scepticism about their programmes and policies, now that they have become participants in the open political arena.

The process of normalisation has been traumatic for all of us. But without it we cannot achieve either a negotiated and lasting solution or the normalisation of our relations with the rest of the world. Nevertheless, it has been a bewildering sometimes frightening experience for many. It has been accompanied by dangerously rising expectations and by an increase in violence, particularly in Natal.

During such times it is of crucial importance that the Government should firmly maintain law and order. And this has, since 20 September, also been one of our main objectives.

In my inaugural speech I said that we would continue to deal with unrest, violence and terrorism with a firm hand. On 2 February I said that I wished to emphasise that the maintenance of law and order dare not be jeopardised:

"The Government will not forsake its duty in this connection. Violence from whichever source, will be fought with all available might. Peaceful protest may not become the springboard for lawlessness, violence and intimidation."

In my speech of 2 April I dealt with the whole question of security in even greater detail. I announced a number of practical steps which the Government would take to strengthen the maintenance of law and order, particularly in Natal. Those steps are, generally speaking, indicating positive results.

Another constant theme has been the Government's attitude towards the state of emergency.

My predecessor frequently stated that it was his objective to lift the state of emergency as soon as circumstances made this possible.

In my inaugural address I said that we would "try to create a climate which will make it possible to lift the state of emergency or, at least, to gradually move away from it".

On 2 February I again said that it was my intention to terminate the state of emergency completely as soon as circumstances justified it and I requested the co-operation of everyone to this end.

Again, on 2 April I repeated this view but added that we were still in a situation which necessitated maintaining the declared state of emergency.

The state of emergency is due to lapse at midnight on 8 June and the time has once again arrived for the Government to give this question its consideration.

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After thorough consideration of all the relevant factors, I have decided to announce that there will no longer be a general country-wide state of emergency but that henceforth it will exist in Natal only.

The Government has pursued with all its might and resources the ideal that, as far as security was concerned, there should be a return to normality in which the remaining vestiges of violence could be countered with the ordinary laws of the land. That point has now been reached.

This decision has been based on the following central considerations:

As far as Natal is concerned, there is still a factual state of emergency which seriously threatens the safety of the public and maintenance of public order and which cannot be countered with the ordinary laws of the land. The increasing phenomenon in Natal of violence among Blacks, which has led to destruction of human life and property and has assumed shocking proportions, as well as the exceptionally high level of intimidation that exists there, must still be countered by the strongest means available. For that reason I have, in consultation with the Government's security advisors and the Cabinet, decided to announce the existence of a state of emergency in the province of Natal, including the self-governing territory of KwaZulu.

A proclamation to this effect will appear in the Government Gazette tomorrow, 8 June 1990.

To maintain order and stability in Natal and to provide for any possible vacuum which may result from the termination of the State of Emergency, the Government has decided to expand the security forces substantially.

I also want to use this opportunity to refer to the process of the removal of the so-called stumbling blocks in the way of negotiation.

The announcement which I have made today addresses one of the most important issues constantly raised inside and outside South Africa.

I should like to emphasize that the Government's decision has nothing to do with pressure from any quarter or with any wish to gain political capital. We do not, and have never, regarded the state of emergency as a political pawn.

Nonetheless, the net result of the lifting of the state of emergency is that one of the main stumbling blocks has been removed.

As regards the other matters referred to in the Groote Schuur Minute I would like to state the following:

Further to the Groote Schuur Minute, a working group held discussions during the week of 14 May on various facets, including exiles and sentenced offenders. The participants then had to report back to their respective principals. The Government considered the report and is ready to implement it. The ANC has, however, requested that they be allowed time until 10 July 1990 to inform us of their reaction. The ANC, therefore, has to account for any delay in this regard.

In the meantime I am, however, willing to release 48 people as a gesture, which I am empowered to do in terms of present powers embodied in the Constitution and the Prisons Act. Any further developments in this area will depend on implementation of the working group's report, which the Government is ready to do.

The Minister of Justice will deal with further details in this regard.

With regard to security legislation the Government is already looking at aspects of security legislation which could possibly inhibit the free conduct of peaceful politics and which, because of the reduction in the violent onslaught on the existing order, might no longer be necessary.

With regard to the so-called exiles, the Government has also started to act, notwithstanding the fact that we are waiting the reaction of the ANC to the report of the working group.

Temporary reprieve was granted a number of leaders of the ANC to come here to establish their peaceful political structures and activities. Communication lines between the South African Police and ANC leaders have in the meantime also been established so that violence and intimidation could be monitored and countered right down to local level.

In the sphere of the removal of discrimination the Government has also acted in terms of its policy to remove discrimination. The repeal of the Separate Amenities Act is now imminent as it has been tabled in Parliament. Early next year the Group Areas Act and Land Acts will receive attention.

This I can confidently state that the Government is adhering to the commitments which I have made since I became State President. We are not only talking. We are actually implementing in rapid succession the steps we have envisaged. The process of building a new South Africa has become irreversible. We are on the threshold of the real negotiation process and the time has come for other important role-players to do their bit.

In particular the ANC must now stop vacillating.

The time has now arrived for the ANC to state unequivocally where it stands on key issues. By its actions and its statements it must now give proof of its adherence to the principles of the Groote Schuur Minute.

It is true that, since the Groote Schuur Meeting, there has been evidence of the ANC (or at least most of its leaders) striving for the goals set out in it.

In terms of that minute the Government and the ANC agreed on 'a common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter, as well as to stability and to a peaceful process of negotiation'. On 2 June Mr Mandela said that the leadership of the ANC was united in its rejection of all forms of violence among the people.

In general their meetings and marches are also well controlled and it is clear that they are making an effort. The ANC, however, still has a long way to go.

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How can these positive aspects be reconciled with continuing support for the so-called "armed struggle"? How can they be reconciled with Mr Mandela's statement on 2 June that:

"The only sort of violence which we accept is organised violence in the form of armed activity which is properly controlled and where the target is carefully selected".

Exactly what targets has the ANC in mind?

- The same police force which protected him and his colleagues during their recent visit to Cape Town?
- The departments of the Ministers with whom he and his colleagues were discussing in a good spirit the need for peaceful solutions?
- Political opponents in the townships and in the homelands?

In the same way, the ANC should explain the contradictory positions which it has adopted with regard to the economy.

On 5 June Mr Mandela told a meeting in Botswana that the ANC wished to bring about a non-racial democracy with a "powerful economy" in South Africa. How does the ANC reconcile this view with its continued calls for sanctions against South Africa? Surely it must realise that sanctions are harming the economic prospects of all South Africans? How does the ANC reconcile its continuing calls for the nationalisation of important sectors of the economy with its professed wish to build a powerful economy? Is it not aware of the potentially disastrous implications of such irresponsible statements for future foreign investment in the Republic?

The time has come for the ANC to give a proper account of itself and of its true intentions. Its commitment to the Groote Schuur Minute must be reflected in all its future actions and statements.

The leaders of South Africa must now rise to the occasion.

In South Africa, Southern Africa and in the world, obsolete policies and systems are being discarded. Irreconcilable differences are being overcome by negotiation. There is no longer any need or justification for violence to achieve political objectives.

History will demand from us to account for our willingness to rise above our own selfish particular interests and prejudices in order to build a new future.

Conflict must end. Secret agendas must be scrapped. Let bygones be bygones. Let us forget real or imagined injustices of the past and create a new future for our children, free from mistrust, prejudice and hatred and domination. A future in which all of us will feel secure. A future free of discrimination or a struggle for domination. A future which will make all of us proud to be South Africans. But above all, a future to be determined by us - not dictated by outside interests.