

MR INGHAM

file ✓

SOUTH AFRICA: MANDELA'S RELEASE

We need to be ready with another statement for the press as soon as Mandela is released. I attach a text which has been agreed by the Prime Minister, which we should hold in reserve.

You will wish to know that she is also sending messages about the way forward to a large number of EC and Commonwealth Heads of Government, as well as to President Bush and Prime Minister Kaifu.

Charles Powell

9 February 1990

c: Mandela (MJ)

RELEASE OF MANDELA: DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

I very warmly welcome the news today of the unconditional release of Mr Nelson Mandela. This is a goal towards which the British Government and many others in Britain have worked long and hard. President de Klerk is to be congratulated on his wise decision and on the other bold and courageous steps he has taken to enable negotiations to take place in which all parties can participate to work out a new democratic constitution for South Africa which - as Mr de Klerk has said - must have the support of the majority of South Africans. This opens the way for all the parties, including the ANC, to enter into negotiations to that end and we urge them to do so. It is essential to find a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems. There could be no greater prize for all South Africans.

In the period when the South African Government took steps of which we strongly disapproved, we condemned those actions and introduced a number of measures designed to bring home to the South African Government the strength of our disapproval. Now that the new President of South Africa manifestly is trying to achieve a political solution to South Africa's problems, it is right to give practical encouragement to that process.

We have already made clear that we believe that it is now right, instead of discouraging, actively to encourage scientific, academic and cultural contacts with South Africa.

Given that President de Klerk has now released Nelson Mandela and other long-term security prisoners, has unbanned the ANC and other political organisations and is offering to lift the State of Emergency if conditions of calm are maintained, we believe that it no longer makes sense to discourage new investment in South Africa - a restraint which in our case in any event has been voluntary - and we shall be discussing this with our EC Partners.

We do not believe that in these changed circumstances it is reasonable to discourage tourism or visits to South Africa: it is for individual British citizens to make up their own minds on that score.

In short, we believe that the steps President de Klerk, has taken merit a positive practical response. He has opened the way for all the parties in South Africa to find a negotiated solution to the country's problems and in doing so he has created a new sense of hope and optimism about the country's future.

*Agreed* *MT*