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PRIME MINISTER

Pik Botha telephoned me about an hour ago. President de Klerk still hopes very much to telephone you at 1345. But things are moving so quickly that he may not be able to get to the telephone then. In case that happens, he wants you to know that he will be announcing at 3.00 pm our time this afternoon that Mandela will be freed tomorrow.

I said that I knew you would very much welcome this news. We had a statement ready to release as soon as an announcement was made, and I was sure the South African government would find it helpful. Pik Botha asked me to convey to you the South African government's appreciation for your strong stand over the years.

I suggest that you be ready to take the call at 1345 and we give it about 5 minutes. If nothing comes through, it would be better then to continue with your programme. De Klerk is likely then to telephone you next week some time. The important thing is that you have been informed in advance and we will make this clear to the press.

*Knipe*

CHARLES POWELL

10 February 1990 (1.10pm)

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