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cc Sir A. Acland
cc Sir P. Cradock

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 October 1985

Dear Len,

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING: SOUTH AFRICA:
GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

The Prime Minister attended an informal meeting, called at short notice, following the last session of CHOGM this morning, to discuss the composition of the group of eminent persons envisaged in the Accord on South Africa. Those present were Mr Hawke, Mr Mugabe, Sir Lynden Pindling, Mr Bhagat and Mr Ramphal. Mr Mulroney was expected but never made it.

There had clearly been a certain amount of prior discussion between Ramphal and some of the others about the nomination of the members of the group. It was rapidly proposed that the Chairman should be Julius Nyerere. Other names mentioned as possible members were Obasanjo of Nigeria; Malcolm Fraser or Gough Whitlam from Australia; and a former Indian Foreign Minister called Singh. In Mr Mulroney's absence no Canadian name was formally proposed. But the Prime Minister tells me that Mulroney himself earlier mentioned Stansfield, and that Trudeau's name also came up in discussion.

The Prime Minister floated, without commitment, the name of Brian Urquhart as a possible candidate. This was well received.

It was agreed that all the governments concerned should let the Commonwealth Secretary-General have their nominations by the end of next week. The Group would then meet in London within a month.

The Prime Minister has subsequently discussed the British representative of the Group with the Foreign Secretary. She suggested to him that the other nominations made it likely that the group would be difficult for the South African Government to accept and do business with. We should need to be able to exercise a strong influence on it. She thought that the Foreign Secretary himself would be the most effective spokesman and the person best able to keep some control of the Group's activities. The Foreign Secretary agreed to reflect on this: he was not averse but concerned whether participation in the Group would be compatible with his other obligations. The Prime Minister urged him to reach a decision as early as possible so that his name could be conveyed to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

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The Prime Minister continues to hope that a way can be found to get Mr Brian Urquhart's name put forward by someone else, for instance by Sir Lynden Pindling who has not so far made any proposal. It will be helpful to have advice on whether we should pursue this with Sir Lynden Pindling, for instance in the form of a message from the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely
C D Powell

C D POWELL

Len Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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