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PRIME MINISTER

SOUTH AFRICA

Mr Leo Evans, who is Pik Botha's Principal Private Secretary, came to see me early this morning having been sent up from South Africa by Pik Botha specially for the purpose. He asked me to convey the following strictly personal message to you from Pik Botha.

President Botha had held a meeting with Nelson Mandela on 6 July in his office in Cape Town. The meeting had lasted rather over an hour. No-one else had been present. This was the first time the two had met, and according to President Botha it had not been at all confrontational, indeed had been quite positive.

I was to emphasise to you that the message came from Pik Botha and not from President Botha, who did not know that anybody else was being informed of the meeting. So far as Pik Botha knew, the intention was to keep it secret, although he could not exclude that the President - who was behaving increasingly irrationally - would not suddenly reveal it. In Pik Botha's view, it was a very important step and might presage a decision by the State President to release Mandela before the elections (although he had not firm evidence of this).

I was also asked to stress that this message was for you alone and nobody else was to be told about it.

I said that I knew you would be very grateful to Pik Botha for taking you into his confidence. I hoped that we could be kept informed on any further developments. If the news did become public, I was confident your inclination would be to welcome the meeting as a very positive step.

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Incidentally, in talking to Leo Evans about a number of other matters, he said that Tiny Rowland had told the South Africans that he had made an arrangement that Renamo should not interfere with Lonhro's interests in Mozambique. |

C.D.P.

C. D. POWELL  
8 July 1989

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