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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President
F. W. de Klerk of South Africa (Ø)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
F. W. de Klerk, President of South Africa
Notetaker: John M. Ordway

DATE, TIME June 27, 1990, 9:00 - 9:24 a.m.
AND PLACE: White House Situation Room

The President telephoned President de Klerk concerning the Mandela Visit.

The President: Hello. (U)

President de Klerk: Good afternoon, Mr. President. (U)

The President: Good morning, Mr. President. It's nice to talk to you. (U)

President de Klerk: It's good to hear your voice again. (U)

The President: I wanted to call to let you know about my meeting with Mr. Mandela. First, though, I want to say I appreciate the thoughts you expressed in your letter on my meeting with Mandela. I will send a written response shortly. But I wanted to take this opportunity now to let you know how it went. (Ø)

President de Klerk: Thank you very much for that. I would appreciate first-hand information. (Ø)

The President: I noted with interest and was struck by the number of times Mandela went out of his way in his talks with me and my people to support you and your efforts. Much of our discussion was private with me. But also in our other larger meeting and with me and our top people at lunch, we were very pleased that he seemed to speak highly of you. He constantly returned to the theme that you are a man of honor that could be trusted, and could work actively to get support among the blacks and whites of South Africa. He particularly felt your visit to the States would be of great help to all concerned, and should happen soon. (Ø)

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President de Klerk: In your future communications with them, directly and indirectly I think this is a matter which needs emphasizing in terms of your legislation. I believe that this stand has a policy bearing, both positive and negative for how you, as a government, handle sanctions against South Africa. (Ø)

The President: I may not have raised it in the sense of an alliance with the South African Communist Party. I raised it more in terms of worldwide communism. (Ø)

President de Klerk: Well, the percentages differ from time to time but at the last check 50% - 80% of the National Executive Committee of the ANC were full members of the South African Communist Party which is a telling fact. There is good reason to believe that the Communist Party has a strangle hold on policy making. (Ø)

The President: I did not know that, and that fact would not be well received in this country. (Ø)

On negotiations, the ANC position was confusing since they seem to favor an interim government during the negotiating process. We had very lively discussions on this. Jim Baker took them on. (Ø)

On sanctions there was some confusion. When he came he talked about stepping them up. I told him we were not interested in that. Instead, I said I hoped that we could lighten them up when the conditions of our law were met. (Ø)

President de Klerk: I would say congratulations to you that you got him to get down from stepping them up. (Ø)

The President: He reiterated if the United States reduced sanction this would play into the hands of some of your political opponents, who would see you as being controlled by the US and the UK. He made that point twice. Did he ever talk to you about that? (Ø)

President de Klerk: No, he did not. It is not a very valid argument. The use of sanctions by the right wing is quite the opposite. In fact, I could find it quite useful as an argument to show we are on the right track. What I would agree with is that if this were interpreted as a method to interfere in the internal affairs of South Africa, yes. But, with respect, I would say that sanctions were an interference. The lifting would be a withdrawal from interfering in our affairs. I could handle that quite well. Relief from sanctions would be accepted very positively, as proof that the initiatives I have taken are the right ones. (Ø)

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I hope you will come here. I was embarrassed by comments here, in the press, about who should come here first. You are President of the country. It would be useful for you to come here, and he and I agreed on that. Perhaps with these visit out of the way, if it fits in with your schedule. I just wanted to let you know that the invitation still stands. (Ø)

President de Klerk: I am looking at the agenda. I have been out of South Africa for quite a while, with my trip to Europe. The tempo is kind of fast at the moment. I have to space overseas visits so as not to create within South Africa an appearance of concentrating on international relations. We have to take a balanced approach, particularly while there is such a dynamic situation here at home. I'll take note. Thank you very much, and let me reiterate that I am anxious to take it up. We will start negotiations through normal channels. (Ø)

May I return to one point. Your said there was a lot of emphasis on interim government. I would appreciate it if you could inform me of the discussion on an interim government. And also, did he raise the question of a constituent assembly? Because these two matters are a problem for us, since it brings into play the sovereignty of South Africa. (Ø)

The President: That was raised, but very indirectly. I was confused by that, but let me ask Brent Scowcroft or Secretary Baker to send you a cable on what was agreed to, on what the man was saying. I must confess I was confused. It was not dwelled on, but I would prefer to let Brent Scowcroft convey to you a cable with our collective thinking. There may have been conversations at the State Department or with other members of the National Security Council that will clarify the confusion I have in my mind. (Ø)

President de Klerk: That would most useful. I appreciate that. It will be most useful, and we will then furnish to you our views on that. That, not sanctions, is going to become the crucial issue in times ahead. On receipt of your cable, I will convey our viewpoints in this regard, emphasizing our view on those two crucial points which will be the subject of great debate in the months ahead. (Ø)

The President: There seems to be some differences between Mbeki and Mandela but let Scowcroft pull it together. To be honest, it was quite confusing. But I will be watching. (Ø)

It was nice talking to you. I hope the visit is now in better perspective. My respects to you for what you are trying to do. Please stay in touch. (U)

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