

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress of South Africa on June 26, 1992

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC
Interpreter: None
Notetaker: John M. Ordway

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: June 26, 1992, 10:14 - 10:28 a.m. EST
The Oval Office

The President telephoned Nelson Mandela concerning the situation in South Africa. (S)

The President: Hello, Mr. Mandela. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Good day, Mr. President. (U)

The President: How are you? (U)

Mr. Mandela: How are you? (U)

The President: I know you have been calling. I'm sorry I didn't have time to take the call. I've been running around as busy as a chicken with its neck cut off. (U)

Mr. Mandela: I know. Thank you very much for this opportunity. (U)

The President: What's on your mind? (U)

Mr. Mandela: I want to brief you on the present situation. (U)

I have asked the Secretary General to call a special session of the Security Council so I can brief them on what is going on in the country. I have gone out of my way to seek to find compromises to get the peace process going. But we have been disappointed by the failure of negotiations on the constitution, and the current violence that has cost more than 50 lives. I thought you should know why I have thought to approach the Secretary General. I thought that if I didn't explain it carefully to you, it wouldn't have a chance of success. (S)

The President: I'll talk to Secretary Baker about this. The UN has been very wary of things like this. What has been the reaction from the Secretary General? (S)

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Mr. Mandela: The Secretary General was very kind but diplomatic. I think he was conveying what you are saying now. He prefers that I write a letter which the Security Council might make public. He was not very keen, but was very nice. He is not very keen on summoning the Security Council itself. (S)

The President: Let us talk about it. We have had several requests to convene the Security Council -- not as urgent as yours. But the UN has been reluctant to get involved in internal affairs. I'll talk about it with Baker. But I would be reluctant to push Boutros Ghali. (S)

What can we do to help you to get over the hurdles? (S)

Mr. Mandela: I have been pressing Ambassador Swing. (S)

The President: I heard about your meeting with Swing. But you did not request any specific action, did you? (S)

Mr. Mandela: I don't know when you got a report. We just met yesterday. (U)

The President: He sent a cable to the State Department. I got a general briefing this morning. But I'll get the full report. (S)

Mr. Mandela: I think the Secretary General might be more willing if it became clear that I had your support. I am keen that the UN should be aware of what is going on, but I don't want to compromise his position. (S)

The President: Are you going to have a talk with de Klerk? (S)

Mr. Mandela: [I have asked for a meeting to present our demands, which would let us continue the discussions. De Klerk said he wanted a two-day meeting, but after I return from Dakar and the OAU summit. But we can't discuss anything with him until they have addressed the issues which we have raised. We have discussed with de Klerk these issues for two years, and they haven't produced any fruit. Until they respond to our demands it won't serve any purpose to discuss with them. We are prepared to go back to CODESA when they address these problems. (S)

Our demands are very reasonable. We want to introduce democracy, which he is against despite the rhetoric. We want a constitution-making body elected by the masses of the people. He says he wants it, but has turned down every proposal. We say we want a constitution adopted by a 2/3 vote -- which is 67 percent; he says 75 percent. We have already made a compromise twice. All the constitutions in the past of this country have been adopted by a simple majority. This is the first time they have suggested a larger majority. To allay what is the concern of the minority whites we went to 70 percent. But this is a problem, since we have a constituency which wants a 51 percent majority. (S)

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The President: We are disappointed since we felt there was good progress, and felt that de Klerk was the most reasonable interlocutor possible at this point in South Africa's history. De Klerk assures me every time we talk that he wants to follow through. (S)

We will think about the UN Security Council request, and I'll review the report from Bill Swing, who has my full confidence. He is a good man. (S)

Mr. Mandela: A lovely man. (U)

The President: I will look at this, and get back to you. But I don't want to say that we will override the Secretary General. (S)

Mr. Mandela: I don't want you to do that. (U)

The President: Maybe I could call him after I get briefed up on this. (S)

Mr. Mandela: Thank you. (U)

The President: This is very important. I remember your triumphant visit here. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Thank you. (U)

The President: I know you have troubles, and I wish you didn't. I haven't talked to the Buthelezi people lately, but I know they have problems too. (S)

If there is some way to help, we will want to do so. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Please give my regards to Mrs. Bush. (U)

The President: Thank you. She is doing well. You have had the flu. How are you doing? (U)

Mr. Mandela: Much better, thank you. (U)

The President: You should take it easy. I'm no spring chicken, and you're older than I am. I just had a birthday, my 68th. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Please give my regards to your sister. (U)

The President: That is very timely that you mentioned that. We are having a wedding this weekend -- my daughter is getting married. I will pass on your regards. Nancy never got over the courtesy you extended to her. You have a big fan in her. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Thank you very much. That's the kind of thing that keeps me going. (U)

The President: I know. I really enjoy the personal touch, which keeps me going. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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