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African National Congress

1912-1992
Eightieth Anniversary



FAX TRANSMISSION SHEET

TO: IRISH FOREIGN MINISTRY

REF: MR. JOHN BURKE

NO: 010-3531-780 628

FROM: CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE'S OFFICE: MENDI MSIMANG

DATE: 30/10/92

MESSAGE:
(if any) PLEASE FIND ATTACHED HERETO
COPY LETTER MR. NELSON MANDELA
ADDRESSED TO ALDRMAN GAY
MITCHELL ON 27 OCTOBER 1992
FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND
RECORDS.

WARM REGARDS

The Year of Democratic Elections for a Constituent Assembly

NUMBER OF PAGES (Inc.):

3

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

27 October 1992

Alderman Gay Mitchell TD
The Right Hon. Lord Mayor of Dublin
The Mansion House
Dublin 2

FAX: 09 353 1 6796573

Dear Mr Mitchell

Thank you for your letter of 21 October, expressing your concern over the interview Bob Geldof conducted with me in June 1991. I regret the delay in my response but I have been out of Johannesburg for a number of days.

You will recall that a similar kind of controversy arose when I visited Ireland in 1990 to receive the Freedom of the City of Dublin, which I greatly value.

I said then that I was saddened to be dragged into a controversy which was not of our making and which we never intended. I repeated at the reception hosted by the then Taoiseach that "the violence should stop, as should the mutual slaughter, and that all concerned could, as with other situations of conflict, find a way to establish peace".

We hold the view that all parties involved in the conflict in Northern Ireland should sit down together to resolve the issue. I am aware that this is not a popular view, and certainly in Britain it aroused opposition in the media, and seems to have led to a situation where some sections of the media use every opportunity to mislead and distort.

The People Shall Govern

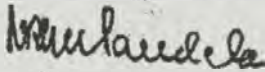
2.

The African National Congress opposes colonialism in all its guises, but does not prescribe how any nation or people should achieve its freedom. Our support for liberation can in no way be construed as advocacy of the IRA, or the condoning of its actions. We clearly recognise the sovereign Irish Government as the elected representative of the Irish people and their aspirations as reflected in your Constitution.

In conclusion I repeat my hope that all parties to the conflict will recognise the urgent need to resolve differences by negotiations. The peaceful adjustment or the removal of wrongs requires patients, understanding and statesmanship, and an openness to others, however awkward or difficult this may be.

I hope very much that my response will alleviate any distress that the interview may have causes.

With my best wishes to you and the people of Dublin.



NELSON R MANDELA
President

TM/EM

STEERING NOTENELSON MANDELA AND THE IRA

1. Nelson Mandela's views on the IRA have been expressed notably in two interviews during the past two years. The first of these occurred in 1990 while in Dublin on a visit when he was conferred with the freedom of the City. At a joint press conference in Dublin Castle (2 July 1990) following his meeting with the then Taoiseach he was asked a number of questions about the IRA. In response Mandela:

- explicitly denied that there was any contact between him, or the ANC, with the IRA;
- suggested that the IRA and Britain should enter into talks;
- and further suggested that it was not necessary for the IRA to cease violent activity prior to entering talks but that, as in the former Rhodesia, the British Government could talk to parties involved in the conflict without preconditions in order to achieve peace.

Sinn Fein claimed that these remarks were a clear sign of support for their approach.

2. In an interview with Bob Geldof broadcast on 20 October last, Mandela said that "the IRA is combatting a struggle for self-assertion. They do not want Britain, a foreign country, to run a colony in Northern Ireland." The role of the IRA was one of "struggle for self-expression". However, the ANC, in a statement issued later that day (appended), sought to dispel any notion of support for the IRA. It was said that Mr. Mandela (whose interview with Geldof was recorded in July 1991) was merely

expressing the support of his organisation for people struggling for freedom, which should not be construed as support for the IRA. It concluded by saying that:

"Mr. Mandela's opposition to colonialism must be seen in the context of the Irish Government's peaceful attempts to bring about the reunification of the country in order to undo the legacy of colonialism."

3. The Secretary of the South African Nationalist Party, Stoffel Van Der Merwe, criticised Mr. Mandela as an apologist for the IRA. Given a certain degree of South African media interest in Mr. Mandela's remarks, it is likely that these may be raised during the Minister's discussions in South Africa. The Government, for their part, deplore all support for violence as a means of achieving political objectives in Northern Ireland and the Minister may wish to make clear that he will avail of his visit to South Africa to brief his various interlocutors on the Government's well-known position. Draft speaking points are included in the brief.

Anglo-Irish Division,
28 October, 1992.

W9547

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DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

STATEMENT OF CLARIFICATION ABOUT THE BOB GELDOLF INTERVIEW WITH ANC PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

The interview with Mr Bob Geldof took place 18 months ago in June 1991.

Mr Mandela was expressing longstanding support for a tradition deeply embedded in the struggle of the people of South Africa of support for struggles for freedom. Historically the Irish people have enjoyed a special place in the affection of the oppressed people of South Africa. At no stage has this been construed as support for the IRA.

Mr Mandela described a situation which objectively is verifiable. His observations cannot be construed as support for the IRA. During his visit to Ireland in July 1990 Mr Mandela made it quite clear that the sovereign government of Ireland was the representative of the people of Ireland and their aspirations.

Mr Mandela's opposition to colonialism must be seen in the context of the Irish government's peaceful attempts to bring about the reunification of the country in order to undo the legacy of colonialism.

Issued by the Department of Information and Publicity
P O Box 61884
Marshalltown
2107

20 October 1992

PA-IRA-

Prepared for Minister's visit to S.A.
Pl PA appropriately.

Dr. 28-10-97

Speaking Notes

Nelson Mandela and the IRA

- the Government of Ireland are committed to achieving a peaceful, just and durable solution to the problem of Northern Ireland. This commitment reflects the deeply held desires of the vast majority of the Irish people;
- it follows that the Government deplore any support for those who espouse violence as a means of achieving their political objectives in Northern Ireland;
- I know that the African National Congress share our concerns in this matter and I appreciate the support which the ANC has expressed for the policies of the Irish Government in this regard;

(If pressed about Nelson Mandela's recently reported comments to Bob Geldof, the Minister may wish to respond as follows):

- Mr. Mandela and the ANC have expressed to me their rejection of the destructive futility of violence in Northern Ireland, from whatever quarter it emanates, and have confirmed their full support for the peaceful policies being pursued by the Irish Government;

(If asked about links between Loyalist groups and South Africa, the Minister might say):

- as I have already indicated, the Government are categorically opposed to any form of support, whether moral or material, for those in Northern Ireland who seek to achieve their goals by violence.

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