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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with F.W. de Klerk of South Africa on August 13, 1990

PARTICIPANT: The President  
F.W. de Klerk, State President of South Africa  
Notetaker: David C. Miller, Jr.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: August 13, 1990, 9:31 - 9:41 A.M. EST  
Kennebunkport, Maine

The President telephoned State President F. W. de Klerk concerning the end of the armed struggle in South Africa. (Ø)

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

The President: Mr. President, how are you? Good to hear from you again. (U)

President de Klerk: It is nice to hear from you. (U)

The President: I simply wanted to call and congratulate you and your delegation on the apparent progress made in Pretoria. It does sound like a breakthrough and I am especially happy about suspension of violence and an end to the armed struggle. As you know I strongly urged Mandela on that subject but I am sure that it was your diplomacy that has brought an end to this internal conflict. (Ø)

President de Klerk: Thank you very much. We also regard it as a real breakthrough and no doubt your influence, and that of European leaders, played a constructive role in the process. No doubt that Mandela means what he says but he has problems with his middle management because this is really a quantum jump. He is standing fast. Even his wife tried to interpret it in a limited way but she was repudiated by Sisulu himself. They have argued in middle ranks but the top executives are strongly behind this. (Ø)

The President: This is a very productive role. I welcome the fast and orderly procedure for the release of political prisoners. I wanted to be sure we were interpreting it the

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same as you. There are still a lot of problems and we are encouraged with this week's events. We share this view of Mandela which backs up what you have begun thinking. I hope the negotiating process goes forward. (S)

We are still looking forward to having you here and hope that the damn problem in the Gulf doesn't complicate it too much. I am calling to pay my respects. (S)

President de Klerk: I think continuing... not pressuring... continued monitoring on your side to not let them play politics will be helpful with the cessation to end the violence is very important. Some of the underlings are trying to reduce this strategic move Mandela made. (S)

The President: And some of the underlings are using the word suspense to mean a temporary suspension? (S)

President de Klerk: Mandela used suspension meaning cessation of violence, but the underlings are trying to use suspension as a tactical move and not cessation. Mandela used the word suspension but he did not mean it in a conditional manner. Yes, we are going to bring back prisoners and exiles, in an orderly manner and now we are conducting good, practical working relations. The talks were carried out in an orderly and well-planned manner. We will be able to manage it so that in a month or two or three, we will be able to show further progress. Thanks for calling in that regards. (S)

As for the visit, my Minister of Foreign Affairs has been in contact with Brent Scowcroft and they are trying to work something out. (S)

The President: I have one last question. I want to raise the question of the Communist Party. When Mandela was here I touched on it and reported to you that I raised it with him. I noticed a big gathering with the Communist leaders. What is the state of play with the Communist Party and an end of violence? (S)

President de Klerk: When Mandela was asked that question he said that the South African Communists who were in the ANC were bound by the Pretoria agreement. Those members of the Communist Party share in the structure of the ANC and regard themselves as bound. The political background is that the alliance is coming under stress. The Communist Party is a full-fledged established party. They will have to adopt their attitudes and relations with each other. There is a lot going on under the surface. (S)

This process is taking place and is debated internally and publicly the wisdom of continuing the alliance as in the past is

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very much a subject which is alive. I think the Communists will become an albatross around their neck. My biggest problem with the moderates is not the ANC but the Communist factors in the ANC that cause a disbelief among the South Africans that this can work and I think Mandela has become sensitive to it and further sensitivity to this aspect is necessary. (Ø)

The President: I do plan to mention to him that we were pleased. We thought your talks productive. And specifically for the U.S., we were delighted to see this changed position by them and maybe that conversation will help. (Ø)

Thanks for your update and congratulation. (Ø)

President de Klerk: I fully realize that you have a tremendous responsibility, vis-a-vis Iraq, and the whole world is looking to you to take the lead and we think of you in these difficult days. (Ø)

The President: Thank you, we are doing our best. So far we are pleased with the world opinion but I shouldn't be talking to you about difficulties, you handle it very well and we are grateful. (Ø)

Good luck, Mr. President. (U)

President de Klerk: Everything of the best. Thank you for the call. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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