MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC of South Africa

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC
Interpreter: None
Notetaker: Robert C. Frasure

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: July 10, 1991, 11:30 - 11:40 a.m. EST
The Oval Office

The President telephoned Mr. Mandela concerning the lifting of sanctions against South Africa. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Yes sir. Good morning, sir. (U)

The President: Mr. Mandela, how are you? Congratulations on your election as President of the ANC. I think this is just de facto recognition of your outstanding leadership all along, not to disparage anyone. I just wanted to call and tell you of my decision to lift sanctions against South Africa, the sanctions imposed by the CAAA, you know, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act imposed by Congress. (U)

The State Department and our bureaucracy have unanimously agreed that the five conditions set by Congress have been met, and I will be signing an Executive Order to that effect. As you know, other sanctions remain in place including the IMF and World Bank. (U)

I wanted to assure you of our continued support to you and others who are committed to negotiations. And I wanted you to know that I will continue to keep in touch with you on this. (U)

Mr. Mandela: Thank you, Mr. President. As I have pointed out before, we deeply appreciate the practice of constant consultation with us on matters of common interest. It has made a deep impression on us. (U)

The sanctions applied by the U.S. in the CAAA have helped immeasurably. And we are grateful for it. On lifting the sanctions, we differ on timing. (U)

Apparently you have no other alternative if South Africa has fulfilled the conditions. Our view differs in that we feel that the provisions in the Act have not been completed fully. But we do understand your action. (U)
Nevertheless, I must say your action is premature. One can do
damage if there are two parties talking to each other and a third
party with a reputation for impartiality appears to be acting in
favor of one or another of the parties. (P)

I know how you feel. And you don’t mean to do that and you want
to avoid that damage, especially because you have given the
impression of being impartial. But you would be convinced that
the Act has been fulfilled. (P)

But I still think it is premature. There are still political
prisoners in prison. It is not correct for the U.S. to have its
own definition. You should use the same definition we used in
the Pretoria Minute. (P)

That is political prisoners are those convicted of politically
motivated offenses. (P)

Then there are the prisoners in Bophuthatswana which doesn’t
exist under American law. You are acting against your own law.
(P)

Thirdly, the abolition of Apartheid is not complete. There are
funding differences in the social services, in education. (P)

Fourthly, the violence is raging in the country. That is
impeding the free political activity. (P)

Nonetheless we appreciate the role of sanctions in getting
discussion going. So we sincerely hope you will pressurize the
South African government on negotiation. We recognize the
extreme importance of the U.S. in this regard. (P)

The President: I appreciate your reasonable approach to
negotiations. And I want to continue to share views and opinions
on the situation on South Africa. (U)

I have a few more comments to make. (U)

Although sanctions will be lifted, there are others means to
ensure South Africa continues toward reform. These include
bilateral discussions through our Embassy and open, public
discussions with the South African government and other
negotiating parties in addition to using the upcoming G-7 summit
in London. We’ll continue to sustain the pressure to ensure that
reform happens. (P)

The CAAA was enacted to encourage negotiations and I think it has
done that. I did note that in your address to the recent ANC
Congress you emphasized the need to move forward in negotiations.
(P)

The negotiations process will be primarily an internal one but
I’d like to continue to keep in touch with you. We continue to
stress with the South African government the need to address the
areas of education and housing for Black South Africans. (P)
Mr. Mandela: Thank you. I appreciate that. It is good to learn that. (U)

The President: Again, I want to continue to communicate with you on the negotiations process. I want my lifting of the sanctions to be a confirmation of U.S. law and to assure you that as President of the United States, I will do everything in my power as President to keep the pressure on the South African government to ensure democratic reforms continue. (C)

Mr. Mandela: Thank you very much. (U)

The President: Thank you and good bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --