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ADVANCE COPY

OO FCO DESK BY 190930Z

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PS/LPS
PS/mr Luce
PS/PUS
mr. DAY
mr. ASPIN
HD. SAJD.
HD. Rhodesia D.

PP SALISBURY

IMMEDIATE

CRS 360A

SECRET

DESK BY FCO 190930Z FEB 80

FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY 190600Z FEB 80

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TEL NO 128 OF 19 FEBRUARY

INFO PRIORITY SALISBURY

PS NOIO Dought.

(File)

YOUR TEL NO 83: PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

1. I HAD A LONGER SESSION WITH PIK BOTHA YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND GAVE HIM THE ASSURANCE IN PARAGRAPH 1 OF YOUR TUR. HE ACCEPTED THIS AND SAID THAT HE WOULD EXPLAIN IT TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. PIK THEN WENT ON TO QUESTION ANOTHER PHRASE IN THE LETTER, NAMELY "I AM HEARTENED BY YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE REMOVAL OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION". HE ASKED ME WHETHER THIS WAS INTENDED TO PICK UP SOME POINT IN MR BOTHA'S OWN LETTER OR WHETHER IT WAS BASED ON OUR GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. IF THE FORMER, THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT THINK THAT WE WERE READING TOO MUCH INTO HIS LETTER. I TOLD PIK THAT I HAD ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS THE SAG'S POLICY TO REMOVE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND THAT HE HIMSELF HAD ONCE SAID AS MUCH IN THE UNITED NATIONS. IT SADDENED ME THAT HE SHOULD EXAMINE OUR PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER WITH A MICROSCOPE AND LOOK FOR HIDDEN TRAPS. WHEN I MYSELF HAD SEEN THE REPLY WHICH I WAS ASKED TO TRANSMIT I HAD THOUGHT THAT IT WAS VERY POSITIVE BOTH IN CONTENT AND IN TONE AND I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY HE SHOULD THINK OTHERWISE. HOWEVER, IF IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM I COULD SAY OFF MY OWN BAT THAT I THOUGHT THE PHRASE IN QUESTION WAS A REFLECTION OF WHAT WE UNDERSTOOD SAG POLICY TO BE. PIK THEN BACKTRACKED AND SAID THAT HE WAS ONLY CONCERNED THAT HIS PRIME MINISTER SHOULD READ THE LETTER IN THE RIGHT WAY. OF COURSE HE ACCEPTED MY EXPLANATION AND HE WOULD GLADLY PASS IT ON, IF IT SHOULD BE NECESSARY. HE ALSO WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT THINK THESE TWO SENTENCES WHICH HE HAD MENTIONED TO ME SPOILED THE GENERALLY POSITIVE TONE OF MRS THATCHER'S REPLY, WHICH HE READILY CONCEDED.

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3. IN THE END PI WENT AWAY CONTENTED TO SHOW THE LETTER TO THE
PRIME MINISTER. I TRIED TO MAKE HIM SEE THAT HIS NIT-PICKING
ABOUT THE LETTER WAS UNWORTHY: AND HE SEEMED TAKEN ABACK WHEN
I SAID AT ONE STAGE THAT I WISHED HE WOULD BE MORE TRUSTING.

LEAHY

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