

*Prime Minister*

GRS 1,600A  
S E C R E T  
FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY 101110Z APRIL 80  
TO IMMEDIATE F C O  
TEL NO 282 OF 10 APRIL

*Nanibia - 3 tels*

*MS*

PERSONAL FOR THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE  
FROM LORD HUNT.

1. THERE IS NO DIPLOMATIC BAG FROM CAPE TOWN FOR ANOTHER 10 DAYS. I AM THEREFORE SENDING YOU THIS TELEGRAM ABOUT MY DISCUSSIONS WITH P W BOTHA YESTERDAY: AND WILL FOLLOW IT BEFORE I LEAVE WITH A FURTHER TELEGRAM ABOUT TODAY'S DISCUSSIONS AND ALSO AN ASSESSMENT. I WILL OF COURSE BE GLAD TO ELABORATE MORE FULLY ON MY RETURN. THERE WILL BE NO FULL RECORD SINCE IT WAS AGREED THAT NO NOTES SHOULD BE TAKEN (AND PIK BOTHA VOLUNTEERED THAT "ON THIS OCCASION" THEY WOULD NOT BE TAPING THE CONVERSATIONS EITHER.)
2. I BEGAN BY HAVING ONE AND A QUARTER HOURS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ALONE. IN THE COURSE OF THE INITIAL PLEASANTRIES I GAVE HIM MRS THATCHER'S GOOD WISHES ADDING THAT SHE RECALLED HER MEETING WITH HIM AS SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND HOPED TO MEET HIM AGAIN "SOME TIME". I THANKED HIM FOR THE HELP HE HAD GIVEN OVER RHODESIA AND STRESSED THE PRIVATE AND INFORMAL NATURE OF THE PRESENT TALKS. HE THEN SPOKE ON THE LINES OF HIS LETTER OF 5 FEBRUARY. THE SOVIET THREAT IN AFRICA WAS A REAL AND GROWING ONE: AND THERE WAS NO STRATEGY FOR MEETING IT. THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT PROCEED BY OVERT AGGRESSION BUT WOULD SEEK TO CREATE SITUATIONS WHERE THEY WOULD BE INVITED IN. IN A NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES THEY WERE WELL ON THE WAY TO CREATING SUCH A SITUATION. THE PRESENCE OF THE EAST GERMANS WAS MUCH MORE SINISTER THAN THAT OF THE CUBANS. THE ULTIMATE TARGET WAS SOUTH AFRICA'S MINERAL RESOURCES WHICH, IF ACHIEVED, WOULD PARALYSE THE WEST. YET THE WEST, FAR FROM HELPING, TOOK EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK SOUTH AFRICA AND ASSIST THE SOVIET STRATEGY. HE SPOKE IN THE HARSHTEST TERMS ABOUT THE AMERICANS WHOM HE SAID WERE MORE OF A DANGER TO SOUTH AFRICA THAN THE RUSSIANS THEMSELVES. SURELY WE OUGHT TO FIND WAYS OF REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE THREAT AND ON MEANS TO COUNTER IT. BRITAIN HAD A UNIQUE KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICA AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE WISHED TO START BY TALKING TO US. HE RECOGNISED THAT WE WISHED TO SEE CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL POLICIES AND HE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT MORE WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CHANGE THE CLIMATE OF WESTERN OPINION TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA. THERE WERE HOWEVER SEVERE LIMITS ON HOW FAR AND HOW FAST HE COULD GO. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE BLACKS WOULD BE IMPROVED AND IN TALKING ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOMELAND CONCEPT HE USED THE WORD "CONFEDERATION". BUT HE HAD TO SAY BLUNTLY THAT MAJORITY RULE WOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTABLE.

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3. AT THIS STAGE I MADE TWO MAIN POINTS. THE FIRST WAS THAT WE WERE UNDER NO ILLUSION ABOUT THE SOVIET THREAT. ON THE OTHER HAND THIS THREAT (CF: HIS OWN WORDS ABOUT THE SOVIETS ALWAYS "SEEKING AN INVITATION TO COME IN") SOUGHT TO FEED ON AFRICAN NATIONALISM. IT WAS A MISTAKE TO EQUATE THE TWO: AND ANY POLICY WHICH DROVE THE AFRICANS INTO CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING. SECONDLY I SAID THAT IT WAS NOT FOR US TO SAY WHAT DOMESTIC CHANGES SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD MAKE. WE WERE NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, ARGUING THAT THEY SHOULD GO FOR ONE MAN ONE VOTE IN A UNITARY STATE. BUT IF RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WERE TO BE IMPROVED ANY CHANGES WOULD HAVE TO BE REAL AND NOT JUST COSMETIC AND WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE SEEN TO CARRY A WIDE MEASURE OF ACCEPTANCE.

4. WE THEN COVERED SPECIFIC POINTS IN GREATER DETAIL:

(A) THE THREAT AND THE STRATEGY TO COUNTER IT

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P W BOTHA IS GIVEN TO USING PHRASES SUCH AS SOUTH AFRICA FACING "TOTAL ONSLAUGHT" FROM COMMUNISM AND THE NEED FOR A "TOTAL STRATEGY" TO COMBAT IT. BUT IS WAS FAR FROM CLEAR THAT HE HAS THOUGHT THROUGH WHAT HE MEANS BY A COMMON ANTI-SOVIET STRATEGY. INDEED WHEN I ASKED HIM AT ONE POINT WHETHER HE WAS TALKING ABOUT SOME KIND OF MILITARY ALLIANCE INVOLVING SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS, OR ACTION TO STABILISE OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND IMPROVE SOUTH AFRICA'S RELATIONS WITH THEM, HE REPLIED "BOTH". WHAT I DO THINK THIS REFLECTS IS SOUTH AFRICA'S GROWING SENSE OF HER OWN ISOLATION AND HER WISH TO END IT - BUT ON HER TERMS. THE PRIME MINISTER MADE MORE THAN ONE REFERENCE TO DUNKIRK, SAYING THAT IF SOUTH AFRICA HAD TO FIGHT ALONE SHE WOULD DO SO EVEN THOUGH HE RECOGNISED THAT SHE MIGHT NOT SURVIVE THE PROCESS. SHE DID NOT HOWEVER WISH TO BE DRIVEN INTO THIS POSITION OF FIGHTING ALONE AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE HAD WRITTEN HIS LETTER TO MRS THATCHER. COULD WE NOT HAVE COMPREHENSIVE BILATERAL TALKS ABOUT THE WHOLE REGION, COUNTRY BY COUNTRY, WITH A VIEW TO SEEING WHERE WE AGREED AND WHERE WE DIFFERED: AND WHAT ACTION COULD BE TAKEN TO STIFFEN RESISTANCE TO THE SOVIET THREAT? IF WE WOULD NOT TALK TO THEM, NO-ONE ELSE WOULD. I DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO THIS: BUT AGAIN REFERRED (ON THE LINES OF MY BRIEF) TO OUR RATHER DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION OF THE SOVIET THREAT. THERE WAS NOTHING WE WOULD RATHER SEE THAN SOUTH AFRICA PLAYING HER PROPER PART IN THE WORLD: AND IF HE WAS ABLE TO TAKE THE STEPS WHICH WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR THIS HE WOULD FIND A READY RESPONSE FROM US. I ADDED THAT IT MIGHT WELL BE NECESSARY TO PROCEED PRAGMATICALLY AND ON A STEP BY STEP BASIS. TO GIVE HIM HIS DUE HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT ASKING BRITAIN TO ACT AS SOUTH AFRICA'S AGENT: BUT UNDOUBTEDLY HE REGARDS OUR EVENTUAL REREACTION TO HIS PROPOSAL

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AS SOME KIND OF TOUCH-STONE. 'IF YOU TURN US DOWN WE HAVE NO HOPE WITH ANYONE ELSE AND WILL HAVE TO GO IT ALONE.' YET THERE WAS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT HE IS CONTEMPLATING THE SORT OF STEPS DOMESTICALLY THAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO HAVE THE CLOSER RELATIONS HE SEEKS.

(B) RHODESIA  
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WE HAD A BIT OF A POST-MORTEM OVER THIS AND HE SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN FATAL TO MAKE THE BISHOP STAND DOWN FROM OFFICE DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD. BUT FOR THIS HE THOUGHT HE WOULD HAVE WON THE ELECTION. HE CLEARLY HAD THE GRAVEST DOUBTS ABOUT MUGABE'S POLICIES IN THE MEDIUM TERM (AND ALSO FEARS MUGABE MAY BE OUSTED BY HIS MORE EXTREME SUPPORTERS): BUT EQUALLY HE SEEMS PREPARED TO GIVE MUGABE A FAIR TRIAL AND NOT TO PREJUDGE THINGS. I SAID THAT OF COURSE NO-ONE COULD FORESEE THE FUTURE BUT THAT WE HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH MUGABE HAD BEEN SEEKING ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE AND ALSO BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE SEEMED TO BE KEEPING HIS DISTANCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION. P W BOTHA SAID 'WE CAN DO MORE FOR HIM ECONOMICALLY THAN YOU' - AND REFERRED TO THE NEW LOAN ARRANGEMENTS EVEN THOUGH HE DOUBTED MUGABE'S INTENTION TO HONOUR EXISTING DEBTS TO SOUTH AFRICA.

(C) NAMIBIA  
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HE TOOK A VERY ROBUST LINE SAYING THAT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES WAS HE PREPARED TO SELL THE TERRITORY DOWN THE RIVER TO SWAPO: AND THAT IF HE DID SO HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD FALL AND BE SUCCEEDED BY AN ULTRA-RIGHT ONE WHICH WOULD OVERTURN HIS MORE LIBERAL INTERNAL POLICIES. HE CONTINUALLY EMPHASISED THE POLITICAL RISKS HE WAS RUNNING OVER NAMIBIA. AT THIS POINT HE RAISED THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS AND THE VETO. I SAID THAT OUR POSITION ON SANCTIONS WAS WELL-KNOWN. WE WERE AGAINST THEM. THE VETO WAS HOWEVER A SEPARATE ISSUE ON WHICH NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN. IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A 'NO WIN' SITUATION. SANCTIONS WOULD BE VERY DAMAGING TO ALL CONCERNED AND WOULD BE THE PATH OF CONFRONTATION. YET IF CERTAIN WESTERN COUNTRIES (I DID NOT (UNDERLINED) TALK IN TERMS OF OUR VETOING ALONE) VETOED, THIS WOULD ALSO GREATLY DIMINISH ANY HOPE OF GETTING THE SORT OF RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT HE WANTED AND WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE SOME OF THE LATTER TO TURN TO THE SOVIET UNION. THE SANCTIONS ISSUE INVOLVED A CHOICE WHICH OUGHT TO BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS. I RECOGNISED THE SENSITIVITY OF THE NAMIBIA ISSUE FOR SOUTH AFRICA, BUT IF IT WENT BADLY WRONG IT COULD PUT AN END TO EVERYTHING ELSE HE SEEMED TO WANT. IT WAS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO KEEP THE NEGOTIATIONS IN PLAY AND TO AVOID AN APPARENT REJECTION OF THE U N PLAN.

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COULD HE GIVE ME ANY IDEA ON THE TIMING AND CONTENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S REPLY TO DR WALDHEIM? HE SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE PIK BOTHA PRESENT FOR THIS.

5. ACCORDINGLY AT THIS POINT HE WAS JOINED BY PIK BOTHA, FOURIE AND DE VILLIERS: AND THE AMBASSADOR JOINED ME. THE REST OF THE DISCUSSION WAS MAINLY A ONE-SIDED ONE WITH THE TWO BOTHAS SETTING OUT AT GREAT LENGTH THE HISTORY (AS THEY SEE IT) OF THE NAMIBIAN SAGA. ONLY TWO RELEVANT POINTS EMERGED:-

(I) ALTHOUGH THEY APPEARED NOT TO HAVE FINALLY DECIDED ON THE LINE OF THEIR REPLY TO WALDHEIM, IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT IT WOULD BE ONE DESIGNED TO BUY MORE TIME:

(II) THE POINT REFERRED TO IN CAPE TOWN TELEGRAM NO 278.

6. IN THE AFTERNOON I SAW MALAN AND PIK BOTHA (SEE CAPE TOWN TEL NO 279).

LEAHY

'FILES  
HD/SAF D  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR LUCE  
PS/PUS  
MR DAY

COPIES TO:  
SIR R ARMSTRONG CABINET OFFICE  
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