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FM FCO 231503Z SEP 80
TO IMMEDIATE PRETORIA
TELEGRAM NUMBER 178 OF 23 SEPTEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE MBABANE (FOR PS/MR LUCE)

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M/D

YOUR TELNO 358 : VISIT OF DR VAN ZYL SLABBERT

1. IF PIK BOTHA, OR FOURIE, REVERTS TO THIS, YOU SHOULD SAY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AGREED TO SEE DR SLABBERT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HER NORMAL CUSTOM OF SEEING MANY VISITING OPPOSITION LEADERS. SINCE (AS IS ALSO USUAL PRACTICE) THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED HIM, THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF GOING BEHIND THE BACK OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE WELL AWARE OF THE CALL IN ADVANCE AND CANNOT CLAIM THAT ANYTHING UNDERHAND OCCURRED. YOU SHOULD VIGOROUSLY REJECT ANY SUGGESTION OF THE SLIGHTEST IMPROPRIETY.

2. YOU SHOULD REFER PRESS ENQUIRIES TO NEWS DEPARTMENT WHO, IN AGREEMENT WITH NO 10, WILL SAY IF ASKED THAT IT IS COMMON PRACTICE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER (AND OTHER MINISTERS) TO RECEIVE VISITING OPPOSITION LEADERS (AND, IF THE POINT IS RAISED, FOR THEM TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR COUNTRY'S AMBASSADOR). FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION WE HAVE A REPORT THAT DR SLABBERT HAS TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE WAS ANNOYED TO BE ACCOMPANIED ON HIS CALL BY A QUOTE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT SPY UNQUOTE. HE MADE NO SUCH COMPLAINT WHEN DAY GAVE HIM LUNCH ON 19 SEPTEMBER AND INDEED SPOKE WARMLY OF HIS CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER.

3. THE LORD PRIVY SEAL WAS UNABLE TO SEE DR SLABBERT AS PLANNED ON 19 SEPTEMBER, BUT DID SO TODAY. ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE THROUGH THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY.

IN THE EVENT, DR SLABBERT CAME UNACCOMPANIED. THEY HAD A FULL AND FRANK DISCUSSION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN QUESTIONS AND NAMIBIA. RECORD FOLLOWS BY BAG.

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NEWS DEPT

PS

PS/LPS

PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS

MR DAY

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