

South Africa

CONFIDENTIAL

Read in full

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 110900Z

FROM U K MISSION NEW YORK 102242Z JULY 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1001 OF 10 JULY

INFO IMMEDIATE PRETORIA ROUTINE BONN WASHINGTON OTTAWA PARIS

LUSAKA LUANDA LAGOS MAPUTO DAR ES SALAAM GABORONE SALISBURY.

MIPT: NAMIBIA.

mb

1. IN THE TIME I HAVE BEEN HERE, I HAVE PROBABLY FORMED AS LOW A VIEW OF SOME OF THE CONTACT GROUP'S ANTICS AS ANYONE IN LONDON.
2. HAVING SAID THAT, I CANNOT SEE ANY EARLY AMELIORATION OF THE SITUATION FOR US. THERE ARE TWO BASIC PROBLEMS. FIRST, THE AMERICANS ARE THE GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED LEADERS OF THE GROUP: I DO NOT HAVE TO SPELL OUT AGAIN HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TRYING TO WORK WITH MCHENRY OVER SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS. THE CANADIANS ARE LED BY LAPOINTE (THE UNDER-SECRETARY CONCERNED IN OTTAWA) WHO IS A CANADIAN VERSION OF MCHENRY ON THESE ISSUES. THE GERMANS ARE NEARLY AS BAD. THE FRENCH OCCASIONALLY TRY TO BE HELPFUL TO US BUT ARE TOO CANNY TO EXPOSE MUCH SURFACE.
3. SECONDLY, THE REST OF OUR PARTNERS, AGAIN LED BY MCHENRY, ARE A GREAT DEAL MORE SCEPTICAL THAN WE ARE ABOUT THE WILLINGNESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT SCR 435. THEY ALSO DIFFER FROM US IN WISHING TO ENSURE THAT THE BLAME FOR ANY BREAKDOWN IS ATTRIBUTED TO SOUTH AFRICA WHERE THEY GENUINELY BELIEVE IT WOULD BELONG. THEY ARE MORE DISPOSED THAN WE ARE TO CONCENTRATE AT THIS STATE ON EMERGING FROM A BREAKDOWN WITHOUT DAMAGE TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE AFRICANS. THEY ARE NOT THEREFORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE ARGUMENT WHICH I HAVE ADVANCED AD NAUSEAM (ON THE ANALOGY OF THE UNITED STATES' KID GLOVE HANDLING OF ISRAEL) THAT NO NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT WILL BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND THAT IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO KEEP THE SOUTH AFRICANS IN PLAY EVEN AT RISK OF GIVING OFFENCE TO THE AFRICANS.
4. THIS IS A BLEAK ANALYSIS, BUT I CANNOT SEE HOW WE CAN ESCAPE. THERE WOULD BE NO FUTURE IN TRYING TO SCRAP THE CONTACT GROUP OR TO TRANSFER ITS WORK TO, SAY, THE PRETORIA FIVE OR THE FIVE ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. THE NEW YORK FIVE HAVE BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE NEXUS OF PLAYERS OF THE NAMIBIAN GAME, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE UN SECRETARIAT. AND, TO BE FAIR TO OUR PARTNERS HERE, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THEY ARE NOT OUT OF STEP WITH THEIR CAPITALS. FURTHERMORE, WE NEED THEM AS COVER. WE ARE PROBABLY POTENTIALLY THE MOST EXPOSED AND, IF THERE IS A BREAKDOWN, WE SHALL NEED ALL THE COMPANY WE CAN GET TO FACE THE AFRICAN ONSLAUGHT. IF WE ISOLATE OURSELVES COMPLETELY FROM THE OTHER FOUR TO THE EXTENT OF TELLING THEM EG TO GO AHEAD WITH JOINT PRONOUNCEMENTS WITHOUT US, THIS WOULD HELP TO CONVINCING THEM THAT, IF AND WHEN THE CHAPTER VII CRUNCH COMES, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO VETO ALONE.

CONFIDENTIAL

/5. MY ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL

5. MY ONLY RECOMMENDATION IS A CHANGE OF TACTICS. AT THE MOMENT, WE ARE GETTING THE WORST OF BOTH WORLDS. WHENEVER ACTION IS PROPOSED WITHIN THE FIVE, WE QUICKLY BECOME THE ODD MAN OUT. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT OUR PARTNERS LET THIS BE KNOWN AMONGST THE AFRICANS. HOWEVER, WE GIVE IN EVENTUALLY FOR THE SAKE OF SOLIDARITY. TO PARAPHRASE THE WORDS OF MY NORWEGIAN COLLEAGUE TO MCHENRY AFTER THE SWITCH OF AMERICAN VOTING IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL OVER PALESTINE ON 1 MARCH QUOTE WHEN FACED WITH A CHOICE OF TWO EVILS WE CHOOSE BOTH UNQUOTE.

6. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT, ON FUTURE OCCASIONS, WE SHOULD DECIDE FROM THE OUTSET WHETHER OR NOT WHATEVER OUR PARTNERS ARE PROPOSING IS REALLY IMPORTANT IE WHETHER IT IS SOMETHING WHICH WE REGARD AS SIMPLY IRRITATING AND UNDESIRABLE OR WHETHER WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGING TO PROSPECTS FOR A SETTLEMENT. IN THE FORMER CASE WE SHOULD BE MORE PREPARED TO SUPPRESS OUR BETTER JUDGEMENT AND GO ALONG WITHOUT A PROCESS OF LONG RESISTANCE AND EVENTUAL COMPLIANCE. IN THE LATTER CASE WE SHOULD STATE OUR VIEWS FIRMLY AT THE OUTSET IN CAPITALS EITHER AT PUS OR MINISTERIAL LEVEL, BEFORE ALLOWING THE LONG WRANGLE TO START HERE.

PARSONS

DEPARTMENTAL DISTN.

S AF D

OADS

UND

NAD

ECD

ERD

CABINET OFFICE

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10
DOWNING ST]