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TELEGRAM NO 403 OF 30 MAY
INFO SAVING WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

MIPT : VISIT OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER : THE INTERNAL SCENE

SUMMARY

1. THE INTERNAL SCENE IS CHANGING IN SOUTH AFRICA. NEW CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES WILL GIVE COLOURED AND INDIANS SOME SAY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY BUT WHITES WILL CONTINUE TO RETAIN CONTROL. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) CONTINUE TO REGARD THE HOMELANDS AS THE PRINCIPAL VEHICLES FOR BLACK POLITICAL EXPRESSION. THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR NON-HOMELAND BLACKS ARE NOT YET CLEAR, BUT THE LONG-TERM AIM OF THE SAG REMAINS THE LINKING OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN SOME FORM OF CONFEDERATION. THE GULF BETWEEN GOVERNMENT PLANS AND BLACK ASPIRATIONS REMAINS WIDE. EVEN THE GOVERNMENT'S LIMITED REFORM PLANS ARE UNDER ATTACK FROM RIGHT-WING AFRIKANERS. FALLING ECONOMIC GROWTH IMPEDES POLITICAL REFORM. THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS QUIET BUT THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE IS ALWAYS THERE.

DETAIL

2. INTERNAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA IS TAKING PLACE AT A MORE RAPID PACE THAN FOR MANY YEARS PAST. THE MOULD OF EXCLUSIVE WHITE POLITICAL CONTROL IS UNDER STRAIN. A NEW PARLIAMENT WITH SEPARATE CHAMBERS FOR WHITES, COLOURED AND INDIANS WILL BE ELECTED IN AUGUST AND WILL HOLD ITS FIRST SESSION IN SEPTEMBER. COLOURED AND INDIANS WILL HAVE NOT ONLY CONTROL OVER THE EXCLUSIVE CONCERNS OF THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES BUT ALSO A SAY IN QUOTE GENERAL UNQUOTE MATTERS CONCERNING ALL THE POPULATION GROUPS (EG DEFENCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICY, TRANSPORT, ETC). THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL ENSURE THAT WHITES RETAIN CONTROL OF THE IMPORTANT LEVERS OF GOVERNMENT. BUT THE SUCCESS OF THE SYSTEM WILL DEPEND UPON CONSENSUS AND COOPERATION, WHICH WILL REQUIRE CONCESSIONS FROM WHITES AS WELL AS FROM COLOURED AND INDIANS. THE TERRAIN ON WHICH THE POLITICAL BATTLE WILL BE FOUGHT HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY BROADENED.

3. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE BLACKS, OVER 70% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION, IS LESS PROMISING. THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN NO PART IN THE NEW PARLIAMENTARY STRUCTURES AND THE SAG CONTINUE TO REGARD THE VARIOUS HOMELANDS AS THE PRINCIPAL VEHICLES FOR BLACK POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. SOME EIGHT MILLION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S TWENTY-TWO

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MILLION

MILLION BLACKS HAVE BEEN ARBITRARILY DEPRIVED OF SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENSHIP SINCE THE QUOTE INDEPENDENCE UNQUOTE OF TRANSKEI, BOPHUTHATSWANA, VENDA AND CISCHEI (TBVC). HOWEVER THE SAG HAVE RECOGNISED THAT THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SIX AND A HALF MILLION BLACKS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE HOMELANDS, LARGELY IN URBAN AREAS, REMAINS THE GREATEST UNRESOLVED QUESTION. BLACK LOCAL GOVERNMENT RIGHTS GRANTED IN 1983 ARE IN THEORY EQUAL TO THOSE OF WHITES, BUT IN PRACTICE LIMITED BY THE ABSENCE OF AN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AS A BASIS FOR FINANCIAL AUTONOMY. A SPECIAL CABINET COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED IN 1983 TO CONSIDER THE PROBLEM OF NON-HOMELAND BLACKS HAS HELD PRELIMINARY TALKS WITH MOST HOMELAND LEADERS (BOTH INDEPENDENT AND SELF-GOVERNING) AND MEETINGS ARE PLANNED WITH NON-HOMELAND BLACK LEADERS BOTH OFFICIAL (RECENTLY ELECTED BLACK MAYORS) AND UNOFFICIAL (EG MOTLANA OF SOWETO). BUT OTHER BLACK LEADERS, LIKE MANDELA, HAVE NOT BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.

4. THERE IS AS YET NO INDICATION OF WHAT WILL EMERGE. A FOURTH CHAMBER FOR BLACKS HAS BEEN DEFINITELY RULED OUT AND THE SAG SAY THAT ANY POLITICAL DISPENSATION FOR BLACKS MUST BE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE POLICY OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT. WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE OF A QUOTE HIDDEN AGENDA UNQUOTE FOR EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE WHICH WOULD LIMIT THE AFRIKANERS' ABILITY TO MANAGE CHANGE AS A RESULT OF THE LOGIC OF BLACK NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY. THE SAG MAY BE PLANNING TO CONVERT BLACK URBAN AREAS COMPOSED PREDOMINANTLY OF ONE TRIBAL GROUP INTO HOMELAND QUOTE CONSTITUENCIES UNQUOTE WHILE SOWETO AND OTHER URBAN AREAS NOT LINKED WITH ANY ONE HOMELAND MIGHT BE GRANTED AUTONOMOUS QUOTE CITY STATE UNQUOTE STATUS. SUCH STRUCTURES MIGHT BRIDGE AT NATIONAL LEVEL WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WHITE, COLOURED AND INDIAN COMMUNITIES IN SOME KIND OF CONFEDERAL COUNCIL. NONE OF THESE IDEAS HOWEVER SEEMS LIKELY TO MEET THE GENERAL BLACK ASPIRATION TO SHARE IN POLITICAL POWER AT THE CENTRE. THE GULF BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK EXPECTATIONS IS NOT TOTALLY UNBRIDGEABLE, BUT IS LIKELY TO WIDEN THE LONGER THE QUESTION REMAINS UNRESOLVED. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC FACTORS ARE ON THE SIDE OF THE BLACKS. BLACK SKILLS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED TO DEVELOP THE ECONOMY AND BY THE YEAR 1990 THERE WILL BE TWICE AS MANY BLACKS LIVING IN URBAN AREAS IN SOUTH AFRICA AS THE COMBINED TOTAL OF WHITES, COLOURED AND INDIANS.

5. A FURTHER COMPLICATION IS THAT P W BOTHA, AS THE HEAD OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED WHITE GOVERNMENT (ALBEIT BY A MINORITY OF THE POPULATION) IS SUBJECT TO THE WILL OF HIS WHITE ELECTORATE. EVEN THE LIMITED REFORMS THAT HE HAS INTRODUCED HAVE CAUSED THE RIGHT WING OF THE RULING NATIONAL PARTY (NP) TO HIVE OFF TO FORM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY (CP) AND THE RIFT IS STILL WORKING ITS WAY THROUGH AFRIKANERDOM. P W BOTHA IS ACCUSED BY THE CP OF QUOTE BETRAYING UNQUOTE THE AFRIKANER CAUSE. THE COLOURED AND INDIAN VOTE IS SEEN BY THE CP AS THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE.

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THE NP IS SEEN TO BE INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT ON ENGLISH-SPEAKING SUPPORT AND THE CP CLAIMS TO HAVE DISPLACED THE NP AS THE AUTHENTIC VOICE OF AFRIKANERDOM. THE MOST WORRYING POLITICAL OPPOSITION FOR THE SAG AT PRESENT IS FROM THOSE WHO ADVOCATE A RETURN TO VERWOERDIAN VALUES AND NOT FURTHER CONCESSIONS.

6. THE CURRENT ECONOMIC STAGNATION IS CONTRIBUTING TO POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY. THE RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NON-WHITE POPULATION, THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES REQUIRED TO KEEP AFLOAT ECONOMICALLY NON-VIABLE QUOTE INDEPENDENT UNQUOTE HOMELANDS AND TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL DECENTRALISATION THE COSTS OF STAYING IN NAMIBIA AND THE ECONOMIC DEMANDS OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH MOZAMBIQUE AND OTHER NEIGHBOURS ALL INCREASE THE DEMANDS ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN TREASURY. THE CONSISTENT ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES OF THE 1950S AND 1960S HAVE GIVEN WAY TO NEGATIVE GROWTH RATES IN 1982 AND 1983. THIS YEAR SOUTH AFRICA WOULD DO WELL TO RESTORE THE ECONOMY TO THE 1981 LEVEL. THE POPULATION MEANWHILE HAS INCREASED, SO GNP PER HEAD WILL BE LESS. A CONTINUING DROUGHT, ADVERSE TRADING CONDITIONS AND A WEAKENED GOLD PRICE SEEM BOUND TO DEPRESS THE ECONOMY THROUGHOUT 1984. AN UPTURN IS NOT EXPECTED UNTIL 1985. THE RECENT BUDGET LACKED CREDIBILITY AND WAS WIDELY CRITICISED. THOUGH VERY MANY SOUTH AFRICAN BLACKS ENJOY A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING, THERE ARE MILLIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN BLACKS, PARTICULARLY IN THE HOMELANDS, WHO ARE ON THE SAME SUBSISTENCE LEVEL AS BLACKS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. THE SITUATION IS UNLIKELY TO IMPROVE IN THE SHORT-TERM. WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS FACE A DECLINING STANDARD OF LIVING. BLACK ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS TOO HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTED. THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK IS GLOOMY IN THE SHORT-TERM. BUT AN INCREASE IN THE GOLD PRICE AND A BREAK IN THE CONTINUING DROUGHT COULD ONCE AGAIN COME TO THE RESCUE.

7. THE PRINCIPAL INEQUALITIES WITH WHICH THE BLACK COMMUNITY (AND TO SOME EXTENT COLOURED AND INDIAN COMMUNITIES) HAVE TO CONTEND ARE:

(A) THE SAG, THOUGH REPRESENTING ONLY THE ONE-SIXTH OF THE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA WHICH IS WHITE, HAVE BEEN STEADILY DEPRIVING BLACKS WHO REPRESENT OVER 70% OF THE POPULATION OF THEIR SA CITIZENSHIP THROUGH THE CREATION OF SO-CALLED QUOTE INDEPENDENT UNQUOTE STATES.

(B) THE SEPARATE FACILITIES FOR BLACKS (SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, SPORTS CENTRES ETC) ARE MARKEDLY THOUGH AT PRESENT INEVITABLY INFERIOR THAN THOSE FOR WHITES. BLACKS HAVE TO LIVE IN SETTLEMENTS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MAIN TOWNS, HAVE TO TRAVEL MUCH FURTHER TO WORK THAN WHITES, HAVE MUCH LESS OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR COMMERCIAL, ARTISTIC AND INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL.

(C) BLACKS HAVE NO VOTE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

(D) TREATMENT OF BLACKS IS DISCRIMINATORY: THEY HAVE TO CARRY THEIR PASS BOOKS AT ALL TIMES, WHILE WHITES, COLOUREDS AND INDIANS DO NOT.

(E) INFLUX CONTROL AND FORCED REMOVALS CAN BE APPLIED RUTHLESSLY, CAUSING WIDESPREAD DISTRESS AND SEPARATION OF FAMILIES (THOUGH THE SAG ARE PLEDGED TO THE REMOVAL OF QUOTE HURTFUL UNNECESSARY DISCRIMINATION UNQUOTE). WHITES ARE OCCASIONALLY SUBJECT TO COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDERS BUT ARE NEVER TREATED AS BADLY AS THE BLACKS ARE.

(F) BLACKS MAY MARRY COLOUREDS, INDIANS AS WELL AS AMONG THEMSELVES, BUT NOT WHITES: SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES ARE ILLEGAL.

8. THE SAG ARE EXAMINING MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS. WHILE LIMITATIONS OF RESOURCES ARE BOUND TO INHIBIT EFFORTS TO PROVIDE EQUAL FACILITIES FOR A VERY LONG TIME TO COME, THE WEST CAN REASONABLY CALL ON THE SAG TO REMOVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS AND DISCRIMINATION WHICH ARE NOT DEPENDENT ON INCREASED RESOURCE ALLOCATION ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH HAVE AN INHIBITING ECONOMIC EFFECT. SUCH MEASURES COULD INCLUDE A MORE HUMANE POLICY ON INFLUX CONTROL, ACCESS FOR BLACK ENTREPRENEURS TO CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS, THE REPEAL OF THE MIXED MARRIAGES PROHIBITION ACT AND PARTS OF THE IMMORALITY ACT, A RELAXATION OF THE RIGID ENFORCEMENT OF THE GROUP AREAS ACT AND A SUSPENSION OF ANY FURTHER FORCED REMOVALS.

9. THE SITUATION MIGHT APPEAR TO BE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE. BUT THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE EXPLOSION IS ABOUT TO OCCUR. THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET FOR SOME YEARS ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASING SPORADIC INCIDENTS THIS YEAR IN BLACK AND COLOURED SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES. THE SAG POSSESS A FORMIDABLE ARRAY OF DRACONIAN SECURITY LAWS BUT THEIR APPLICATION HAS IN RECENT YEARS BEEN RELAXED. THE NUMBERS OF BANNINGS AND DETENTIONS REMAINS LOW. BUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT VIOLENCE COULD ERUPT AT ANY TIME CANNOT BE DISCOUNTED.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING.

FERGUSSON

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SOUTHERN AFRICA

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