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TELEGRAM NUMBER 237 OF 30 SEPTEMBER.

MY TELEGRAM NO. 236: SITUATION AT DURBAN CONSULATE

1. PLEASE NOW DELIVER TO PRESIDENT BOTHA'S OFFICE THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT BOTHA.

BEGINS JANET YOUNG HAS TOLD ME OF YOUR PROPOSAL TO SEND YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER TO LONDON FOR A TALK WITH ME.

LET ME FIRST ASSURE YOU THAT I AM FOLLOWING EVENTS IN DURBAN VERY CLOSELY AND HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED FROM THE OUTSET. I KNOW YOU WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT I WAS UNABLE TO SEE YOUR AMBASSADOR WHEN HE REQUESTED AN APPOINTMENT. MY PROGRAMME THAT WEEK WAS EXTREMELY TIGHT. AMBASSADOR WORRALL WILL, I HOPE, HAVE EXPLAINED THAT A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM YOU, HAD IT BEEN DELIVERED TO A FOREIGN OFFICE MINISTER OR TO MY PRIVATE SECRETARY, WOULD HAVE RECEIVED MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

I HAVE GIVEN SOME THOUGHT TO YOUR SUGGESTION. LET ME BE ENTIRELY FRANK ABOUT THIS, AS I AM SURE YOU WOULD EXPECT ME TO BE. THE SITUATION AT THE DURBAN CONSULATE POSES PROBLEMS FOR EACH OF US AND THE PUBLIC DIMENSION IS A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT ONE. ADDED TO THAT, THE DECISION YOU HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ARMSCOR CASE MAKES THE POSITION MORE DIFFICULT. YOU WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE PUBLICLY STATED THAT WE CANNOT BECOME INVOLVED AS INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN THE SIX IN THE CONSULATE AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. WE TAKE THE VIEW THAT IT IS FOR THE SIX TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND FOR THE LATTER TO CREATE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE SIX WILL FEEL ABLE TO LEAVE THE CONSULATE VOLUNTARILY, AND I HOPE THAT WILL BE SOON. I AM RATHER CONCERNED THAT A SUDDEN VISIT BY MR. BOTHA TO SEE ME WOULD HEIGHTEN PUBLIC SPECULATION THAT SOME SORT OF DEAL WAS ABOUT TO BE NEGOTIATED. IT WOULD I THINK BE DIFFICULT FOR BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY IN THE FULL GLARE OF THE

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PUBLICITY WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY FLOW FROM SUCH A VISIT. I BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE A RISK THAT NOTHING POSITIVE WOULD EMERGE, WHICH MIGHT LEAVE US BOTH WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE.

I WONDER THEREFORE WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT BE WISER IF WE WERE TO PROCEED THROUGH THE EXCHANGE OF CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGES. I WOULD NOT WANT TO RAISE FALSE EXPECTATIONS BUT I WOULD FIND IT VERY HELPFUL IF, AS A FIRST STEP, YOU COULD GIVE ME A CLEARER INDICATION OF YOUR THINKING.

BECAUSE OF THE INTENSE MEDIA INTEREST HERE, I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU COULD ASK YOUR AMBASSADOR TO DELIVER YOUR REPLY TO MY PRIVATE SECRETARY. A PERSONAL MEETING BETWEEN ME AND DR. WORRALL AT THIS STAGE MIGHT GIVE RISE TO THE SAME DIFFICULTIES AS A MEETING BETWEEN ME AND MR. R.F. BOTHA. THIS DOES NOT, OF COURSE, INDICATE ANY LESSENING OF MY CONCERN. IT IS SIMPLY THAT WE BOTH HAVE TO SHOW GREAT DELICACY IN THE WAY WE HANDLE THIS ISSUE. ENDS.

HOWE

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