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DESKBY 251630Z JAN 85  
FM CAPE TOWN 251515Z JAN 85  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 16 OF 25 JANUARY 85  
INFO PRETORIA, JOHANNESBURG, MBABANE, MASERU, GABORONE.  
INFO SAVING CAPE TOWN, DURBAN(PRETORIA PSE PASS)

STATE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

SUMMARY.

PRESIDENT BOTHA MADE A MAJOR POLICY SPEECH TODAY AT THE FIRST FULL SESSION OF THE NEW TRICAMERAL PARLIAMENT. THE GOVERNMENT THEMSELVES SEE THE SPEECH AS AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT OF INTENT ABOUT POLICY TOWARDS THE BLACK COMMUNITY. IN PLACES THE LANGUAGES IS CODED AND IMPRECISE. BUT THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED SOME NEW STEPS AND INTRODUCED A FRSH NOTE OF URGENCY. WE SHOULD GIVE HIS STATEMENT A CAUTIOUS WELCOME.

2. MAIN POINTS ARE:

(A) WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE ( A KEY WORD GOING BEYOND PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS TO DISCUSSIONS) THE GRANTING OF PROPERTY RIGHTS. THIS WILL BE SEEN AS AN INDICATION THAT FREEHOLD RIGHTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME TO BLACKS WITHIN THE REPUBLIC.

(B) QUOTE STEPS TO PROMOTE ORDERLY URBANISATION AND TO ELIMINATE NEGATIVE AND DISCRIMINATORY ASPECTS OF INFLUX CONTROL ARE RECEIVING URGENT ATTENTION UNQUOTE. THERE IS ALSO AN UNDERTAKING THAT RESETTLEMENT WILL BE GIVEN NEW ATTENTION. THE PRECISE INTENTION IS UNCLER BUT THE INFERENCE IS THAT PROCEDURES FOR CONTROLLING BLACK SETTLEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC AND PROVIDING FOR REMOVALS OF BLACKS FROM WHITE AREAS WILL BE SOFTENED.

(C) THE GOAL OF INDEPENDENCE FOR THE HOMELANDS IS TO BE MAINTAINED, BUT SOME NEW STATUS BETWEEN SELF-GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENCE WILL BE EXAMINED. THERE SEEMS TO BE OPEN RECOGNITION THAT MANY BLACKS IN SELF GOVERNING HOMELANDS WISH TO STAY WITHIN THE REPUBLIC.

(D) THE PERMANENT PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF BLACKS OUTSIDE THE HOMELANDS IS ACCEPTED TOGETHER WITH THE NEED TO PROVIDE FOR POLITICAL STRUCTURES QUOTE THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN THEMSELVES DECIDE ON THEIR OWN AFFAIRS UP TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS UNQUOTE. THIS APPEARS TO CONFIRM IDEAS WHICH HAVE BEEN UNDER REVIEW FOR SOME TIME FORESHADOWING SOME SORT OF UMBRELLA ORGANISATION IN WHICH BLACKS WOULD PARTICIPATE ALONGSIDE REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER RACIAL GROUPS.

(E) AN EARLY DECISION IS PROMISED ON THE QUESTION OF CITIZENSHIP WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT THERE MAY BE ADJUSTMENTS HELPFUL TO BLACKS.

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(F) EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON THE NEED FOR MORE DIALOGUE WITH BLACKS. IN PARTICULAR A NEW INFORMAL AND NON-STATUTORY FORUM FOR CONSULTATION IS TO BE CREATED AND A STRONG BID MADE FOR BLACK PARTICIPATION.

3. THIS GENERAL AGENDA WILL NOT WIN OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S BLACK CRITICS. IT IS TOO IMPRECISE AND FAILS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT BLACKS HAVE ANY RIGHTS OTHER THAN IN THE CONTEXT OF QUOTE OWN AFFAIRS UNQUOTE, A RESTRICTIVE TERM IN SOUTH AFRICAN USAGE EXCLUDING QUESTIONS OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES. THERE IS NO OVERALL CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH WHICH REMAINS THAT EACH GROUP SHOULD EXERCISE SELF DETERMINATION OVER ITS OWN AFFAIRS IN A WAY APPROPRIATE TO IT.

4. NEVERTHELESS THERE ARE ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE PREPARED TO REMOVE SOME OF THE MOST OBJECTIONABLE ASPECTS OF APARTHEID. MOREOVER TO DEVOTE THE SUBSTANTIAL PART OF A SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT TO BLACK AFFAIRS WILL BE SEEN IN AFRIKANER CIRCLES AS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT, AS WILL THE GENERAL TENOR OF THE SPEECH. FOR THE PRESIDENT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED FOR IMPROVED ATTITUDES TO THE BLACKS AND ACCEPTING THAT BLACKS MUST BE INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES WOULD HAVE BEEN UNTHINKABLE PREVIOUSLY. THE GOVERNMENT CAN EXPECT TO BE SHARPLY ATTACKED BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY HERE. THERE MAY EVEN BE RESTIVENESS AMONG THE MORE RIGHT WING MEMBERS OF ITS OWN BACK BENCHERS.

5. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD GIVE A CAUTIOUS WELCOME TO SIGNS IN THE STATEMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT ARE THINKING OF CHANGES AND MAY BE PREPARED TO MODIFY SOME OF THEIR MOST CONTROVERSIAL POLICIES, EG. POPULATION REMOVALS. WE CAN WELCOME THE EMPHASIS ON GREATER CONSULTATION. WE MIGHT ALSO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE SPEECH WILL BE FOLLOWED UP BY SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS FOR REAL CHANGE BENEFICIAL TO THE BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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