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FM CAPE TOWN 281435Z JAN 85

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 019 OF 28 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY PRETORIA, JOHANNESBURG.

INFO SAVING CAPE TOWN CONSULATE (ACTIONED), DURBAN (PTA PSE PASS)

MY TELNO 16: STATE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

1. YOU MAY WISH TO HAVE SOME FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON PRESIDENT BOTHA'S STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. REACTIONS SO FAR HAVE BEEN MIXED. BUT ALL EXCEPT LEADING OPPONENTS OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM RECOGNISE THE SPEECH AS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT WHICH SETS THE AGENDA FOR THE POLITICAL DEBATE FROM NOW ON.

2. THE DRAWBACK OF THE STATEMENT IS THAT IT IS STRONG ON GOOD INTENTIONS, WEAK ON SPECIFICS. THIS IS DELIBERATE. IT GIVES LESS OF A TARGET TO THE GOVERNMENT'S RIGHT WING CRITICS- A CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP. IT ALLOWS FOR THE NEWLY-ELECTED COLOURED AND INDIAN REPRESENTATIVES TO HAVE SOME ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH THEY CAN CLAIM AS A SUCCESS FOR THEMSELVES DURING THE FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENTARY SESSION. (THIS MAY EXPLAIN WHY THERE WAS NO MENTION IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ABOUT MATTERS SUCH AS THE MIXED MARRIAGES ACT AND IMMORALITY ACT WHICH HAVE BEEN ALREADY REFERRED TO A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE AND WHERE CHANGES WILL PRIMARILY INTEREST THE COLOURED COMMUNITY RATHER THAN TO BLACKS.) IT ALSO OWES SOMETHING PROBABLY TO CALCULATION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PART THAT A BROAD BRUSH APPROACH IS TO BE PREFERRED RATHER THAN ANNOUNCING DETAILS ALL AT ONCE. I HAVE SUGGESTED ELSEWHERE THAT REFORM BY STEALTH MAY BE AN ELEMENT IN THE PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL TECHNIQUE.

3. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT'S GUIDING PHILOSOPHY REMAINS INTACT, THE SPEECH DOES REPRESENT A DISTINCT CHANGE OF EMPHASIS. IT RECOGNISES THAT BLACKS MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. IT MAKES A NEW BID TO ENLIST MODERATE BLACK SUPPORT. IT TACITLY ADMITS THAT PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO FIND COMMON GROUND HAVE PROVED INADEQUATE. IT CORRECTLY HIGHLIGHTS MANY OF THE PROBLEM AREAS. BUT MUCH IS LEFT TO BE FILLED IN. THE APPEAL DEPENDS HEAVILY ON HINTS OF REFORM BEING ON THE WAY. IT WILL TAKE TIME TO BECOME CLEAR HOW FAR THESE HALF PROMISES ARE TO BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION.

4. ON RESETTLEMENT, FOR INSTANCE, THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS SERIOUS ABOUT GIVING UP ITS PREVIOUS POLICY OF REMOVALS OF WHOLE COMMUNITIES AGAINST THEIR WILL. WILJOEN, MINISTER OF CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, TOLD ME AS MUCH YESTERDAY, THOUGH HE ADDED THAT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT RESETTLEMENT

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TO DISAPPEAR ALTOGETHER, E.G. IN CASES OF OVERCROWDING. IN OTHER PLACES WHERE THE PRESIDENT SEEMS TO BE SAYING THE RIGHT THING (INCLUDING A HIGH PREMIUM ON IMPROVED PROVISION FOR EDUCATION AND THE IDEA OF EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL) THE CRITICS WILL REPLY ON LINES OF THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING BEING IN THE EATING. SIMILARLY, WE DO NOT YET KNOW HOW MUCH TO READ INTO THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ABOUT CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS POLITICAL ENTITIES ON MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST QUOTE WITHIN THE SAME OVERALL FRAMEWORK UNQUOTE. IS THIS A HINT OF SOME KIND OF JOINT COUNCIL EVENTUALLY? A POSSIBLE POINTER WAS GIVEN BY WILJOEN IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WHEN HE REFERRED TO HOPES OF A GREATER INPUT BY NON-ESTABLISHED BLACK UOUCS AND LEADERS, IMPLYING PERHAPS THAT AS WELL AS RADICALS MODPRATES MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN SOME WAY. BUT ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT PREVIOUS MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION HAVE NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND.

5. THE GOVERNMENT SEEM TO HAVE EXPECTED THE SPEECH TO BE DISMISSED BY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE UDF WHO ARE OPPOSED TO THEM ROOT AND BRANCH. THEY CAN TAKE SOME COMFORT FROM FIRST REACTIONS OF BLACK LEADERS LIKE MOTLANA IN SOWETO. THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION ALSO FELT THE SPEECH AN IMMEDIATE POSITIVE FEELING WHILE SUSPENDING JUDGEMENT ABOUT ITS FULL IMPLICATIONS. FOR A FULLER ACCOUNT OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH SEE MIFT.

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