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15

SOUTHERN AFRICA

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IMMEDIATE

*We must not let the news
on this - in the spirit of
MFB*

15.11.81

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 291620Z JUNE 85

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1992 OF 29 JUNE

INFO IMMEDIATE UKDEL MILAN (FOR APPEYARD), PRETORIA, MASERU

INFO PRIORITY GABORONE. MAPUTO, LUANDA

SOUTH AFRICA/LESOTHO RELATIONS

SUMMARY

1. U.S. SEE A DANGER OF A REPETITION ON MASERU OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RAID ON GABORONE, AND URGE UK DIPLOMATIC ACTION. DETAIL
2. CROCKER SUMMONED KERR ON 29 JUNE TO REPORT THAT STATE WERE WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY ACTION AGAINST LESOTHO, AND WOULD WELCOME UK ASSISTANCE IN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO PERSUADE BOTH SIDES TO START TALKING.
3. CROCKER SAID THAT THE EXPLOSIONS IN THE TRANSKEI ON 25 JUNE COULD PROVIDE PRETORIA WITH A REASON, OR EXCUSE, FOR PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST LESOTHO. SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO ON 27 JUNE HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO A POLICE STATEMENT THAT QUOTE ANC SUICIDE SQUADS WERE OPERATING NOT ONLY FROM GABORONE, BUT WERE ALSO BEING CONTROLLED FROM THE LESOTHO CAPITAL OF MASERU. UNQUOTE. CROCKER DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS ALLEGATION WAS WELL-FOUNDED (THOUGH HE THOUGHT IT NOT WHOLLY IMPLAUSIBLE). NOR HAD HE SEEN ANY EVIDENCE

DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS ALLEGATION WAS WELL-FOUNDED (THOUGH HE THOUGHT IT NOT WHOLLY IMPLAUSIBLE). NOR HAD HE SEEN ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE PLANNING PUNITIVE ACTION; BUT THEIR RECENT PATTERN OF BEHAVIOUR, AND AN APPARENT BREAKDOWN OF DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRETORIA AND MASERU, MADE HIM UNEASY.

4. CROCKER'S PRESCRIPTION WAS FOR DIPLOMATIC ACTION IN BOTH CAPITALS. IN MASERU, THE AIM SHOULD BE TO ARGUE FOR A MORE COHERENT DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA ON SECURITY ISSUES. IN PRETORIA, IT SHOULD BE TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING TO THE LESOTHO, RATHER THAN RESORTING TO DIRECT ACTION WHICH WOULD PRODUCE FURTHER MASSIVELY NEGATIVE WORLD-WIDE REACTION.

5. CROCKER SAID THAT THE US WOULD BE ACTING IN THIS SENSE IN BOTH CAPITALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT THEY WOULD GREATLY WELCOME OUR SUPPORT. THE LESOTHO MIGHT BE MORE READY TO LISTEN TO US THAN TO THE AMERICANS. AND IF THE AMERICANS ALONE ACTED IN PRETORIA, THE DFA MIGHT DISCOUNT THEIR ACTION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE CURRENT BILATERAL QUARREL, OR THE CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL CLIMATE. THEY SHOULD BE MADE TO REALISE THAT ANY RAID ON MASERU WOULD OCCASION GENERAL HOSTILE REACTIONS, AND NOT JUST FROM THE US.

6. KERR UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY CROCKER'S REQUEST. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT THIS STAGE ONLY THE UK ARE BEING APPROACHED.

WRIGHT

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