

GRS 230

UNCLASSIFIED

FM CANBERRA 290215Z JULY 85

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 501 OF 29 JULY

AND REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO ROUTINE PRETORIA, WASHINGTON,
WELLINGTON, OTTAWA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS AND BONN

MY TELNO.485

AUSTRALIAN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA

1. SPEAKING IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON 28 JULY THE AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, MR HAYDEN, SAID THAT HE AND THE TRADE MINISTER, MR DAWKINS, ARE CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA'S OFFICIAL LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. HE SAID THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE THE PROSPECT OF GLOBAL SANCTIONS UNTIL IT COULD BE ESTABLISHED WHETHER THEY WOULD BE EFFECTIVE. IF THEY COULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE, AUSTRALIA WOULD REVIEW THE SITUATION TO SEE WHAT UNILATERAL ACTION COULD BE TAKEN. MR HAYDEN CONFIRMED THAT MR HAWKE WILL INTRODUCE PROPOSALS FOR A TRADE EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA AT THE CHOGM.
2. ON 26 JULY MR HAYDEN HAD SAID THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD VOTE IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY FRANCE IN THE UNSC, BUT HAD IMPLIED THAT AUSTRALIA FAVOURED MORE EXTENSIVE SANCTIONS. HE SAID THAT AUSTRALIA HAD "BEEN MAKING DISCREET CONTACT WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO SEE WHETHER A GLOBAL COMMERCIAL EMBARGO WAS PRACTICABLE" BUT THAT THESE MOVES HAD BEEN "OVERTAKEN BY THIS VERY SUDDEN DEVELOPMENT ON THE PART OF THE FRENCH".
3. PRESS COMMENTATORS SEE THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REVIEW AS THE CLOSURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN TRADE COMMISSION IN JOHANNESBURG. (AUSTRALIAN EXPORTS TO SOUTH AFRICA IN 1983-84 WERE WORTH AUD 279 MILLION, WHILE IMPORTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA WERE WORTH AUD 132 MILLION). THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION HAS DESCRIBED THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS IN THE UNSC AS "MISTAKEN AND SHORT-SIGHTED". HE SAID THAT SANCTIONS WOULD HURT POOR BLACKS MORE THAN ANY SECTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY. EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS BEEN VERY MIXED, RANGING FROM "IRRESPONSIBLE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS THROUGH THEIR MINDLESS ADVOCACY OF SANCTIONS THREATEN TO PLUNGE THE COUNTRY INTO POVERTY AND A REVOLUTIONARY BLOODBATH" (THE AUSTRALIAN) TO "VOLUNTARY SANCTIONS ARE WORTH PURSUING AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT IN THE TRAGEDY OF SOUTH AFRICA" (THE AGE). THERE IS VERY LITTLE DIRECT CRITICISM OF THE UK POSITION, AND 'THE AGE' NOTES THAT THE ABSTENTION BY THE UK AND THE USA ON THE FRENCH RESOLUTION IS AN IMPORTANT SIGNAL TO SOUTH AFRICA.
4. SEE MIFT.

LEAHY

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