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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2325 DATED 5 AUGUST

INFO IMMEDIATE BONN, LUXEMBOURG, THE HAGUE, ROME, PRETORIA

FCO TELNOS 1226-7 : MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOTHA TO THE PRIME MINISTER

1. I RAISED THESE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS WITH CROCKER ON 5 AUGUST, JUST AS HE WAS GOING INTO A MEETING WITH SHULTZ AND MCFARLANE TO DISCUSS THE US ATTITUDE TO THEM. ON CROCKER'S INSTRUCTIONS, GELBARD SUBSEQUENTLY BRIEFED US AS FOLLOWS.

2. GELBARD SAID THAT PIK BOTHA HAD TELEPHONED WISNER ON 2 AUGUST TO SAY THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAD ON 1 AUGUST TAKEN A NUMBER OF FAR-REACHING DECISIONS, WHICH WOULD HELP MOVEMENT TOWARDS REAL AND GENUINE POWER-SHARING. AS A RESULT, PW BOTHA WAS PLANNING TO MAKE A NEW STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES AT THE NATAL PARTY CONFERENCE ON 15 AUGUST.

3. IT WAS CLEAR FROM WHAT PIK BOTHA HAD SAID THAT THE MAIN AIM OF THIS PROPOSED SOUTH AFRICAN MOVE WAS TO ENABLE THE US ADMINISTRATION TO STAND UP TO CONGRESS, AND TO HELP THE BRITISH AND GERMAN GOVERNMENTS TO RESIST SIMILAR PRESSURES, AND THUS (PIK BOTHA HAD CLAIMED) TO WIN THE SOUTH AFRICANS ENOUGH TIME TO WORK OUT THEIR PROBLEMS WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. PIK BOTHA HAD STRESSED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WISHED TO MAKE SURE IN ADVANCE THAT THE MEASURES THEY WERE PROPOSING WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. THEY THEREFORE ATTACHED IMPORTANCE TO PRIOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE AMERICANS, AND THEN WITH THE BRITISH AND GERMANS, BEFORE THE 15 AUGUST SPEECH. TO THIS END, PIK BOTHA WAS READY TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON, LONDON AND BONN. HE EXPECTED TO BE BRINGING WITH HIM AN ADDITIONAL MESSAGE OF EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE (WHICH THE AMERICANS SUSPECT MAY RELATE TO MANDELA).

4. PIK BOTHA HAD ALSO RAISED WITH WISNER THE PROPOSED VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA BY EC FOREIGN MINISTERS, AND HAD ASKED THE AMERICANS TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO HAVE THIS DELAYED SO AS TO PRECLUDE ANY POSSIBILITY OF THE 15 AUGUST PROPOSALS BEING PERCEIVED AS THE RESULT OF FOREIGN PRESSURE.

5. GELBARD SAID THAT SHULTZ HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT THE AMERICANS COULD NOT AFFORD TO SPURN THIS OPPORTUNITY, DESPITE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD SEEK TO CO-OPT THE US IN SOME WAY. FOR ONCE, THE AMERICANS SEEMED TO HAVE SOME LEVERAGE. THE SOUTH AFRICANS SEEMED TO BE FEELING THE FINANCIAL PRESSURE IN PARTICULAR. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF REAGAN SEEING PIK

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BOTHA. NO DECISION HAD YET BEEN MADE ON THE US REPRESENTATIVE, BUT HE SEEMED VERY LIKELY TO BE LOWER-LEVEL THAN SHULTZ. AS FOR THE VENUE, THE AMERICANS WOULD BE PROPOSING A THIRD COUNTRY (AS YET UNIDENTIFIED). AND IF THE MEETING DID INDEED TAKE PLACE, THE AMERICANS WOULD APPROACH IT WITH AN AGENDA OF THEIR OWN AS WELL, COVERING BOTH DOMESTIC SOUTH AFRICAN AND REGIONAL ISSUES.

6. GELBARD SAID THE AMERICANS WERE VERY WORRIED THAT NEWS OF THE PROPOSED MEETING WOULD LEAK. THEY WERE THEREFORE HOPING THAT IT COULD BE ARRANGED FOR THIS WEEK (WHICH WOULD HAVE THE ADDED ADVANTAGE OF ALLOWING THE SOUTH AFRICANS MORE TIME TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF US VIEWS BEFORE FINALISING THE 15 AUGUST TEXT). IF IT DID LEAK, THEY WOULD PROBABLY DEFEND THEIR DECISION BY SAYING THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD PROMISED DETAILS OF REFORMS AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE BEEN IRRESPONSIBLE TO REJECT SUCH A DISCUSSION.

7. THE AMERICANS HAVE YET TO DISCUSS THESE DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE GERMANS. WE ENCOURAGED THEM TO DO SO.

HANNAY

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