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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 438 OF 05 AUGUST

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (DS6)

PRIORITY WASHINGTON

ROUTINE GABORONE, PRETORIA AND LUSAKA

MY TELNO 429: KIDNAPPED TOURISTS

1. MY US AND AUSTRALIAN COLLEAGUES AND I SAW JOSHUA NKOMO IN BULAWAYO THIS MORNING AND DREW A VIRTUAL BLANK.

2. WE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE TWO (NOT WELL PUBLICISED) STATEMENTS OF CONDEMNATION WHICH HE HAS ALREADY MADE: EXPLAINED OUR VIEW THAT MORE POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN APPEALS SHOULD BE MADE, IN ADDITION TO THE POLICE AND MILITARY SEARCHES: TOLD HIM OF THE RELEVANT PARTS OF OUR DISCUSSION WITH MUGABE (TUR): AND URGED THAT HE TAKE UP THE OFFER OF RADIO FACILITIES TO MAKE A FURTHER WIDELY BROADCAST APPEAL AND TO DISSOCIATE ZAPU CLEARLY FROM THE KIDNAPPING.

3. NKOMO EXPRESSED HIS SHOCK AND GREAT SADNESS AT THE KIDNAPPING AND THE DEATHS OF THE 3 BRITISH TOURISTS IN INYANGA. HE SAID THAT PUBLIC APPEALS SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE FROM THE START. HE BLAMED THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT REPORTING HIS FIRST APPEAL ON RADIO. OF COURSE ZAPU WAS NOT BEHIND THE KIDNAPPING OR OTHER BANDITRY. HIS MEETING WITH MUGABE HAD BEEN UNSATISFACTORY: HE HAD OFFERED A COOPERATIVE APPROACH AND MUGABE'S REACTION HAD BEEN "YOUR PEOPLE ARE DOING IT, YOU STOP THEM." HE ENTIRELY UNDERSTOOD OUR APPROACH, BUT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD APPROACH HIM DIRECTLY "NOT THROUGH DIPLOMATS". HE COULD NOT ACT INDEPENDENTLY ON A NATIONAL MATTER OF THIS KIND NOR COULD HE SPEAK AS LEADER OF ZAPU ABOUT SOMETHING WHICH WAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PARTY. HE WAS, HOWEVER, VERY READY TO JOIN "AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN" IN PUBLICLY SUPPORTING APPEALS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO THE KIDNAPPERS TO RELEASE THEIR HOSTAGES. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE MADE SUCH APPEALS FROM THE START.

4. THIS WAS A LONG AND REPETITIVE DISCUSSION. IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT NKOMO'S OVERRIDING PRE-OCCUPATION IS THAT, IF HE WERE TO ACT AS WE URGED, THIS MIGHT BE SEIZED UPON AS INDICATING ZAPU CONTROL OVER DISSIDENCE AND PERHAPS AS A PRETEXT FOR HIS DETENTION. WE ARGUED AT LENGTH AND DID OUR BEST TO GET HIM TO SEE THAT HE RUNS AT LEAST AS MUCH RISK OF GUILT BY ASSOCIATION BY REMAINING SILENT. I MADE A PERSONAL APPEAL TO HIM TO CONSIDER ALSO THE WIDER SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN PARTIES, BOTH OF WHICH WERE DETERIORATING. I SAID THAT, IF DISASTER WERE TO BE AVERTED, ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER WOULD HAVE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE MATTERS. I URGED HIM TO CONSIDER THE ADVANTAGES FOR ZAPU IN DOING SO: A FORTHRIGHT STAND OVER THE KIDNAPPING COULD BE A FIRST STEP TO REBUILDING OTHER BRIDGES. ALL OF THIS NKOMO REJECTED POLITELY BUT FIRMLY AND ALMOST FRANTICALLY.

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5. IT REMAINS POSSIBLE THAT HE MAY THINK IT OVER. IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT THE LINE TAKEN PUBLICLY (MY TELNO 418) AND PRIVATELY (MY TUR) BY MUGABE IS NOT SUCH AS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR NKOMO TO ACT AS WE WISH. THE AMERICAN, AUSTRALIAN AND I ARE SEEKING AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO PROBE, WITHOUT MUCH HOPE, WHETHER THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES SUFFICIENTLY TO GET THE RIGHT KIND OF MESSAGES GOING OUT OVER THE DOMESTIC RADIO.

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 429 OF 4 AUGUST

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (DS6)

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, GABORONE, PRETORIA, LUSAKA.

MY TELNO 425 : KIDNAPPED TOURISTS

1. DESPITE PARA 7 OF TUR, MUGABE RECEIVED MY US AND AUSTRALIAN COLLEAGUES AND ME YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ALL THREE, I SAID THAT OUR GOVERNMENTS REMAINED DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF THE HOSTAGES AND WOULD BE GLAD THAT WE WERE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH HIM. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE STRENUOUS EFFORTS BEING MADE BY THE SECURITY FORCES AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFICULTY OF LOCATING THE HOSTAGES. IF THERE WERE ANY ADDITIONAL WAYS IN WHICH OUR GOVERNMENTS COULD HELP THEY WOULD BE GLAD TO DO SO. WE HAD 3 SUGGESTIONS AS TO POSSIBLE FURTHER MEASURES, SOME OF WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AT MUGABE'S MEETING WITH NKOMO. THEY WERE:

I) THAT, EVEN THOUGH RESPONSE WAS UNLIKELY, FINANCIAL REWARDS MIGHT BE OFFERED FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO RECOVERY OF THE HOSTAGES ALIVE:

II) THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER FINDING JUNIOR EX-ZIPRA COMMANDERS, WHO HAD OPERATED IN THE SEARCH AREA DURING THE LIBERATION WAR, TO ADVISE AND ASSIST THE POLICE ENQUIRIES IN THE AREA:

III) THAT THE ZAPU OR EX-ZIPRA LEADERSHIP BE URGED TO MAKE MORE PUBLIC AND EMPHATIC DENUNCIATIONS AND APPEALS FOR SAFE RELEASE OF HOSTAGES.

2. MUGABE ASKED US TO CONVEY TO OUR GOVERNMENTS HIS SHOCK, HORROR AND DEEP REGRET AT WHAT HAD HAPPENED. HE SAID THE FIRST PRIORITY NOW WAS TO LOCATE THE HOSTAGES, DEAD OR ALIVE. HE THOUGHT THAT THE SECURITY FORCES HAD BEEN DECOYED AWAY FROM THE RIGHT TRACK BY THE LOCAL INHABITANTS, WHO MADE COMMON CAUSE WITH THE DISSIDENTS DESPITE HALF-HEARTED STATEMENTS BY NKOMO. HE ASSURED US THAT THE ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT REST UNTIL THEY HAD "A DEFINITE CLUE" ABOUT THE HOSTAGES AND WOULD DEPLOY MORE FORCES TO NEIGHBOURING AREAS SUCH AS NKAI AND LUPANE TO THE NORTH IN CASE THE KIDNAPPERS HAD SLIPPED THROUGH THE PRESENT CORDON.

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3. HE THOUGHT A FINANCIAL REWARD WORTH TRYING. LOWER RANKING ZIPRA LEADERS TENDED TO BACK THE DISSIDENTS NOT THE GOVERNMENT AND HE DOUBTED IF THEY WOULD HELP. BUT A MORE ACTIVE LINE BY THE ZAPU LEADERSHIP WOULD BE USEFUL. HE HAD ASKED NKOMO AT THEIR MEETING YESTERDAY TO CONSIDER THIS BOTH IN RELATION TO THE KIDNAPPING AND BANDITRY IN GENERAL. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER NKOMO WOULD ACT: "YOU CAN NEVER DEPEND ON HIM". THIS LED TO A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING (SEE MY TELNO 430). BUT HE DID NOT DESPAIR THAT NKOMO MIGHT COME IN TIME TO MAKE MORE VIGOROUS DENIALS.

4. IN ANSWER TO MY SUGGESTION HE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF THE 3 OF US WERE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE WITH NKOMO OURSELVES (WE HAVE NOW ARRANGED TO DO SO IN BULAWAYO TOMORROW MORNING) AND HE AGREED THAT IF NKOMO AND OTHER SENIOR ZAPU LEADERS WERE PREPARED TO MAKE STATEMENTS APPEALING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES, THESE COULD BE CARRIED ON RADIO IN ENGLISH AND THE LOCAL LANGUAGE.

5. HE CONCLUDED BY REPEATING HIS REGRET AND ASSURING US THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RECOVER THE HOSTAGES. HE ASKED ME PARTICULARLY TO CONVEY HIS CONDOLENCES OVER THE TRAGIC NEWS OF THE DEATH OF THE 3 BRITISH TOURISTS AT INYANGA. WHEN DEPARTING FOR THE OAU MEETING IN TRIPOLI THIS MORNING HE COMMENTED TO ME THAT HE HOPED FOR BETTER NEWS OF THE HOSTAGES BY THE TIME OF HIS RETURN.

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