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OF 221221Z OCTOBER 85

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM NOW REPEATED TO YOU AT REQUEST OF DEPARTMENT WAS RECEIVED FROM PRETORIA TELEGRAM NO 414 OF 22 OCTOBER.

SOUTH AFRICAN REACTIONS TO THE COMMONWEALTH ACCORD

SUMMARY

1. IN HIS FIRST REACTION, THE STATE PRESIDENT, THOUGH GENERALLY SCEPTICAL ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH ACCORD, HAS RESERVED JUDGEMENT ON THE PROPOSED MISSION. MR BOTHA WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE SIX MONTH TIME LIMIT FOR CONCRETE PROGRESS TOWARDS REFORM.

DETAIL

2. IN HIS FIRST REACTION TO THE COMMONWEALTH ACCORD THE STATE PRESIDENT IS REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED BROAD CRITICISMS AT A BY-ELECTION RALLY IN BETHLEHEM, ORANGE FREE STATE, YESTERDAY EVENING, BUT HE DID NOT COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ON THE PROPOSED COMMONWEALTH MISSION. (HIS OFFICE HAVE TOLD US THAT THERE IS NO OFFICIAL VERSION OF HIS REMARKS.)

3. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MR BOTHA SAID THAT IT WAS AN "INTERNATIONAL LIE" THAT HE WAS NOT NEGOTIATING WITH BLACK LEADERS: "WE ARE TALKING TO BLACK LEADERS EVERY DAY AND WE ARE



● LLING TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL REASONABLE LEADERS ... BUT WE WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY NOTICE TO COMPLETE DISCUSSIONS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR - ONLY SOUTH AFRICANS WILL DECIDE THAT''.

4. HE WARNED THE US AND THE COMMONWEALTH THAT BY PROPOSING SANCTIONS, ''BY DIGGING A HOLE FOR SOUTH AFRICA, THEY COULD END UP HARMING THEMSELVES''. SANCTIONS WERE SENSELESS. THEY HAD FAILED IN THE PAST, AS THE MILITARY BOYCOTT HAD SHOWN. IF SOUTH AFRICA WERE TO WITHHOLD ITS CHROME EXPORTS, ONE MILLION AMERICANS WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS AND THE MOTOR INDUSTRY IN EUROPE WOULD BE BROUGHT TO A STANDSTILL. A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WEST WAS NEEDED. THE WORLD HAD BECOME RESTLESS ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION AND SOMETIMES APPLIED DOUBLE STANDARDS. HE FOUND IT STRANGE THAT AUSTRALIA WAS ''CRUCIFYING'' SOUTH AFRICA, BUT HAD SOLVED ITS OWN PROBLEMS BY QIPING OUT THE ABORIGINIES.

5. WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD MUCH TO PROTECT AND COULD NOT BE DICTATED TO FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, BUT THEY HAD TO ACCEPT THAT REFORM MUST TAKE PLACE. THE GUIDELINES FOR REFORM WERE CHRISTIAN AND CIVILISED NORMS: LAW AND ORDER HAD TO BE MAINTAINED, AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY UPHELD. THE NATIONAL PARTY DID NOT BELIEVE IN ONE MAN ONE VOTE IN ONE STRUCTURE NOR IN A FOURTH CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT BUT IN ''A SYSTEM IN WHICH EVERYONE WOULD BE GIVEN A VOTE WITHIN A SPECIALLY CREATED STRUCTURE WHICH PROVIDED GROUP DOMINATION''.

6. THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER, PIK BOTHA, HAS SAID THAT HE WOULD RESERVE COMMENT UNTIL HE HAD STUDIED THE FULL TEXT OF THE COMMONWEALTH ACCORD AND RELATED DOCUMENTS. HE EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL APPRECIATION FOR MRS THATCHER'S CONTRIBUTION, WHILE CRITICISING THE CONCEPT OF SANCTIONS IN PRINCIPLE AND PARTICULARLY THE ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE A SIX MONTHS TIME LIMIT FOR REFORM.

7. GENERALLY, THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS HAVE BEEN LUKEWARM ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH ACCORD, WITH EVEN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS FAR FROM ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SOME OF ITS FORMULATIONS. WE ARE TELEGRAPHING SEPARATELY A PRESS REVIEW.

8. A MORE DEFINITIVE REACTION BY THE STATE PRESIDENT AND/OR FOREIGN MINISTER IS EXPECTED LATER THIS WEEK.

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