

SECRET

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FM PRETORIA

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 472

OF 120900Z DEC 88

INFO IMMEDIATE BONN

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FOLLOWING STRICTLY PERSONAL FOR PS/SECRETARY OF STATE AND
HEAD OF SAFD

BONN (PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR)

Stephen
Secretary of State

YOUR TELNO 288: ANGLO/GERMAN EMISSARY TO PRESIDENT BOTHA

1. DR LEUTWILER, BEFORE LEAVING FOR SWITZERLAND, GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOTHA ON FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER. HE WILL BE GLAD TO GIVE THE PRIME MINISTER A DIRECT ACCOUNT AS AND WHEN THIS IS CONVENIENT FOR HER.

2. LEUTWILER SAID THAT HE HAD HANDED OVER A COPY OF THE MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AND CHANCELLOR KOHL. THEREAFTER THE DISCUSSION HAD GONE ON FOR TWO OR THREE HOURS. IT HAD BEEN A TENSE AND DIFFICULT MEETING. P W BOTHA HAD BEEN BOTH BITTER AND EMOTIONAL. WHEN LEUTWILER HAD SAID THIS TO HIM, P W BOTHA SAID THAT HE WAS NOT BITTER, BUT DISAPPOINTED. DESPITE LEUTWILER'S REPEATED REMINDERS THAT THIS WAS A MESSAGE ALSO FROM CHANCELLOR KOHL, P W BOTHA HAD ADDRESSED ALL HIS REMARKS THROUGH HIM TO THE PRIME MINISTER. HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT SHE WAS BEING UNFAIR. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS CONSTANTLY PRESSURISING THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. I ALSO KEPT PRESSURISING THEM. WE WERE NOT GOING TO GET THEM TO LANCASTER HOUSE ETC.

3. ON MANDELA, P W BOTHA HAD ARGUED THAT HE WAS NOW "PRACTICALLY" A FREE MAN. HE WAS LIVING IN A NICE HOUSE WITH A SWIMMING POOL. HE REFUSED TO AGREE TO BE SENT TO THE TRANSKEI. P W BOTHA THEN GAVE THE FOLLOWING REASONS FOR HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO FREE HIM COMPLETELY :

(A) IF HE WERE RELEASED, MANDELA WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE KILLED

107 IF HE WERE RELEASED, MANDELA WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE KILLED EITHER BY A BLACK OR A WHITE . THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN BE BLAMED. HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE PROTECTION.

(B) HE WOULD BE LIKELY TO GO TO SOWETO AND ADDRESS A CROWD OF 100,000 PEOPLE. THERE WOULD THEN BE UNREST AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO ARREST HIM AGAIN.

(C) IF HE, P W BOTHA, WERE OBLIGED TO APPEAR ON TELEVISION AND SAY THAT MANDELA WAS BEING SET FREE, HE WOULD HAVE TO STEP DOWN ON THE SAME DAY.

(D) THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT FREE MANDELA IF THE WEST WOULD LIFT SANCTIONS .

4. LEUTWILER SAID THAT THE MESSAGE HE HAD BROUGHT CAME FROM MRS THATCHER AND CHANCELLOR KOHL PERSONALLY AND NOT FROM HIM. BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE CHANCELLOR WERE UNDER PRESSURE ON SANCTIONS, WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RESIST IF THERE WERE NOT POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS. HE WAS NOT AUTHORISED TO OFFER ANY BARGAIN IN EXCHANGE.

5. P W BOTHA SAID THAT HE WAS IN A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION. HE WAS UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. WHEN THE WEST HAD ENDED UP DESTROYING THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT, SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WHOLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD GO DOWN THE DRAIN. PIK BOTHA ASKED WHAT THE WEST WERE PREPARED TO DO. WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A MARSHALL PLAN FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA.

6. LEUTWILER WENT AT SOME LENGTH INTO SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMIC PREDICAMENT. HE COMMENTED THAT P W BOTHA CLEARLY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT WESTERN GOVERNMENTS COULD NOT INSTRUCT THE BANKS TO RESUME LENDING TO SOUTH AFRICA. THEY WOULD DO

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7. LEUTWILER ADDED THAT P W BOTHA ARGUED, RIDICULOUSLY, THAT SOUTH AFRICA DID NOT HAVE POLITICAL PRISONERS - ONLY LONG TERM SECURITY PRISONERS. BRITAIN HAD POLITICAL PRISONERS - IE THE IRA. HE BRIDLED AT THE REFERENCE TO BUTHELEZI. LEUTWILER TOLD HIM THAT BUTHELEZI WAS REGARDED IN EUROPE AS THE SYMBOL OF MODERATE BLACK LEADERSHIP. P W BOTHA ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF BUTHELEZI WERE OFFERED A PLACE IN THE GOVERNMENT. HE SUGGESTED ALSO THAT THE ANC WERE VERY DIVIDED ABOUT MANDELA. LEUTWILER POINTED OUT THAT MANDELA WAS OF MUCH MORE VALUE TO THE ANC IN PRISON THAN IF HE WERE RELEASED.

8. AS P W BOTHA KEPT ASKING WHAT THE WEST WOULD OFFER IN RETURN LEUTWILER SAID THAT THE WEST WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO OFFER SOMETHING JUST FOR THE RELEASE OF MANDELA. IF MANDELA WERE RELEASED, THAT WOULD HELP TO AVOID ANY MORE SANCTIONS. A MORE POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM THE WEST WOULD BE LIKELY TO DEPEND ON A PROCESS OF GENUINE NEGOTIATION.

9. LEUTWILER COMMENTED THAT P W BOTHA WAS A BITTER OLD MAN. HE WAS STRUCK BY THE UNHEALTHY ATMOSPHERE AROUND HIM. P W BOTHA AND THE FINANCE MINISTER, BAREND DU PLESSIS, HAD TOLD LEUTWILER EN ROUTE TO THE MEETING THAT THEY AGREED WITH THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE HE WAS DELIVERING. BUT IN THE DISCUSSION WITH P W BOTHA, NEITHER HAD SAID A WORD EXCEPT, OCCASIONALLY, TO AGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION THE TREASURY SECRETARY, STALS, TOLD LEUTWILER THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD TOLD HIS FIVE OR SIX SENIOR MINISTERS THAT THEY SHOULD AGREE A SUCCESSOR AMONG THEMSELVES. HE KNEW THAT THEY ALL WANTED TO SUCCEED HIM AND WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AGREE. SO HE WAS SAYING THAT IN THAT EVENT HE WOULD STAY ON, TO WAIT FOR A NEW GENERATION TO EMERGE, EG BAREND DU PLESSIS. HE THOUGHT THAT HE ALONE COULD HOLD THE COUNTRY TOGETHER AND STAND UP TO THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. A NEW CONSTITUTION WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT ON THE SWISS OR BELGIAN MODEL.

10. LEUTWILER CAME AWAY BELIEVING THAT P W BOTHA WANTS TO BARGAIN ABOUT MANDELA. HE WANTS TO TALK DIRECT TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND KOHL. HE WAS BITTER AT NOT HAVING BEEN RECEIVED PROPERLY AT STRAUSS'S FUNERAL. ON THAT OCCASION HE SAID THAT HE HAD ASKED KOHL IF HE WOULD LIFT SANCTIONS IF MANDELA WERE RELEASED. KOHL HAD PROMISED TO WRITE TO HIM ABOUT THIS AND HAD NOT DONE SO.

11. AT MOMENTS WHEN THE CONVERSATION WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT,

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11. AT MOMENTS WHEN THE CONVERSATION WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT, LEUTWILER HAD REMINDED THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROLE HE HAD PLAYED IN HELPING SOUTH AFRICA WITH THE LAST DEBT RESCHEDULING AND THE FACT THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON A FURTHER RESCHEDULING WERE GOING TO HAVE TO START AGAIN NEXT YEAR.

12. LEUTWILER EMPHASISED THAT PIK BOTHA WAS EXTREMELY CONCERNED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO LEAKS ABOUT HIS MISSION AND ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING AT HEAD OF GOVERNMENT LEVEL (PIK BOTHA, TYPICALLY, HIMSELF TOLD SENATOR NUNN LAST WEEK THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS ABOUT TO RECEIVE AN EMISSARY FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AND KOHL, BUT DID NOT SAY WHEN OR REVEAL HIS IDENTITY).

13. LEUTWILER CONCLUDED THAT, IF THIS WOULD HELP TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE AND THE PRIME MINISTER AND CHANCELLOR WANTED HIM TO DO SO, HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO RETURN HERE IN APRIL OR MAY NEXT YEAR TO SEE P W BOTHA AGAIN.

14. ~~LEUTWILER WAS IMPRESSED BY THE DISPLAY OF BLACK PURCHASING POWER HE WITNESSED IN CENTRAL JOHANNESBURG~~ AND THE EXTENT OF THE SOCIAL CHANGES WHICH ARE TAKING PLACE HERE. HIS CONCLUDING REMARK WAS THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING OUR OPINION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE TO GO ON TRYING TO HELP THIS COUNTRY FIND A WAY THROUGH ITS PROBLEMS AS, OTHERWISE, THE PROSPECTS FOR THE REGION ARE DISMAL.

15. LEUTWILER DID NOT HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THE GERMAN EMBASSY WHILE HE WAS HERE.

16. COMMENT FOLLOWS.

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FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET

RENWICK

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