

SECRET

DEDIP

FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 009

OF 231145Z JANUARY 90

INFO IMMEDIATE EAST BERLIN

EAST BERLIN PERSONAL FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY

SOUTH AFRICA: MEETING WITH DE KLERK

1. I HAD AN HOUR'S TALK TODAY WITH PRESIDENT DE KLERK ON HIS OWN. I PASSED ON TO HIM THE PRIME MINISTER'S BEST WISHES AND CONGRATULATIONS ON THE PROGRESS HE HAD ACHIEVED IN THE FOUR MONTHS SINCE HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT.

2. I SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF PRESS MIS-REPRESENTATION ABOUT VISITS. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE CLEAR THAT IF SHE CAME TO SOUTH AFRICA, SHE WOULD WANT TO JUDGE THE TIME 'WHEN IT WAS BEST FOR THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE FORWARD MOVEMENT'. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THIS ATTITUDE.

3. I SAID THAT WE WERE PROPOSING THAT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY SHOULD VISIT SOUTH AFRICA JUST BEFORE OR AFTER THE NAMIBIA INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS. DE KLERK SAID THAT THIS WAS VERY WELCOME. HE WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE FOREIGN SECRETARY.

4. I SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD WELCOME A FURTHER MEETING WITH DE KLERK ON HIS NEXT VISIT TO EUROPE. WE WOULD NEED TO SETTLE DATES AND NO ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE MADE MEANWHILE. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE MEETING SHOULD BE A SUCCESS FOR BOTH SIDES. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE HAD PLANS TO BE IN EUROPE BETWEEN 12 AND 20 MAY. HE VERY MUCH WELCOMED THE CHANCE OF MEETING THE PRIME MINISTER. THEIR LAST MEETING HAD BEEN EXTREMELY VALUABLE TO HIM. HE HOPED TO HAVE MADE A GOOD DEAL OF PROGRESS BY THEN AND THOUGHT THAT THE TIMING WOULD BE RIGHT. HE ALSO HOPED TO MEET CHANCELLOR KOHL.

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18(a-c)
Rune Amin
Sir Robin Dennis
meeting wth
President de Klerk
CBN 2/1

5. I SAID THAT THERE WAS A LOT OF RATHER WILD SPECULATION ABOUT THE SPEECH DE KLERK WAS DUE TO MAKE AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ON 2 FEBRUARY. WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD WANT TO KNOW WAS WHAT WE COULD REASONABLY EXPECT IN THE PERIOD AHEAD: AND WHAT NOT TO EXPECT.

6. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE WAS IN INTENSE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET. THEY WERE ADDRESSING ALL THE OBSTACLES TO GETTING NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY I.E. MANDELA, THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, WHETHER THE ANC COULD BE UN-BANNED, THE ANC'S ATTITUDE ON VIOLENCE. HE WAS STILL REVIEWING THE OPTIONS AND COULD NOT HIMSELF TELL ME YET PRECISELY WHAT HE WOULD SAY ON 2 FEBRUARY. HE WOULD WANT TO GIVE THE PRIME MINISTER AN INDICATION IN ADVANCE, THOUGH THAT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE UNTIL THE FRIDAY MORNING. HE COULD NOT MEET UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS. BUT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THERE MUST NOT BE A REPEAT OF PW BOTHA'S 'RUBICON' SPEECH WHICH HAD DISAPPOINTED EVERYBODY. HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE PROGRESS, THOUGH THIS MUST CONTINUE TO BE ON THE BASIS OF A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH. I SAID THAT I REALISED THE DIFFICULTY OF SIMPLY UN-BANNING THE ANC WITHOUT A FIRM COMMITMENT FROM THEM ON VIOLENCE: BUT AS HE WOULD PROBABLY REALISE, THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MIGHT BE UN-BANNED WAS WHAT WAS CAUSING MOST CONCERN TO THE ANC.

7. HAVING HEARD FROM OTHER MINISTERS THAT THERE ARE STILL DIVIDED VIEWS ON THE TIMING FOR THE RELEASE OF MANDELA (AND THAT IT CERTAINLY WILL NOT TAKE PLACE IN PROXIMITY TO THE VISIT HERE OF THE REV JESSE JACKSON FROM 7-13 FEBRUARY), I SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD REALISE THAT IF HE WERE UNABLE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE, AT ANY RATE IN TERMS OF A CLEAR DECLARATION OF INTENT, ON 2 FEBRUARY THEN EXPECTATIONS WOULD INDEED BE DISAPPOINTED. DE KLERK SAID HE DID INTEND TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE. WE WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT MANDELA'S RELEASE HAD TO BE MANAGED AT A TIME AND IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD HELP TO TRIGGER NEGOTIATIONS: OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE A SET-BACK TO THE WHOLE PROCESS.

8. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE AIMED TO MAKE PROGRESS ON ALL THE ISSUES I HAD MENTIONED. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM THAT THERE SHOULD BE A POSITIVE WESTERN RESPONSE. HE HAD RAISED THIS WITH COHEN (THE US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE WHO IS HERE) WITHOUT GETTING ANY VERY POSITIVE REPLY. SOME GOVERNMENTS SEEMED TO THINK THAT IF SOUTH AFRICA TOOK MAJOR STEPS, IT WOULD SUFFICE SIMPLY TO SAY THAT SANCTIONS WOULD NOT BE INTENSIFIED. SOUTH AFRICA'S GREATEST NEED WAS TO GET BACK INTO A SITUATION IN WHICH IT COULD ATTRACT EXTERNAL CAPITAL. I SAID THAT IF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT MADE REAL PROGRESS ON THESE ISSUES, I WAS SURE THAT THERE WOULD BE A POSITIVE UK RESPONSE.

9. WE DISCUSSED THE RECENT ANC STATEMENT EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR NEGOTIATIONS BUT ALSO CONTAINING RITUAL RE-AFFIRMATIONS OF THE SUPPOSED NEED TO INTENSIFY THE ARMED STRUGGLE. I POINTED OUT THAT THE ANC IN PRACTICE HAD CEASED ATTACKS ON 'SOFT' TARGETS AND DE KLERK SAID THAT THE POLICE COMMISSIONER HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS SO. HE UNDERSTOOD THE INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES BESETTING THE ANC. BUT IT WAS VERY UNHELPFUL TO HIM AND THOSE WHO WANTED TO MOVE FORWARD QUICKLY TO HAVE RE-AFFIRMATIONS OF SOME SORT OF COMMITMENT TO VIOLENCE. ANYTHING WE COULD DO TO HELP OVER THIS WOULD BE EXTREMELY WELCOME. I SAID THAT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY WAS INTENDING TO SEE WALTER SISULU, IF HE PASSED THROUGH LONDON, AND THAT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WOULD BE TO GO THROUGH THIS WITH THE ANC.

10. I ALSO RAISED THE APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY. I SAID THAT WHETHER SOUTH AFRICA RETAINED CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WAS NOT OUR CONCERN. BUT WE WELCOMED THE SHARP REDUCTION LAST YEAR IN THE NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH THE DEATH PENALTY HAD BEEN APPLIED (53 AS AGAINST 117 IN 1988 AND 164 IN 1987) AND THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SENTENCES WHICH HAD BEEN COMMUTED. IT WOULD, I BELIEVED, HAVE A VERY POSITIVE EFFECT IF DE KLERK OR THE JUSTICE MINISTER COULD ANNOUNCE THAT THE APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY WAS BEING REVIEWED WITH A VIEW TO REDUCING THE NUMBER OF INSTANCES IN WHICH IT APPLIED. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE DID NOT ENJOY HAVING TO DEAL WITH SO MANY CASES HIMSELF AND WAS DISPOSED TO INDICATE THAT THE APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY WAS GOING TO BE REVIEWED. *d*

11. I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THAT YOU AND THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD FIND THIS CONVERSATION ENCOURAGING. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE COULD NOT ACHIEVE MIRACLES. THOSE EXPECTING THEM WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED. THERE WERE ALL SORTS OF OBSTACLES AHEAD. BUT THOSE WHO WERE EXPECTING FURTHER PROGRESS WOULD NOT BE DISAPPOINTED. HE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THE SUPPORT HE HAD RECEIVED FROM US.

12. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO NO.10

RENWICK