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*We must really tie a rocket to the Foreign Office, to get action at the EC Foreign Ministers meeting on 20 February*

SOUTH AFRICA: PIK BOTHA'S MEETING WITH EC AMBASSADORS

SUMMARY

1. PIK BOTHA MAKES A STRONG PLEA FOR A TANGIBLE RESPONSE FROM THE EC GOVERNMENTS ON 20 FEBRUARY TO THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES DE KLERK HAS ANNOUNCED. A FAILURE TO GET IT WOULD COMPOUND THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEMS WITH THE RIGHT WING HERE.

*CAF*

*Agreed mb*

DETAIL

2. PIK BOTHA ASKED ME AND THE OTHER EC AMBASSADORS TO CALL LATE YESTERDAY. HE WANTED US TO CONVEY AN APPEAL FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. ON 20 FEBRUARY THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS WERE DUE TO MEET IN DUBLIN TO DISCUSS SANCTIONS. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WERE EXTREMELY CONCERNED THAT SANCTIONS MIGHT NOT THEN BE LIFTED. SOME EC GOVERNMENTS APPEARED TO WANT TO BUY TIME, ARGUE FOR CAUTION AND DECIDE ON NOTHING.

3. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE TWELVE THAT, TO GET NEGOTIATIONS OFF THE GROUND, THEY MUST RELEASE MANDELA, UN-BAN THE ANC AND LIFT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. HE HAD ENCOURAGED THE GOVERNMENT TO BELIEVE THAT IF THEY DID ALL THIS AND COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO APARTHEID BEING DISMANTLED, THIS WOULD BE THE TURNING POINT IN THEIR RELATIONS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC RELATIONS, WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THE EC GOVERNMENTS HAD NOT SAID - AT ANY RATE NOT HITHERTO - THAT ONLY IF THE ANC AGREED WOULD THEY LIFT SANCTIONS. THEY HAD SAID THAT THEY WOULD PRESS THE ANC TO JOIN IN ONCE THESE OBSTACLES HAD BEEN REMOVED. THEY WERE BEING REMOVED. MANDELA WOULD BE RELEASED SHORTLY. PROVIDED THAT PASSED OFF CALMLY, THE REMAINDER OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WOULD BE LIFTED THEREAFTER. MANDELA HAD TO BE RELEASED IN DIGNITY AND UNDER SAFE CIRCUMSTANCES. THAT WAS BEING ARRANGED. HE WOULD HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE TWELVE HAD UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPONDING POSITIVELY AND HAD BEEN QUICK



TO DO SO. A POSITIVE RESPONSE WAS NO LESS ESSENTIAL VIS A VIS SOUTH AFRICA IF THE EC WISHED TO HELP THE FORWARD MOVEMENT HERE. IN THE DECISIONS THEY HAD TAKEN, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO TAKE BIG RISKS. IF THE EC WERE NOT PERSUADED NOW THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WAS SERIOUS ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE, THEY WOULD NEVER BE.

4. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF COURSE HAD EXPECTED A WHITE BACKLASH AGAINST THE MEASURES THAT HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED, BUT THEY APPEARED TO HAVE UNDER-ESTIMATED IT. THE GOVERNMENT HAD MOVED WAY AHEAD OF ITS SUPPORTERS. THE RIGHT WING WERE MOBILISING AND IF THEY WERE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THROUGH RALLIES, BY-ELECTIONS ETC THAT THEY WERE GREATLY INCREASING THEIR SUPPORT, THERE WOULD BE A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM AND THAT WOULD ACT AS A BRAKE ON THE PROCESS.

5. THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO TAKE THE PLUNGE AND FACE THE INTERNAL CONSEQUENCES. THEY NOW VERY BADLY NEED SOMETHING TANGIBLE TO SHOW FOR THIS. HE COULD NOT GO TO THE AMERICANS: IT WOULD TAKE FOREVER TO MOVE CONGRESS AND THE JAPANESE WOULD HIDE BEHIND CONGRESS. DE KLERK HAD RECEIVED VERY POSITIVE MESSAGES FROM OTHER AFRICAN PRESIDENTS BUT THEY WOULD NOT WANT THESE PUBLICISED. THEY HAD TO TURN TO THE EC GOVERNMENTS. THE REPORTS FROM THE NATIONAL PARTY ORGANISERS IN THE CONSTITUENCIES WERE DISQUIETING. THE CP WERE LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO SECURE MORE THAN A MILLION SIGNATURES FROM THE WHITE ELECTORATE AGAINST THE MEASURES DE KLERK HAD ANNOUNCED. DE KLERK NEEDED CARDS TO PLAY NOT AGAINST THE ANC, BUT AGAINST THIS GROWING WHITE BACKLASH. THERE WAS CONFUSION AND ANXIETY IN THE MINDS OF A LOT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN SUPPORTERS. BIG BUSINESS WERE VERY SUPPORTIVE BUT DID NOT COMMAND MANY VOTES.

6. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT HE COULD NOT EMPHASISE TOO STRONGLY HOW MUCH SOUTH AFRICA WANTED TO RETURN TO INTERNATIONAL RESPECTABILITY AND THAT DE KLERK HAD BEEN PREPARED TO GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO ACHIEVE THIS. IF THERE WERE A RESPONSE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO SHOW THAT THERE WERE BENEFITS AS WELL AS PROBLEMS FLOWING FROM WHAT THEY HAD DONE. TO DESCRIBE THE FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS WHICH HAD BEEN TAKEN AS A 'STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION' WAS A DERISORY RESPONSE. THEY WERE READY FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON A COMPLETELY NEW CONSTITUTION: AND DE KLERK HAD STATED EXPLICITLY THAT THIS NEW CONSTITUTION MUST ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

7. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE BRITISH RESPONSE HAD HELPED ENORMOUSLY, BECAUSE IT DID INCLUDE SOMETHING TANGIBLE. THE MEETING ON 20 FEBRUARY WAS GOING TO BE VERY IMPORTANT IN ITS POLITICAL IMPACT HERE. IF THERE



WERE NO TANGIBLE RESPONSE, THAT WOULD BE FLUNG IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FACE BY THEIR OPPONENTS AND WOULD COMPOUND THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEM.

8. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND I POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD HELP IF MANDELA WERE RELEASED BY 20 FEBRUARY. PIK BOTHA INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT FULLY UNDERSTOOD THAT.

9. I SAID THAT WE HAD WELCOMED DR VILJOEN'S STATEMENT THAT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WOULD BE LIFTED IN ITS ENTIRETY IN A FEW WEEKS IF MANDELA'S RELEASE PASSED OFF CALMLY. HIS RELEASE SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A FURTHER CLEAR STATEMENT OF INTENT TO LIFT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT PROVIDED THERE WAS NO VIOLENCE IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF MANDELA'S RELEASE THE REMAINING EMERGENCY POWERS WOULD BE SCRAPPED.

10. ON THE REMAINING APARTHEID LEGISLATION, PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE SEPERATE AMENITIES ACT WOULD BE REPEALED IN THIS PARLIAMENTARY SESSION. THE LAND ACTS WERE BEING REVIEWED AND AN ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE ABOUT THEM. THE GROUP AREAS ACT WAS BEING REFORMED AND WOULD HAVE TO BE ON THE NEGOTIATION TABLE. VILJOEN ALREADY HAD INDICATED THAT THE POPULATION REGISTRATION ACT WOULD HAVE TO BE REPLACED IN NEGOTIATIONS ON A NEW CONSTITUTION.

11. I ASKED ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM THE TOWNSHIPS. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT VIRTUALLY ALL TROOPS HAD ALREADY BEEN WITHDRAWN, EXCEPT IN NATAL WHERE THE LOCAL POPULATION HAD REQUESTED AN SADF PRESENCE IN TOWNSHIPS AFFECTED BY THE FACTIONAL VIOLENCT THERE. THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED IN DUE COURSE TO STATE THAT ALL TROOPS WERE BEING WITHDRAWN FROM THE TOWNSHIPS. AT PRESENT A TOTAL OF 800 SADF REMAIN IN THE TOWNSHIPS, NEARLY ALL OF THEM IN NATAL.

12. I ASKED ABOUT AN AMNESTY FOR THE ANC AND OTHER EXILES. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WERE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO A DISCUSSION WITH THE ANC AS SOON AS THEY LIKED. THE SAG WOULD BE OPENMINDED ABOUT AN AMNESTY: THEY WANTED TO WIPE THE SLATE CLEAN. HE WOULD BE READY TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THABO MBEKI (WITH WHOM HE HAD A TELEVISED DEBATE LAST NIGHT) AS SOON AS MBEKI WANTED.

13. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WERE NOT SAYING THAT THE ANC HAD TO RENOUNCE THE ARMED STRUGGLE. BUT THEY HAD TO ASSIST IN ACTUALLY STOPPING VIOLENCE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY APPEARED TO BE DOING SO. THE ANC WERE DIVIDED: THEY HAD HARD-LINERS AND SOME WHO WERE NOT READY FOR NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THE GOVERNMENT



BELIEVED THAT THEY WOULD NEGOTIATE. THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN OFF BALNCE BY THE RADICALISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH AND IT WAS GOING TO TAKE TIME FOR THEM TO REACT. THEWY SHOULD REALISE THAT APARTHEID AND THEIR OWN BRAND OF STATE SOCIALISM BOTH NOW BELONGED TO THE PAST.

14. IN A SEPERATE CONVERSATION, PIK BOTHA THANKED ME FOR OUR SUPPORT. I WARNED HIM NOT TO DEVELOP EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN ON 20 FEBRUARY. WE WOULD BE ARGUING STRONGLY FOR A TANGIBLE RESPONSE AND WERE MAKING ONE OURSELVES IN RELATION TO THE VOLUNTARY BAN OON NEW INVESTMENT. MEANWHILE DE KLERK'S SPEECH HAD RESULTED IN A RISE IN THE VALUE OF THE RAND, A SHARP RISE ON THE JOHANNESBURG STOCK EXCHANGE AND A NET IN-FLOW OF CAPITAL OF RAND ONE BILLION IN THE PAST SIX DAYS. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME TO GET ACTION FROM THE EC, BUT THE GOVERNMENT VERY BADLY NEEDED IT. IT WAS, HE AGREED, THE BAN ON NEW INVESTMENT THAT MATTERED MOST.

15. PIK BOTHA THIS MORNING ALSO SAW LORD BARBER AND MADE MANY OF THE SAME POINTS TO HIM. LORD BARBER ASKED IF THIS COULD BE REPORTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER: HE KNEW THAT I HAD ALREADY INFORMED YOU ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S HOPES FOR A POSITIVE RESPONSE. LORD BARBER ADDED THAT HE WOULD HARDLY HAVE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GET THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO FULFILL ALL THE EPG NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH THEY NOW APPEARED TO BE ON THE VERGE OF DOING.

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