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MIPT

MEETING WITH MANDELA

1. IN THE DISCUSSION, THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR ASKED FURTHER ABOUT INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE. MANDELA SAID THAT THE BASIC DEMAND WAS TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID. THE ANC MUST CONTINUE ITS STRATEGIES UNTIL THAT WAS ACHIEVED. BUT THEY MUST ALSO BE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE, EVEN ON BASIC ISSUES. IF THE GOVERNMENT ASSERTED ITS READINESS TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID WITHIN A GIVEN PERIOD, THEN IN HIS VIEW THE ANC COULD CALL OFF THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND POSSIBLY EVEN SANCTIONS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE DISMANTLING OF APARTHEID WOULD TAKE YEARS.

2. I SAID THAT IT WAS A SOURCE OF GREAT PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION TO US THAT WE WERE ABLE TO MEET MANDELA AS A FREE MAN. FOR THE FIRST TIME CONDITIONS HAD BEEN CREATED IN WHICH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PROBLEMS WAS POSSIBLE. MANDELA COULD MAKE A DECISIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS. WE WERE DISCUSSING WITH THE GOVERNMENT WHAT HE HAD DESCRIBED AS THE REMAINING OBSTACLES TO NEGOTIATION JUST AS WE HAD DISCUSSED WITH DE KLERK HIS OWN RELEASE AND THAT OF OTHER PRISONERS, THE UNBANNING OF THE ANC, AND PAC, CHANGES IN RELATION TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ETC. ON SOME ISSUES DEFINITE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. WE BELIEVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIFT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IF CONDITIONS OF CALM WERE MAINTAINED. I HAD DISCUSSED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS WITH DE KLERK AND VILJOEN THE WHOLE QUESTION OF GROUP RIGHTS AND URGED THEM TO THINK AND TALK INSTEAD IN TERMS OF PROTECTION AND GUARANTEES FOR THE MINORITY - THE TERMS MANDELA HIMSELF WAS NOW USING. ON THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS, IN OTHER NEGOTIATIONS EG. IN ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA A GENERAL AMNESTY HAD BEEN AGREED BUT ONLY AFTER NEGOTIATIONS HAD MADE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROGRESS. ON THE QUESTION OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE, I ASKED MANDELA IF HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THE FORMULATION ADVANCED BY THABO MBEKI THAT IF FURTHER PROGRESS WERE MADE TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS THE ARMED STRUGGLE COULD FIRST BE SUSPENDED WHILE NEGOTIATIONS TOOK PLACE AND THEN

TERMINATED WHEN THEY SUCCEEDED.

3. MANDELA SAID HE ASSUMED THAT MBEKI'S STATEMENT WAS ANC POLICY AND HE COULD AGREE WITH IT. HE WAS LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO MOVE AWAY FROM CONFLICT. IF THE GOVERNMENT CREATED THE OPPORTUNITY, THAT WOULD HAPPEN. ON THE QUESTION OF PRISONERS HE WAS ADAMANT. MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAD NOW BEEN RELEASED, INCLUDING HIMSELF, HAD BEEN FOUNDERS OF THE MILITARY WING OF THE ANC. OTHER YOUNGER PEOPLE HAD BEEN SENTENCED FOR FOLLOWING THEIR EXAMPLE. IT WAS NOT HONOURABLE TO HAVE A SITUATION IN WHICH ONLY THE LEADERS WERE FREE. IN FACT THE CONTRARY SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE CASE. HE COULD NOT REST UNTIL ALL THE OF THE ANC MEMBERS IMPRISONED FOR FOLLOWING HIM WERE RELEASED AND NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT TAKE OFF WITHOUT AGREEMENT ON THE PRISONERS. THIS ALSO WAS NECESSARY TO GET A MANDATE FROM ANC CADRES.

4. THE NORWEGIAN CONSUL GENERAL SAID THAT SOME GOVERNMENTS WANTED TO BE IN A POSITION TO EXERT INFLUENCE, BUT LOBBIES IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES WANTED TO PREVENT THEM HAVING ANY CONTACT WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. WHAT WAS MANDELA'S POSITION ON THIS? MANDELA SAID THAT THE ANC HAD CALLED FOR THE BREAKING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS 'BUT YOU ARE ALL HERE, AND YOU HAVE EXERTED INFLUENCE'. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE HAD PRODUCED RESULTS.

5. THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR ASKED IF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY COULD PLAY A MEDIATING ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS. MANDELA SAID THAT ALL COUNTRIES WERE VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT EXTERNAL PRESSURE. WHILE HE WAS IN PRISON HE HAD WANTED TO SEE ONE OR TWO OF US, BUT KNOWING THIS SENSITIVITY HE HAD NOT THOUGHT IT WISE TO PRESS THIS ON THE GOVERNMENT. WHAT HE WANTED US TO DO WAS TO EXERT OUR INFLUENCE BEHIND THE SCENES, NOT TOO STRIDENTLY.

6. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR ASKED IF MANDELA WAS NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRY. THERE WERE RIGHT-WING FORCES WHO DID NOT WANT PROGRESS TOWARDS A SOLUTION. MANDELA SAID THAT THE REACTIONS OF THE RIGHT WING AND THE HARM THEY COULD DO SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THE ENGLISH SPEAKERS HAD VOTED MOSTLY FOR THE GOVERNMENT BUT THE AFRIKAANERS WERE ALMOST EQUALLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE NATIONAL PARTY AND THE RIGHT WING. THE GOVERNMENT HAD TENDED TO THINK MAINLY IN TERMS OF AFRIKANER SUPPORT. BUT THEIR RIGHT WING OPPONENTS COULD NOT UNSEAT THE GOVERNMENT. THE ANC WERE PREPARED TO ADDRESS WHITE FEARS. DE KLERK MUST AIM TO CARRY THROUGH THE CHANGES HE HAD IN MIND THROUGH THE VOTES OF ALL SOUTH AFRICANS AND NOT JUST OF THE WHITE MINORITY.

7. IN A BRIEF SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH MANDELA AFTERWARDS, I SAID THAT WE SHARED MUCH OF HIS ASSESSMENT. THE FUTURE WOULD DEPEND ON BOTH HIM AND DE KLERK BEING ABLE TO TRANSCEND THEIR OWN CONSTITUENCIES AS DE KLERK WAS TRYING TO DO AND AS HE SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO DO. DE KLERK WOULD NEED HELP TO CARRY THE WHITES WITH HIM AND MANDELA SAID THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THIS. I ADDED THAT THE POINT HE HAD MADE ABOUT GENERAL DE WET WAS ONE I HAD MADE MYSELF TO PW BOTHA AND DE KLERK IN ARGUING FOR HIS RELEASE.

COMMENT

8. THIS WAS A VERY IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE. MANDELA IS A MAN OF MUCH HIGHER CALIBRE THAN ANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES AND HE CLEARLY DOES WANT TO TRY TO PLAY A STATESMAN-LIKE ROLE. HE WILL NOT GIVE WAY ON THE QUESTION OF THE PRISONERS AND THAT IS GOING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE. BUT I POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WERE NOW OFFERING TO DISCUSS BOTH THIS AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WITH THE ANC AND THOSE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD NOW HAPPEN. MANDELA CLEARLY THINKS THAT THEY SHOULD.

9. AT HIS REQUEST, I GAVE VAN HEERDEN AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAS PASSED, IN PARTICULAR THE EXCHANGES ABOUT THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A 'SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES' AND MANDELA'S REMARKS ABOUT THE PRISONERS. I ADDED THAT I WAS SURE THAT DE KLERK WAS RIGHT IN HIS JUDGEMENT THAT MANDELA DID WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACEFUL OUTCOME.

10. OBVIOUSLY WE SHOULD NOT GO INTO THE DETAIL OF THIS MEETING WITH THE PRESS. BUT I THINK THAT IT WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT IF WE WERE TO INDICATE THAT YOU AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD RECEIVED AN ACCOUNT OF THIS MEETING WITH MANDELA AND FOUND IT ENCOURAGING.

11. IN A BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE AFTERWARDS, MANDELA WAS ASKED ABOUT INVITATIONS TO BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES. MANDELA SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THOSE COUNTRIES, THOUGH HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT THE ANC. THE IMMEDIATE PRIORITY FOR HIM, HOWEVER, IS TO GO TO LUSAKA AND, I HOPE, TO RETURN HERE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD SPOKEN LAST NIGHT TO PIK BOTHA ABOUT HIS PASSPORT AND PIK BOTHA HAD ASSURED ME THAT THIS WOULD BE DELIVERED TO HIM SHORTLY. I ALSO LEFT WITH MANDELA A PERSONAL NOTE REFERRING TO YOUR VISIT HERE.

RENWICK

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