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TO DESKBY 161600Z FCO

TELNO 62

OF 161615Z FEBRUARY 89

INFO IMMEDIATE CAPE TOWN, JOHANNESBURG, HARARE, LUSAKA
INFO IMMEDIATE DAR ES SALAAM, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, LAGOS
INFO IMMEDIATE NAIROBI, E C POSTS

MEETING WITH MANDELA *mt*

1. THE OTHER WESTERN AMBASSADORS AND I HAD A TWO HOUR MEETING WITH MANDELA IN JOHANNESBURG THIS MORNING. I WAS GREETED WITH GREAT FRIENDLINESS BY MANDELA, WHO SAID THAT HE WOULD WELCOME THE CHANCE FOR A PRIVATE DISCUSSION AND ASKED FOR HIS REGARDS TO BE PASSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER. THE ENSUING DISCUSSION WAS PRIVATE AND SHOULD NOT, PLEASE, BE QUOTED DIRECTLY.
2. MANDELA EMPHASISED THE ROLE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT HAD PLAYED IN WHAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED HERE AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE. WHEN HE HAD BEEN SENT TO PRISON, DR VERWOERD'S CALCULATION HAD BEEN THAT HE COULD BE COMPLETELY ISOLATED AND, IF HE EVER GOT OUT, PEOPLE WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIM. AT FIRST CONDITIONS HAD BEEN HARSH BUT IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAD BEEN GREAT IMPROVEMENTS. SINCE 1985 HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO RECEIVE THE NEWSPAPERS UNCENSORED. FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS HE HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT. HIS PURPOSE IN THESE DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN
 - (A) TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF OTHER PRISONERS
 - (B) TO BRING THE GOVERNMENT INTO A MEETING WITH THE ANC.
3. THERE HAD BEEN TREMENDOUS PROGRESS IN BOTH REGARDS. THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE ANC AND GOVERNMENT WAS NOW VERY CLOSE. HE WANTED A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. VIOLENCE AND SANCTIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN UP BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE. HE HAD HOPED NOT TO BE RELEASED UNTIL THE REMAINING ANC CONDITIONS FOR ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN MET. THESE WERE THE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS. UNTIL THEN, THE SITUATION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NORMALISED. THE ANC WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONSULT ALL OF ITS MEMBERSHIP. THE EXILES MUST BE ABLE TO COME BACK AND THERE WAS NOT YET SUFFICIENT CLARITY FOR ALL THEM TO BE ABLE TO DO SO. THE STATE OF EMERGENCY MUST BE ENDED. THE PRESIDENT OF THE

SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH CONGRESS HAD BEEN DETAINED AFTER VISITING HIM IN PRISON. THIS SORT OF THING MUST END.

[ridiculous] 4. THE GOVERNMENT ARGUED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE POLITICAL PRISONERS. DE KLERK HAD ORDERED THE RELEASE OF THOSE CONVICTED FOR BELONGING TO THE ANC OR FURTHERING THE AIMS OF THE ORGANISATION. THIS WAS NOT SUFFICIENT. MANDELA'S DEFINITION OF A POLITICAL PRISONER WAS ANYONE WHOSE OFFENCE WAS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT ACCEPT THAT. HE HAD REMINDED THEM OF THE AMNESTIES THE BRITISH HAD OFFERED AFTER THE BOER WAR AND OF THE CASE OF GENERAL DE WET WHO HAD BEEN PARDONED BY US AFTER SERVING ONLY SIX MONTHS IN PRISON FOR TREASON. RIGHT WING EXTREMISTS HAD BEEN PARDONED BY THE NATIONAL PARTY AFTER THEY TOOK OVER THE GOVERNMENT IN 1948.

5. MANDELA SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN MOST IMPRESSED BY HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT DE KLERK. HE WAS A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND IT WAS A PLEASURE TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS WITH HIM. SOUTH AFRICA WAS FORTUNATE TO HAVE HIM AS ITS HEAD OF STATE. DE KLERK DID WANT TO WRITE A NEW CHAPTER IN SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORY. SO DID THE JUSTICE MINISTER, COETSEE, WHOM HE HAD MET COUNTLESS TIMES AND DR VILJOEN (THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS) WHO HE HAD MET FOUR TIMES. THESE WERE VERY ENLIGHTENED AND PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO LEAD SOUTH AFRICA OUT OF ITS PRESENT SITUATION.

6. BUT ANC POLICIES STILL HAD TO BE BASED ON THE 'HARSH REALITY' THAT APARTHEID STILL EXISTED. THEY HAD NOT YET BEGUN TO DISCUSS ONE-PERSON-ONE-VOTE IN A NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA. IF THE ANC'S CONDITIONS SET OUT ABOVE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WERE MET, HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE ANC WOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY. HE HOPED TO GO TO LUSAKA ON 21 FEBRUARY AND HE THOUGHT THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE ANC WOULD AGREE TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD HELP DE KLERK TO MOVE FORWARD.

7. UNTIL RECENTLY THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONTINUED TO TALK ABOUT GROUP RIGHTS. BUT THE NATIONALIST PARTY NEWSPAPER 'DIE BURGER' AND OTHER AFRIKAANS NEWSPAPERS HAD NOW BEGUN TO QUESTION THIS DOCTRINE. HE HAD TOLD DE KLERK THAT NO SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND ON THAT BASIS AND HE THOUGHT THAT DE KLERK HAD LISTENED TO HIM.

8. SO FAR AS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WAS CONCERNED, HE ASKED US TO MAINTAIN OUR INTEREST AND TO KEEP DISCUSSING ALL THESE ISSUES WITH THE GOVERNMENT. SANCTIONS SHOULD GO ON UNTIL A SETTLEMENT WAS REACHED. THEY WERE AN EXPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY. THE ANC WOULD NOT SUSPEND THE ARMED STRUGGLE UNTIL THERE WAS A SETTLEMENT. BUT VIOLENCE

WAS NOT THEIR CHOICE.

9. HE HOPED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO EXERT DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS THE IDEAL PERIOD TO STRIVE FOR A SETTLEMENT. THE U S AND SOVIET LEADERS HAD TAKEN VERY GOOD INITIATIVES TO REDUCE INTERNATIONAL TENSION. IN HIS VIEW MRS THATCHER HAD PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN BRINGING THE SOVIET UNION AND U S TOGETHER. SHE HAD LED THE WAY IN TALKING TO GORBACHEV AND PERSUADING PRESIDENT REAGAN THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DO BUSINESS WITH HIM. THESE WERE BREATHTAKING DEVELOPMENTS.

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RENWICK

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