

GRS 280

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FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY 150845Z AUG 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 126 OF 15 AUGUST

INFO PRIORITY LUANDA, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

FCO TELNO 1202 TO WASHINGTON: ANGOLA

1. I THINK THE AMERICANS HAVE MADE AN IMPORTANT POINT IN ARGUING (LAST SENTENCE OF PARAGRAPH 2 OF TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE) THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS, IN THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT, COULD REPRESENT THE QUOTE LOSS UNQUOTE OF NAMIBIA AS BEING OFFSET AGAINST THE DEPARTURE OF THE CUBANS (IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW IF THIS WERE A POINT WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE MADE TO THE AMERICANS). WHAT IS AT ISSUE IS NOT JUST A QUESTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS. A CAST IRON ASSURANCE OF CUBAN WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE A WEIGHTY, POSSIBLY EVEN A CLINCHING, ARGUMENT IN PERSUADING P W BOTHA TO ACQUIESCE IN A SWAPO VICTORY: AND IN GETTING HIS CABINET AND CAUCUS TO DO THE SAME. IT WOULD ALSO BE A POWERFUL ARGUMENT WITH THE DTA AND SWA NATIONAL PARTY WHO HAVE REGULARLY EXPRESSED THE FEAR THAT A SWAPO VICTORY WOULD RESULT THEN OR LATER IN THE CUBANS COMING INTO NAMIBIA: THEIR PARTICULAR FEAR IS THAT A SWAPO GOVERNMENT WOULD SOON GET INTO DIFFICULTIES, AND THEN CALL IN THE CUBANS TO HELP THEM OUT.

2. IT IS ALSO WORTH EMPHASISING THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS SEE THE WHOLE QUESTION OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA IN ITS FULL HISTORICAL CONTEXT. THEY HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE HUMILIATION WHICH THEY SUFFERED IN 1975/76 WHEN THEIR INVADING COLUMN WAS TURNED BACK SOUTH OF LUANDA, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE INTERVENTION OF THE NEWLY ARRIVED CUBANS, P W BOTHA, WHO WAS MINISTER OF DEFENCE AT THE TIME, WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED AND IS LIKELY TO REGARD IT AS A MOST DESIRABLE PRIZE TO SECURE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE CUBANS. WE MUST HOPE THAT HE WOULD NOT FEEL TEMPTED TO USE THE PRESENT NEGOTIATION TO SECURE THAT OBJECTIVE, AND THEN DRAG HIS FEET OVER AN ELECTION IN NAMIBIA.

FCO PLEASE PASS ALL

REID [PASSED AS REQUESTED]

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THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
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