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FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY 260800Z QU 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 148 OF 26 AUGUST

AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK (DI 4)

INFO IMMEDIATE LUANDA WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK PARIS BONN OTTAWA

PRIORITY LUSAKA SALISBURY GABORONE

ROUTINE MAPUTO DAR ES SALAAM LAGOS

SOUTH AFRICA/ANGOLA

1. PIK BOTHA SPOKE TO ME AT A RECEPTION YESTERDAY EVENING (25 AUGUST) ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ANGOLA. AT THE TIME I WAS AWARE OF WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING ONLY FROM A TELEPHONE CALL FROM A LONDON NEWSPAPER SEEKING FURTHER INFORMATION, WHICH WE COULD NOT OF COURSE GIVE, ON A REPORT BY ANGOP. PIK BOTHA, WHO WAS IN A GREAT STATE, BEGAN BY COMPLAINING THAT THE BRITISH PRESS WERE HARASSING HIM (EVIDENTLY THEY TRIED HIM AFTER FAILING WITH US). HE DID NOT SAY HOW HE HAD REPLIED TO THE PRESS ENQUIRIES BUT HE SAID WE OUGHT TO KNOW THAT SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES HAD HAD TO GO IN BECAUSE THE OTHER SIDE WERE ARMING THEMSELVES WITH SOME NEW AND DEADLY WEAPONRY WHICH POSED A MAJOR THREAT. THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD NOT PERMIT THIS. THEIR FORCES WOULD GO IN, DO WHAT THEY HAD TO DO AND THEN COME OUT. I ASKED IF I WOULD BE RIGHT TO RELATE THIS TO RECENT REPORTED COMMENTS BY GENERAL LLOYD ABOUT THE INSTALLATION OF ADVANCED SAM GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILES. THIS BRIEFLY SILENCED PIK BOTHA AND HE DID NOT REPLY TO MY QUESTION. HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS GOING ON WAS A LIMITED OPERATION. WHEN I SAID THAT I WOULD REPORT TO YOU WHAT HE HAD SAID, HE SAID QUOTE AND TELL PETER THAT IF HE COMPLAINS I WON'T HAVE IT, I WON'T HAVE IT. THESE PEOPLE ARE BLOODY MURDERERS. THEY WANT TO KILL INNOCENT WOMEN AND CHILDREN. WE HAVE GOT TO STOP THEM UNQUOTE.
2. I SAID THAT I WOULD NOT NEED TO TELL PIK BOTHA HOW NEWS OF THE OPERATION WOULD BE RECEIVED IN NEW YORK AND THE CONSEQUENCES THAT IT MIGHT HAVE JUST BEFORE THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE REPLIED BY TELLING ME IN FORCEFUL, COLOURFUL AND BITTER LANGUAGE JUST WHAT HE THOUGHT OF THE UNITED NATIONS.
3. PIK BOTHA THEN SAID THAT WE WOULD MAKE A GREAT MISTAKE IN IGNORING SAVIMBI. HE WAS GAINING GROUND AGAINST THE MPLA AND WAS A FORCE WHO MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. HE SAID SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD NOT ABANDON HIM.

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4. COMMENT. PIK BOTHA'S ADMISSION THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE IN FACT TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN WHAT MAY BE A MAJOR OPERATION (PARAGRAPH 1 ABOVE) IS AT VARIANCE WITH THE OFFICIAL LINE HERE (SEE MIFT) THAT THIS IS A NORMAL FOLLOW-UP OPERATION. HE WOULD REGARD WHAT HE SAID TO ME, ALTHOUGH DELIVERED AT TREBLE FORTISSIMO AT A NOISY FUNCTION AND THUS PROBABLY OVERHEARD BY VARIOUS PEOPLE, AS BEING PRIVILEGED. I SUBMIT THAT GREAT CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN IN ANY USE THAT IS MADE OF IT.

5. I EXPECT TO SEE PIK BOTHA TOMORROW AT A LUNCH WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER IS GIVING FOR MR HEATH. IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT YOU WISH ME TO SAY TO PIK BOTHA (OR EVEN THE PRIME MINISTER, THOUGH I WOULD MUCH PREFER TO SPEAK TO PIK BOTHA WHOM I KNOW WELL) GRATEFUL FOR INSTRUCTIONS DESKBY 270900Z AT THE LATEST.

6. CANADIAVUN AMBASSADOR HAS JUST CALLED A MEETING OF THE CAPE TOWN FIVE. SINCE I ASSUME THAT WE SHALL NOT (NOT) WANT TO KEEP THE INFORMATION IN THIS TELEGRAM FROM OUR PARTNERS, AND WILL IN ANY CASE SHARE IT WITH THEM EG IN CONSULTATIONS IN NEW YORK, I PROPOSE TO GIVE COLLEAGUES THE GIST OF PARAGRAPH 1 ABOVE IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

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