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FM HARARE 011020Z JAN 83
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 001 OF 1 JANUARY.
INFO IMMEDIATE PRETORIA, DUBLIN
ROUTINE GABORONE, LUSAKA. (F.C.O PSE PASS).

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MY TELNO 772(NOT TO ALL) : KIDNAPPINGS IN MATABELELAND.

1. TWO WHITES WERE KIDNAPPED YESTERDAY NEAR TURK MINE JUST NORTH OF BULAWAYO BY A BAND OF DISSIDENTS. THEY ARE BENJAMIN AUSTIN WILLIAMS, 72, A PROMINENT LOCAL FARMER AND DUAL ZIMBABWE/UK CITIZEN (BRITISH PASSPORT NO C140938A, ISSUED PRETORIA 12.9.77) AND HIS GRANDSON, DAVID C BILANG, 24, UNMARRIED APPARENTLY A MONO-IRISH CITIZEN (IRISH PASSPORT NO H007812, ISSUED PRETORIA). TWO NOTES WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED FROM THE TWO MEN, ADDRESSED RESPECTIVELY TO WIFE AND GIRL FRIEND, TELLING THEM TO RELAY TO THE LOCAL PRESS A DEMAND FROM THE KIDNAPPERS (DESCRIBING THEMSELVES AS 'ZIPRA FORCES') FOR THE RETURN BY THIS WEEKEND OF ALL THE ZIPRA PROPERTY CONFISCATED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY OF THE ARMS CACHES. BOTH NOTES SAY THE MEN WOULD BE HELD UNTIL THIS DEMAND WAS MET, BUT CONCLUDE WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT 'THEY SAY THEY WILL NOT KILL US'.

now found dead (para 8)

2. THE ARMY AIR FORCE AND POLICE MOVED QUICKLY YESTERDAY AND A BIG SEARCH OPERATION IS, I UNDERSTAND, NOW UNDER WAY. I AMV TOLD THAT THE ARMY COMMANDER, GEN NHONGO, AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (NORMAN) HAVE GONE DOWN TO MATABELELAND AND ARMY TRACKERS WERE ON THE TRAIL OF THE KIDNAPPERS YESTERDAY AND HOPED TO FOLLOW IT FURTHER TODAY. TRACKING CONDITIONS ARE SAID TO BE GOOD SO THERE MUST BE A CHANCE OF EARLY CONTACT. I HAVE THEREFORE REMINDED THE CIO DIRECTOR GENERAL OF OUR READINESS TO CONSIDER ANY REQUEST FOR EXPERT HELP AND ADVICE. I AM ARRANGING FOR THE SAME REMINDER TO BE PASSED TO THE ARMY HIERARCHY. I HAVE DONE THIS TO COVER US IN CASE OF AN EARLY AND UNCONTROLLED CONTACT (HOWEVER, COL DYKE IS SAID TO BE AWAY). THE ZIMBABWEANS ARE UNLIKELY TO MAKE A REQUEST IMMEDIATELY, NEVERTHELESS, YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER PUTTING SOMEONE ON STAND-BY.

3. BILANG'S FATHER AND ANOTHER SON-IN LAW OF WILLIAMS CAME TO SEE ME THIS MORNING WITH TIME GIBBS (SON OF SIR HUMPHREY GIBBS) TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE BRITISH HELP. I EXPLAINED THE INHIBITION'S IMPOSED BY WILLIAMS' DUAL NATIONALITY (GRATEFUL TO KNOW URGENTLY WHETHER WE HAVE A FORMAL CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR IRISH CITIZENS BUT ASSURED THEM THAT WE WOULD DO WHAT WE COULD THROUGH CIO AND THE ARMY OF OUR COOPERATION OVER THE OTHER HOSTAGES. I HAVE ALSO PUT THEM IN TOUCH WITH CIO TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES FOR INDEPENDANT ACTION BY THE FAMILY, WHO SEEM TO HAVE GOOD CONTACTS WITH LOCAL AFRICANS IN THE AREA.

Has this been done? If not, please advise me.

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4. THERE ARE REASONS TO BELIEVE THE KIDNAP WAS FORTUITOUS RATHER THAN PLANNED AND NO INDICATION THAT IT WAS THE SAME DISSIDENT GROUP AS THE JULY KIDNAP (NOTE DIFFERENT DEMAND).

5. SINCE THE ABOVE WAS DRAFTED WE LEARN THAT WILLIAMS WAS TODAY FOUND DEAD - NO INDICATION YET WHETHER MURDERED OR, FOR EXAMPLE, SUFFERED A STROKE. THE GANG'S TRACKS ARE STILL BEING FOLLOWED.

BYATT

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FM HARARE 011400Z JANUARY 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 002 OF 1 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY MODUK, PRETORIA, GABORONE, LUSAKA.

MY TELNO 001 : SECURITY SITUATION.

1. ON THE SAME DAY AS THE KIDNAPPING AT TURK MINE 5 WHITES AND ONE BLACK WERE MURDERED IN AN AMBUSH PRESUMABLY BY DISSIDENTS, ABOUT 20 KM FROM BULAWAYO ON THE MAIN BULAWAYO-VICTORIA FALLS ROAD. THE DEAD WERE DAVID BRIAN WALTERS, AN ESTATE MANAGER FOR LONRHO (BORN ZAMBIA, UK CITIZEN BY DESCENT), HIS YOUNG CHILDREN MICHAEL AND SHAWN, HIS BROTHER IN LAW, JOHN HERN (PROBABLY A DUAL NATIONAL), PHILLIP BOIRON, A FRENCHMAN, AND AN AFRICAN SECURITY GUARD. DAVID WALTERS WIFE WAS INJURED (NOT SERIOUSLY) AND WAS TAKEN TO BULAWAYO WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH HER RELATIVES THERE.

2. THERE HAS BEEN A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS ON THE MAIN ROAD IN THIS GENERAL AREA, MAINLY INVOLVING HOLD-UPS OF BUSES. THIS IS THE WORST FOR MANY MONTHS. THIS AND THE INCIDENT AT KOMBE (ON THE MAIN ROAD BETWEEN BULAWAYO AND GWERU) ON CHRISTMAS EVE (MY TELNO 772 NOT TO ALL) THE TURK MINE KIDNAPPINGS, AND ANOTHER INCIDENT NEAR KEZI TWO WEEKS AGO WHEN 3 BUSES WERE BURNED AND SEVERAL WHITE MOTORISTS WERE LUCKY TO ESCAPE WITH THEIR LIVES, SUGGEST A RESURGENCE IN DISSIDENT ACTIVITY (THOUGH EVIDENCE OF CENTRALISED CONTROL OF THE DISSIDENCE REMAINS INCONCLUSIVE), AND ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFICULTIES THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES FACE IN GETTING ON TOP OF THE PROBLEM (AS THEY HAVE CLAIMED TO BE DOING), NOTWITHSTANDING A SIZEABLE MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA AND FASTER REACTION TIME IN RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS AND SIGHTINGS.

3. WHITE MORALE IN MATABELELAND HAS, ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACTS THERE, PLUMMETED. GOVERNMENT'S INSTINCT WILL BE TO USE GREATER MILITARY FORCE TO TRY TO SUPPRESS THE BANDITS. MUGABE TOOK A VERY TOUGH LINE ON DISSIDENTS DURING HIS NEW YEAR TV ADDRESS LAST NIGHT: THOSE CAUGHT WOULD INCUR THE DEATH PENALTY.

4. FOR PRETORIA, LUSAKA, GABORONE. ENQUIRERS SHOULD BE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED FROM TRAVELLING BY ROAD ANYWHERE IN MATABELELAND AT PRESENT, AND SHOULD BE TOLD THAT EVEN MAIN ROADS ARE UNSAFE.

BYATT

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