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3652 - 1

OCMIAN 3652
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OO LUSAK
OO HARAR
OO LAGOS
OO DAESS
PP NEDEL
FM FCOLN TO LUSAK
061430Z NOV
GRS 257

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FM FCO
TO IMMEDIATE LUSAKA
TELNO 420
OF 061430Z NOVEMBER 85
AND TO IMMEDIATE HARARE, LAGOS, DAR ES SALAAM
INFO PRIORITY CANBERRA, OTTAWA, NASSAU, DELHI

EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

1. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO US BY A JOURNALIST WHO HAS BEEN SPEAKING TO THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT THAT THE AFRICANS MAY HAVE 'GONE COLD' ON THE IDEA OF THE EPG. AKINYEMI IN A SPEECH ON 31 OCTOBER (LAGOS TELNO 1098 NOT TO OTHERS) EXPRESSED SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT IT AND SAID THAT WHILE NIGERIA WOULD NOT OBSTRUCT THE WORK OF THE GROUP IT WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN IT EITHER.
2. SO FAR ONLY FRASER AND LORD BARBER HAVE BEEN FORMALLY NOMINATED. RAMPHAL HAS SAID THAT HE EXPECTS SWARAN SINGH TO BE THE INDIAN NOMINEE. HE HAS SPOKEN TO TRUDEAU, AT MULRONEY'S REQUEST, BUT THE LATTER SEEMED RELUCTANT TO SPARE THE TIME FOR WHAT HE REGARDED AS A 'CHANCY' EXERCISE.
3. CHIEF ANYAOKU OF THE SECRETARIAT IS TOURING CERTAIN COMMONWEALTH CAPITALS APPARENTLY TO PERSUADE THE AFRICANS TO COME FORWARD WITH NOMINATIONS. THE SECRETARIAT SAY THAT NYERERE IS STILL PONDERING WHETHER TO ACCEPT NOMINATION. THEY DO NOT

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3652 - 1

ENTIRELY RULE OUT OBASANJO (WHOSE NAME WAS MENTIONED IN NASSAU) DESPITE AKINYEMI'S RECENT PRONOUNCEMENT. BUT WE SUSPECT THAT THEY MAY BE HAVING MORE DIFFICULTY WITH THE AFRICANS THAN THEY LET ON.

4. WE WISH TO GIVE THE EPG EVERY SUPPORT, BUT SUSPECT THAT IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE FOR US TO PUSH IT TOO HARD WITH THE AFRICANS. IF A RESCUE OPERATION IS NEEDED IT MAY BE BEST TO RELY ON THE AUSTRALIANS AND THE SECRETARIAT. GRATEFUL FOR ANY INFORMATION WHICH YOU AND OTHER RECIPIENTS CAN GATHER DISCREETLY.

HOWE

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