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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 485

OF 131430Z NOVEMBER 85

INFO ROUTINE JOHANNESBURG, HARARE, LUSAKA

INFO SAVING CAPE TOWN CONSULATE, DURBAN

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MY TELNO 461: INTERNAL SITUATION

SUMMARY

1. THE GOVERNMENT CLAIM THAT UNREST IS ABATING ALTHOUGH ANOTHER 11 DIED IN THE PAST WEEK. 1,417 ARE STILL IN DETENTION UNDER EMERGENCY POWERS. A NUMBER OF PROMINENT DETAINEES HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND THE PORT ELIZABETH CONSUMER BOYCOTT IS BEING SUSPENDED FOR TWO WEEKS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS HELD TALKS WITH THE SOWETO PARENTS' CRISIS COMMITTEE AND CAPE EDUCATIONALISTS TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE SCHOOL BOYCOTTS.

DETENTIONS, INCIDENTS AND DEATHS

2. 1,417 PEOPLE REMAINED IN DETENTION UNDER EMERGENCY REGULATIONS ON 8 NOVEMBER. 134 PEOPLE WERE DETAINED LAST WEEK, MOSTLY IN THE CAPE TOWN AREA AND THE WESTERN CAPE.

3. THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LAW AND ORDER, ADRIAAN VLOK, SAID ON 6 NOVEMBER THAT 799 PEOPLE HAD DIED AND 12,668 HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN UNREST INCIDENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR. 11 FURTHER PEOPLE DIED IN INCIDENTS IN THE LAST WEEK BUT OVERALL THE NUMBER OF REPORTED INCIDENTS HAS FALLEN FROM 150 TO 30/40 A DAY.

EASTERN CAPE

4. THE FOUR-MONTH OLD CONSUMER BOYCOTT IN PORT ELIZABETH IS EXPECTED TO BE SUSPENDED FOR TWO WEEKS FROM 15 NOVEMBER FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF A NUMBER OF PROMINENT DETAINEES INCLUDING IN THE EASTERN CAPE REGIONAL UDF VICE-PRESIDENT, HENRY FAZZIE, THE LEADER OF THE PORT ELIZABETH CONSUMER BOYCOTT, MKHUSELI JACK, THE PORT ALFRED COMMUNITY LEADER, GUGILE NKWINTI, AND OTHER PORT ELIZABETH COMMUNITY AND TRADE UNION LEADERS. BUT THE BOYCOTT MAY BE REIMPOSED IF OTHER DEMANDS INCLUDING THE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, WITHDRAWAL OF SADF FORCES FROM TOWNSHIPS, ARRAIGNMENT IN COURT OF THE GONIWE MURDERERS, AND THE UNBANNING OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATION MEETINGS ARE NOT MET.

TRANSVAAL

5. THE TRANSVAAL UDF LEADER, DR RASHID SALOOJEE, WAS RELEASED YESTERDAY. HE HAD BEEN UNWELL. UNDER HIS RELEASE ORDER HE IS RESTRICTED TO THE JOHANNESBURG MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT. POLICE ARRESTED 177 PEOPLE IN MAMELODI, PRETORIA, DURING THREE DAYS OF VIOLENCE UP TO 11 NOVEMBER, SPARKED BY THE FUNERALS OF THREE SCHOOLCHILDREN. ONE WOMAN WAS KILLED AND SEVERAL PEOPLE INJURED IN THE POLICE ACTION. ANOTHER FATALITY WAS AT SEBOKENG (WEST RAND).

6. ACCORDING TO UNCONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS MRS WINNIE MANDELA HAS REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH A POLICE ORDER TO REOCCUPY HER REPAIRED HOUSE IN BRANDFORT BY 4 NOVEMBER. SHE HAS INDICATED THAT SHE IS PREPARED TO CONTRAVENE THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT BY MOVING INTO HER HOUSE IN SOWETO AFTER NELSON MANDELA'S DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL.

WESTERN CAPE

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7. A CAPE CORPS SOLDIER WAS MURDERED AT MITCHELL'S PLAIN, NEAR CAPE TOWN. THE DEATH TOLL IN THE CAPE PENINSULA AREA NOW STANDS AT 69. FATALITIES HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN THE LAST WEEK IN INCIDENTS IN GUGULETU, UPINGTON, PORT ELIZABETH AND WORCESTER IN THE CAPE.

8. IN CAPE TOWN ITSELF, ALTHOUGH THE OVERALL SITUATION APPEARS TO HAVE QUIETENED THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF ATTACKS ON PROPERTY INCLUDING THAT OF PFP MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL. THE LATTER APPEAR TO BE A RIGHT WING REACTION AGAINST LIBERAL WHITE SPOKESMEN. NEGOTIATIONS ON UNREST

9. AT A MEETING WITH THE DEPUTY MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT AID AND OF LAW AND ORDER ON 10 NOVEMBER, THE SOWETO PARENTS' CRISIS COMMITTEE (SPCC) LISTED THE FOLLOWING AS REASONS FOR THE CURRENT URBAN UNREST - POLICE BRUTALITY, SADF PRESENCE IN THE TOWNSHIPS, DETENTION AND HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS, BANNING OF COSAS, AND THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITIES TOGETHER WITH THE SEPARATE EDUCATION SYSTEM. MR VLOK SAID HE WOULD PASS THE SPCC'S COMPLAINTS TO THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING ITS PROPOSAL THAT SADF AND OTHER SECURITY FORCES SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE TOWNSHIPS.

SCHOOL BOYCOTTS AND EXAMINATIONS

10. AT MANY BLACK SECONDARY SCHOOLS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CAPE PENINSULA, EASTERN CAPE AND REEF TOWNSHIPS, BOYCOTTS OF END OF YEAR EXAMINATIONS HAVE BEEN SOLID. IN SOWETO EXAMINATIONS HAVE COME VIRTUALLY TO A STANDSTILL.

11. SIMILAR BOYCOTTS BY COLOURED STUDENTS IN THE CAPE PENINSULA ALTHOUGH LESS FULLY SUPPORTED LED TO MANY CHILDREN MISSING EXAMS. AT A MEETING ON 11 NOVEMBER BETWEEN PRESIDENT BOTHA, THE REV ALLAN HENDRICKSE AND THE PRINCIPALS OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF CAPE TOWN, THE WESTERN CAPE AND THE PENINSULA TECHNIKON, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD AN OBLIGATION TO FIGHT LEFTIST RADICALS, BUT AGREED THAT IF STUDENTS WERE UNABLE TO WRITE THEIR EXAMINATIONS THEY COULD TAKE A SUPPLEMENTARY EXAM AT A LATER DATE. TRANSVAAL TREASON TRIAL

12. THE TRIAL AT DELMAS INVOLVING 22 UDF LEADERS FACING TREASON CHARGES HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL 20 JANUARY TO ENABLE THE STATE TO FURNISH FURTHER PARTICULARS IN RESPECT OF 7 OF THE 13 OBJECTIONS LODGED AGAINST THE INDICTMENTS BY THE DEFENCE.

COMMENT

13. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT EVEN AMONG THE GOVERNMENTS CRITICS THAT THE NUMBERS OF INCIDENTS ON A COUNTRY WIDE BASIS SEEM TO HAVE DIMINISHED A LITTLE ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER OF DEATHS IN THE PAST WEEK, SOME CAUSED BY THE POLICE, WERE ALMOST AS NUMEROUS AS THOSE IN PREVIOUS WEEKS. THERE IS SOME PRIVATE TALK IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES OF LIFTING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AT LEAST IN A SUBSTANTIAL AREA BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

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14. THE RELEASE OF THE 21 UDF DETAINEES IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND TRANSVAAL, THE GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO TAKE SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMS AND THE PROPOSED SUSPENSION OF THE PORT ELIZABETH CONSUMER BOYCOTT ARE ENCOURAGING SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY. BUT THE DEMANDS OF THE BOYCOTT ORGANISERS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE MET AND THE BOYCOTT MIGHT RESUME ON 1 DECEMBER IF THERE IS NO PROGRESS TOWARDS ENDING THE EMERGENCY.

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NY TELNO 485: SOUTH AFRICA INTERNAL

SUMMARY

1. THE MINISTER OF LAW AND ORDER GAVE ME AN OPTIMISTIC VIEW TODAY ABOUT THE UNREST SITUATION IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS GRADUALLY IMPROVING. HE HOPED THE STATE OF EMERGENCY COULD BE PROGRESSIVELY-LIFTED. AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IS THE GOVERNMENT'S WISH THAT TROUBLEMAKERS WHO HAVE BEEN DETAINED UNDER EMERGENCY REGULATIONS SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF CIRCULATION UNTIL THE SITUATION IS MORE NORMAL.

DETAIL

2. WHEN I CALLED ON LE GRANGE TODAY HE CLAIMED THAT UNREST AND VIOLENCE WAS DIMINISHING IN AREAS COVERED BY THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. TWO OR THREE WEEKS AGO THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAILY INCIDENTS WAS 150 OR MORE. NOW IT WAS DOWN TO 30 OR 40. MANY OF THESE WERE RELATIVELY MINOR IN NATURE, SUCH A STONE-THROWING.

3. I EXPLAINED OUR POSITION CALLING FOR AN EARLY END TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY. HE SAID IT MIGHT POSSIBLY BE LIFTED BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, ALTHOUGH THIS OF COURSE DEPENDED ON HOW THE SITUATION DEVELOPED. HE EXPECTED THAT THE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS WOULD BE PROGRESSIVELY LIFTED AREA BY AREA. MANY AREAS WERE ALREADY QUIETER.

4. WHEN I ASKED WHETHER NORMAL POLICE POWERS WOULD NOT SUFFICE AT ANY RATE IN QUIETER AREAS, LE GRANGE REPLIED THAT THE EMERGENCY POWERS ENABLED THE AUTHORITIES TO CONTROL MOVEMENT WITHIN TOWNSHIPS, STOP UNDESIRABLES FROM ENTERING, AND ABOVE ALL REMOVE TROUBLE-MAKERS FROM CIRCULATION. HE STRESSED THIS LAST POINT. OFTEN THE POLICE WERE SURE THAT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WERE RING-LEADERS OR INSTIGATORS OF VIOLENCE YET WITHOUT QUITE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONVICT THEM IN A COURT OF LAW. THE ONLY HOPE OF PREVENTING THEM FROM CAUSING MORE TROUBLE WAS TEMPORARILY TO PLACE THEM IN CUSTODY, USING EMERGENCY POWERS. IN A FEW CASES PEOPLE DETAINED IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE CHARGED, BUT THE MAJORITY WOULD BE RELEASED AND RETURNED TO THEIR COMMUNITIES. INDEED THIS WAS ALREADY HAPPENING. OF OVER 5000 PEOPLE DETAINED SINCE THE EMERGENCY BEGAN ABOUT THREE QUARTERS HAD ALREADY BEEN RELEASED. IT WAS GENUINELY DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE AT WHAT STAGE DURING A RETURN TO GREATER NORMALITY SUCH PEOPLE SHOULD BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES.

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5. HE ADDED THAT THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT WAS NEVER DESIGNED FOR A SITUATION OF MAJOR UNREST SUCH AS THE GOVERNMENT NOW FACED. HENCE THE RESORT TO EMERGENCY POWERS. HE WENT ON VIRTUALLY TO ADMIT THAT ONE BY-PRODUCT OF TREASON TRIALS UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT WAS THAT THEY PREVENTED UDF LEADERS FROM PLAYING A CONTRIBUTORY ROLE IN THE CURRENT WAVE OF VIOLENCE.

6. LE GRANGE ALSO SPOKE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WISH TO PRESS ON WITH THEIR REFORM PROGRAMME. HE DECLINED TO BE DRAWN BEYOND OBVIOUS POINTS SUCH AS LEGISLATION TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE PRESIDENT'S PROMISE ON CITIZENSHIP, BUT SAID THAT WE MIGHT BE SURPRISED HOW FORTHCOMING THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVE TO BE IN THE COMING MONTHS.

7. I TOLD THE MINISTER OF THE REPRESENTATIONS WE HAD MADE OVER RESTRICTIONS ON JOURNALISTS, AND WHAT A BAD IMPRESSION IT WOULD MAKE IN LONDON IF BRITISH JOURNALISTS WERE PENALISED BY THE AUTHORITIES. LE GRANGE ARGUED THAT JOURNALISTS IN BRITAIN HAVE ALSO BEEN PREVENTED BY THE POLICE FROM ENTERING AREAS AFFECTED BY URBAN RIOTS. I DISMISSED THE PARALLEL AND SAID THAT POLICE POWERS WERE QUITE DIFFERENT BETWEEN THESE TWO CASES. (I SHOULD NONETHELESS WELCOM AN AUTHORITATIVE LINE WHICH WE CAN TAKE AGAINST LE GRANGE'S LINE OF ARGUMENT WHICH HAS BEEN USED ALSO BY OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN SPOKESMENN).

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