

GRS 450
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FM CAPE TOWN

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 252

OF 061415Z MAY 86

INFO PRIORITY LUSAKA, HARARE

INFO SAVING JOHANNESBURG, DURBAN, CAPE TOWN CONSULATE

NELSON MANDELA

1. TWO MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY, HELEN SUZMAN AND TIAN VAN DER MERWE, HAD A TWO AND A HALF HOUR MEETING IN POLLSMOOR PRISON WITH NELSON MANDELA YESTERDAY (5 MAY).

2. VAN DER MERWE HAS BRIEFED US ABOUT THE MEETING. MRS SUZMAN HAD ASKED FOR THIS SOME MONTHS AGO. SHE HAS ASKED REGULARLY TO SEE MANDELA BUT SINCE A MEETING IN 1983 THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT ACCDED TO HER REQUEST. NO REASON WAS GIVEN WHY THERE WAS THE MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE THIS YEAR.

3. THE MEETING HAD BEEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF POLLSMOOR PRISON BUT MANDELA HAD SPOKEN APPARENTLY WITHOUT INHIBITION. VAN DER MERWE SAID THAT THEY HAD NOT TRIED TO PRESS HIM ON DIFFICULT POINTS AND FOR THIS REASON LITTLE HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVE BUT A NUMBER OF THINGS HAD COME ACROSS VERY CLEARLY. IN THE FIRST PLACE MANDELA HAD APPEARED TO GO OUT OF HIS WAY TO TALK ABOUT THE NEED FOR A CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS. HE HAD STRESSED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE END BY VIOLENCE. THE VIOLENCE HAD PLAYED ITS PART IN PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT BUT ANY SETTLEMENT WOULD REQUIRE DISCUSSIONS AROUND A TABLE WITH THE RULING PARTY AND WITH OTHER BLACK PARTICIPANTS. HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT CHIEF BUTHELEZI AND THE INKATHA MOVEMENT WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE INVOLVED. HE HAD TALKED POSITIVELY ABOUT BUTHELEZI AND REFERRED TO CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIM. HE DID NOT APPEAR TO SHARE THE ANTAGONISM FOR BUTHELEZI EXPRESSED BY OTHER RADICAL LEADERS.

4. MANDELA HAD ALSO STRESSED THAT HE WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST A BLACK AFRICAN NATIONALIST. HE HAD SAID THAT HE WAS NOT A MARXIST. HE DESCRIBED TAMBO AS SHARING HIS VIEWS AND CLAIMED THAT MOST MEMBERS OF THE ANC WERE NOT THE HARDLINERS THAT THEY WERE FREQUENTLY DESCRIBED AS. HE HIMSELF BELIEVED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE REASSURANCES TO WHITES ABOUT THEIR FUTURE. THIS APPLIED IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE. THERE WERE PLENTY OF LESSONS AROUND TO TAKE NOTE OF. A GOOD EXAMPLE WAS THE MESS THAT MOZAMBIQUE HAD GOT INTO BECAUSE OF THE APPLICATION OF DOCTRINAIRE POLICIES.

5. MANDELA HAD REITERATED HIS DETERMINATION TO ACCEPT NOTHING LESS THAN UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE. HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE

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EXPECTED HIS FELLOW PRISONERS TO BE RELEASED WITH HIM. THE VISITORS HAD BEEN LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT MANDELA HAD FELT ALMOST INSULTED THAT HIS RELEASE HAD BEEN LINKED BY PRESIDENT BOTHA TO THE FREEING OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS.

6. MANDELA HAD SEEMED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH AND HAD SAID THAT HE WAS FULLY RECOVERED FROM HIS RECENT OPERATION. HE HAD HAD NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT HIS TREATMENT EXCEPT OVER SOME DIFFICULTY WITH THE TRANSMISSION OF CORRESPONDENCE.

7. VAN DER MERWE, WHO HAD NOT MET MANDELA BEFORE, SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN MORE IMPRESSED THAN HE HAD EXPECTED. HE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH MANDELA'S KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS AND SHREWD JUDGEMENTS AND THAT HIS CONVERSATION THROUGHOUT HAD AVOIDED POLITICAL SLOGANS AND HARDLINE ASSERTIONS. HE HAD LEFT THE IMPRESSION OF BEING GENUINELY COMMITTED TO WORK FOR REAL NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH GROUPS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WOULD BE INCLUDED.

MOBERLY

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