

SECRET

FC 1720

P30 / COS



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF
(INTELLIGENCE)

Full
744

1. COS has asked "what do I think about this?" - the attached DPTEN, a South African ~~Academy~~ ^{CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF} Argentina.

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF		COPIES
DATE 25-5-81		
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		CGS
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FILE: 2038/1		SEC

2. There are two points to cover:

a. The South African statements.

b. The validity of Rein denial.

3. The statements are absolutely predictable and reflect the position they have consistently taken i.e. "no comment". But General Malan's specific denial is a precedent.

4. The validity is highly questionable. ^{Codeword} Assuming of one assessment of South African involvement is attached. We believe that South Africa has been supplying, and is continuing to supply, Argentina with some missiles, spareparts and ammo.

5. We are having no difficulty with the FEO. They are convinced ^{by} the evidence and are taking such diplomatic action as they can.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

Aug 25/1

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IMMEDIATE 250845Z MAY 82

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FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY 250845Z MAY 82

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 357 OF 25 MAY

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO ROUTINE JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA

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← Sent at our instigation reporting our suspicions

MY TELNO 356 (NOT TO ALL) AND FCO TELNO 190: SOUTH AFRICAN ARMS SUPPLIES TO ARGENTINA

1. THE FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT REACTION WAS TO REFUSE TO COMMENT. SUBSEQUENTLY IN RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION QUESTIONS ABOUT PRESS REPORTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARMS SUPPLIES TO ARGENTINA, THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, GENERAL MAGNUS MALAN, LAST NIGHT (24 MAY) MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT:

BEGINS

I FEEL IT IS MY DUTY TO MAKE A SHORT STATEMENT THIS EVENING IN PARLIAMENT.

IT IS GENERALLY KNOWN THAT IT IS OUR POLICY TO PROVIDE NO DETAILS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S TRANSACTIONS IN ARMS, AMMUNITION AND OTHER MILITARY MATTERS. WITH REFERENCE TO TODAY'S SPECULATION I WILL HOWEVER THIS EVENING ON THIS ONE OCCASION DEPART FROM THIS POLICY BECAUSE WE ARE NOW IMPLICATED IN A CONFLICT.

SOUTH AFRICA HAS NOT PROVIDED OR SOLD TO ARGENTINA ANY MISSILES OR AEROPLANE PARTS IN ANY WAY AS HAS BEEN REPORTED, BEFORE OR DURING THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT.

ENDS

2. IN RESPONSE TO A FURTHER QUERY THE MINISTER GAVE THE ASSURANCE THAT NO SUCH ARMAMENTS HAD BEEN SUPPLIED DURING THE SAME PERIOD TO ANY SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY FOR POSSIBLE DIVERSION TO ARGENTINA OR TO A SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY ACTING AS INTERMEDIARY FOR ARGENTINA.

3. EARLIER YESTERDAY (PRIOR TO THE STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE) MR PIK BOTHA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ISSUED THE

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FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

BEGINS

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS CONSISTENTLY DECLINED TO CONFIRM OR DENY ALLEGATIONS OF ARMS SUPPLIES TO AND FROM SOUTH AFRICA. SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS DEMAND THAT THIS PRINCIPLE SHOULD NOT BE VIOLATED. THE GOVERNMENT ACCORDINGLY ALSO DOES NOT CONFIRM OR DENY THE EXISTENCE OF ANY CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS WITH ANY SPECIFIC COUNTRY OR WITH ANY SPECIFIC AGENCY OF ANY COUNTRY. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR TO ALL THAT SHOULD THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT UNDERMINE THIS PRINCIPLE, A SITUATION WOULD EVENTUALLY ARISE WHERE PARTICULARS OF ARMS SUPPLIES TO AND FROM ALL OF THE COUNTRIES WITH WHICH SOUTH AFRICA HAS DEALINGS WOULD BE DISCLOSED, CAUSING INCALCULABLE HARM TO SOUTH AFRICA'S SECURITY. THE WHOLE QUESTION OF ARMS SALES IS AN EXTREMELY DELICATE ISSUE BASED UPON MUTUAL TRUST AND INTEGRITY. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THIS NATURE CANNOT BE TAMPERED WITH WITHOUT OTHER COUNTRIES AND AGENCIES IN SUCH COUNTRIES QUESTIONING SOUTH AFRICA'S ABILITY TO ACT WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF THESE ARRANGEMENTS.

ENDS

4. THIS MORNING'S DIE BURGER (26 MAY) REPORTS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER, MR P W BOTHA, TOLD THE NEWSPAPER EARLIER YESTERDAY (ALSO BEFORE GENERAL MALAN'S STATEMENT) THAT SOUTH AFRICA WAS GUIDED BY ITS OWN INTERESTS IN ARMS TRANSACTIONS. QUOTE THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY WHICH HAS BEEN LAID DOWN SINCE I BECAME MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND WHEN AN ARMS EMBARGO WAS INTRODUCED AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS POLICY SOUTH AFRICA DOES NOT SAY FROM WHOM SHE BUYS WEAPONS OR TO WHOM SHE SELLS THEM. ACCORDINGLY WE DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE SOLD WEAPONS TO ANYBODY, WE SHALL NOT BE FRIGHTENED OFF THIS POLICY BY POLITICKING. UNQUOTE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER PRESS ENQUIRIES WE SHALL TAKE THE FOLLOWING LINE: QUOTE WE HAVE NOTED AND REPORTED TO LONDON GENERAL MALAN'S STATEMENT THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS NOT SUPPLIED ARGENTINA WITH MISSILES OR AIRCRAFT PARTS. UNQUOTE.

6. COMMENT TO FOLLOW.

FERGUSSON

BT

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