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TO DESKBY 301200Z FCO

TELNO 338

OF 301030Z JULY 87

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON

*Prime Minister  
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call.  
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CALL ON PIK BOTHA

SUMMARY

1. FIRST CALL ON PIK BOTHA.

DETAIL

2. WHEN I CALLED ON PIK BOTHA, I GOT A FRIENDLY RECEPTION.

PIK STARTED BY SAYING THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA IF THERE HAD NEVER BEEN A RHODESIA SETTLEMENT AT ZOUA LANCASTER HOUSESM I SAID THAT, IF HE WOULD FORGIVE MY SAYING SO, THIS REALLY WAS NONSENSE. IF THERE HAD NOT BEEN A RHODESIA SETTLEMENT, THE COUNTRY WOULD HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THE CONGO.

I WELL REMEMBERED PIK COMING TO LOADON DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS TO TELL US THAT THE RHODESIANS WERE ON THEIR BEAM ENDS AND THAT THERE MUST BE A SETTLEMENT. IT WAS OUR ASSESSMENT THAT WITHOUTBO IT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A MILITARY COLLAPSE IN RHODESIA, AND THAT HAD BEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSESSMENT ALSO.

3. PIK BOTHA, CHANGING TACK, CHEERFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS SO. HE THOUGHT THAT MUGABE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO COME TO POWER BY MILITARY HEANS AND THAT PROBABLY HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO SO. THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD TOLD THE RHOD IANS DURING THE CONFERENCE THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO TAKE OVER THE WAR OR FACE CONTINUALLY ESCALATING SINANCIAL COSTS. SMITH SHOULD HAVE NEGOTIATED EARLIER AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD TOLD HIM SO. WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS THAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE FUNDAMMNTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SITUATION OF RHODESIA AND THAT OF SOUTH AFRICA.

/4. I SAID

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4. I SAID THAT WE DID UNDERSTAND THOSE DIFFERENCES. WHEREVER ELSE THE SOUTH AFRICANS ENDED UP, IT WAS NOT LIKELY TO BE AT LANCASTER HOUSE. WE HAD A DIRECT CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR RHODESIA. WE HAD NONE FOR SOUTH AFRICA. WE WOULD GO ON MAKING CLEAR OUR POSITION ON THE RELEASE OF MANDELA, THE UNBANNING OF POLITICAL PARTIES ETC. BUT THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOU HAD STATED CLEARLY ON EVERY OCCASION THAT A SETTLEMENT HERE COULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICANS.

5. PIK ASKED FOR HIS GREETINGS TO BE CONVEYED TO YOU AND THE PRIME MINISTER. THE SAG HAD BEEN MOST IMPRESSED BY THE SIZE OF THE ELECTION VICTORY. THERE WOULD BE PLENTY OF DIFFERENCES, BUT THEY DID ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO CO-OPERATION WITH US - THE MORE SO AT A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY IN WASHINGTON. SANCTIONS DID NOT HELP THOSE WHO WANTED TO SEE INTERNAL REFORM GO AHEAD FASTER HERE. THEY SIMPLY PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF TREURNICHT AND CO.

6. PIK BOTHA ASKED ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE. I SAID THAT OUR POSITION ON SANCTIONS AND DISINVESTMENT HAD NOT CHANGED AND THERE WAS AN INCREASING UNDERSTANDING THAT THESE MEASURES WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THE DESIRED POLITICAL RESULTS. I SAID THAT I HAD DISCUSSED THIS WITH YOU AND THE PRIME MINISTER, HOWEVER, AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD REALISE THAT WE WERE LIKELY ONCE AGAIN TO BE OUR OWN IN RESISTING FURTHER MEASURES AT THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN VANCOUVER. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS NEVER WORRIED ABOUT BEING ALONE WHEN CONVINCED THAT OUR POSITION WAS RIGHT. WE WOULD DEFEND IT ACCORDINGLY. MUCH WOULD DEPEND, HOWEVER, ON WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN NOW AND VANCOUVER. I WANTED HIM TO REALISE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PLACED IN AN INTOLERABLE POSITION IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS ENGAGED IN MAJOR CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE CONFERENCE. I HAD BEEN ASKED TO PUT THIS POINT VERY FIRMLY TO HIM AND TO OTHERS IN THE SAG. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT HE RECEIVED THE MESSAGE: THE PRIME MINISTER'S STAND WAS MUCH APPRECIATED. HE HOPED I WOULD PUT IT ALSO TO THE PRESIDENT OR THE HEAD OF HIS OFFICE (WHICH I SHALL DO).

7. ON ZIMBABWE, I SAID THAT WE HOPED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE CAUTIOUS IN ITS REACTION. WE WOULD NOT KNOW FOR SOME TIME WHAT THE ZIMBABWEAN MEASURES REALLY AMOUNTED TO. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD WAIT AND SEE. THE ZIMBABWEANS WERE VERY MUCH MISTAKEN IF THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD DO WITHOUT OIL SUPPLIES FROM SOUTH AFRICA. THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD NOT REACT HASTILY. IT DEPENDED ON WHAT VIEW PREVAILED IN HARARE.

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8. PIK BOTHA COMPLAINED AT LENGTH ABOUT RECENT MOZAMBIQUE STATEMENTS. HE HAD INVESTED A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT IN TRYING TO MAINTAIN ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION WITH MOZAMBIQUE. THE MOZAMBIKANS KNEW HOW MUCH THEY DEPENDED ON THIS. IT WAS INTOLERABLE FOR THE SOUTH AFRICANS TO BE ACCUSED OF CAUSING THE MACHEL AIR CRASH AND THE HOMOINE MASSACRE. THE FACT WAS THAT THE MOZAMBIKAN GOVERNMENT WAS NOT IN CONTROL OF MUCH OF ITS OWN TERRITORY. CHISSANO DID NOT HAVE THE SAME POLITICAL AUTHORITY AS MACHEL. RENAMO ACTIVITY WAS MORE LIKELY TO GET WORSE THAN BETTER. AT SOME POINT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE TALKS BETWEEN FRELIMO AND RENAMO. I MADE THE SAME POINTS AS I HAD DONE TO VAN HEERDEN (MY TELNO 335).

9. I TOLD PIK BOTHA THAT ON MY NEXT CALL I WOULD LIKE TO GET HIS VIEW ON WHAT PROSPECTS THERE WERE FOR PROGRESS WITH INTERNAL REFORM. PIK SAID THAT HE WOULD BE GLAD TO DISCUSS THIS, INCLUDING MANDELA AND THE GROUP AREAS ACT.

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