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520*Prime Minister*

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FM CAPE TOWN EMBASSY 121310Z AUG 81  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 119 OF 12 AUGUST  
INFO WASHINGTON  
INFO SAVING BCG CAPE TOWN, BCG JOHANNESBURG, BC DURBAN*M.P.*  
*13/10/81*CAPE TOWN: POLICE ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL BLACK RESIDENTS

1. HARASSMENT OF THE HUNDREDS OF BLACKS MADE HOMELESS BY EVICTIONS NEAR CAPE TOWN (FALL'S LETTER 014/20 OF 24 JULY TO SPRAKE SAFD) CONTINUED YESTERDAY (11 AUGUST) WHEN ARMED POLICE AND OFFICIALS BURNED CRUDE SHELTERS ERECTED TO PROVIDE SOME PROTECTION FROM ONE OF THE COLDEST AND WETTEST WINTERS FOR YEARS.

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2. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SHELTERS TOOK PLACE ONLY HOURS BEFORE THE SITE WAS VISITED BY A US CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WERE PREVENTED BY POLICE FROM TALKING TO THE HOMELESS BLACKS. IN A SUBSEQUENT PRESS CONFERENCE THEY DESCRIBED THE AUTHORITIES' ACTION AS INHUMAN AND BRUTAL (SEPARATE REPORT FOLLOWS ON THE VISIT AS A WHOLE).

3. ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE NOW CAMPING OUT ON THE OPEN GROUND BETWEEN CROSSROADS AND NYANGA VARY. KOORNHOF, THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE, HAS REFERRED TO OVER 1000 PEOPLE (SEE PARA 7 BELOW) BUT OTHERS PUT THE FIGURE NEARER SEVERAL HUNDRED. THESE ARE MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, FORMER ILLEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE LANGA BARRACKS EVICTED BY POLICE LAST MONTH. MOST SEEM TO HAVE BEEN IN THE CAPE FOR SOME YEARS.

4. THE AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO ARREST, FINE AND IMPRISON THOSE ILLEGALLY IN THE CAPE. THOSE RELEASED AFTER BEING FINED OR IMPRISONED APPEAR TO PREFER TO REMAIN AND BRAVE THE ELEMENTS AND OFFICIAL HARASSMENT RATHER THAN FACE WORSE PRIVATION IN THEIR QUOTE HOMELANDS UNQUOTE ( IN MOST CASES THE TRANKEI OR CISKEI). NONE SO FAR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FORCIBLY REMOVED TO THE HOMELANDS.

5. FOOD, CLOTHING, BATHS, MEDICAL ATTENTION AND LEGAL AID HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY A VARIETY OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. HOWEVER, ALL WHITES, INCLUDING MPS, ARE NOW APPARENTLY BEING BARRED FROM ENTERING THE AREA.

6. THE OPPOSITION PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY HAVE BITTERLY CRITICISED THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE AFFAIR. HELEN SUZMAN DESCRIBED THE BURNING OF THE SHELTERS AS QUOTE ONE OF THE MOST SHAMEFUL EPISODES OF THE NATIONAL PARTY REGIME UNQUOTE.

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7. KOORNHOF SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE AFFAIR WAS BEING ORCHESTRATED IN ORDER TO WRECK INFLUX CONTROL. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE BLACKMAILED INTO ALLOWING THE CREATION OF NEW SQUATTER CAMPS. IT HAD A DUTY TO PROTECT LEGAL BLACK RESIDENTS OF THE CAPE, FOR WHOM, DESPITE GOVERNMENT EFFORTS, THERE WAS STILL NOT ENOUGH HOUSING OR JOBS. THE ILLEGAL RESIDENTS EVICTED FROM THE LANGA BARRACKS HAD BEEN WARNED TWO YEARS AGO THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO MOVE TO MAKE WAY FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

8. OFFICIAL REMOVALS OF ILLEGAL RESIDENTS AND SQUATTERS' CAMPS OCCUR PERIODICALLY. KOORNHOF TOOK AN ENLIGHTENED COURSE IN 1979 WHEN HE LEGALISED THE CROSSROADS SQUATTERS. HIS DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN GRADUALLY MOVING THEM INTO NEW HOUSING. BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL FOLLOW THE SAME COURSE OVER THE NYANGA SQUATTERS.

9. THE CONTINUING SAGA OF THE SQUATTERS AND THE ATTENDANT PUBLICITY IS CAUSING UNEASE IN NATIONAL PARTY CIRCLES. TODAY'S PRO-GOVERNMENT PAPER DIE BURGER EXPRESSES MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE AUTHORITIES' ACTION WHICH IT SAYS HAS CREATED THE SORT OF PUBLICITY SOUTH AFRICA COULD DO WITHOUT.

PRETORIA REGISTRY PLEASE PASS SAVING TO JOHANNESBURG AND DURBAN.

REID

[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]

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