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ZZ PRETORIA
ZZ CAPE TOWN
OO JOHANNESBURG

GRS 550

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FM FCO 141440Z SEP 84

TO FLASH PRETORIA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 192 OF 14 SEPTEMBER

AND TO FLASH CONSULATE CAPETOWN

AND TO IMMEDIATE JOHANNESBURG

TELECON ARCHER/THORPE: DETAINEES AT DURBAN

1. IT NOW SEEMS LIKELY THAT, AS YOU FEAR, THE SIX DETAINEES WILL SEEK TO STAY IN THE CONSULATE FOR A FURTHER PERIOD AND INCREASE THE PRESSURE ON US TO SUPPORT THEIR DEMANDS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. WE MUST RESIST THIS. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE DETAINEES IN THE CONSULATE IS UNDESIRABLE AND UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT WE WILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT. OUR PRESENT POSITION IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:-

(I) NO FORCIBLE EXPULSION.

(II) CONTINUATION OF EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE SIX TO LEAVE AT THEIR OWN VOLITION.

(III) REFUSAL TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARY OR NEGOTIATOR OVER THE GROUP'S DEMANDS (DOES NOT PRECLUDE CONTACT WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ON MODALITIES OF THEIR DEPARTURE).

(IV) PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL FACILITIES IN ORDER TO PERMIT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE SIX AND THE SAG TO TAKE PLACE.

(V) PROVISION OF BASIC FACILITIES, EG FOOD AND DRINK.

2. POINT (I) ABOVE NEEDS CAREFUL PUBLIC PRESENTATION. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE STATED THAT THE GROUP SHOULD NOT BE FORCIBLY REMOVED THEY CLEARLY CANNOT STAY INDEFINITELY. THERE ARE OBVIOUS LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND WE DO NOT WANT TO SET UNDESIRABLE PRECEDENTS. WE ARE THEREFORE NOW TAKING THE FOLLOWING LINE: 'IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WE HAVE INFORMED THE GROUP THAT, THEY

WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES AGAINST THEIR WILL. THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE, HOWEVER, IS SERIOUSLY DISRUPTING THE WORK OF THE CONSULATE''. UNATTRIBUTABLY YOU MAY POINT OUT THAT IT IS NO SOLUTION TO THE GROUP'S PROBLEMS THAT THEY SHOULD SEEK TO REMAIN INDEFINITELY.

3. IT WOULD BE USEFUL NOW TO APPROACH FORMALLY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. GRATEFUL THEREFORE IF TONKIN COULD SEEK AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO BOTHA IN CAPE TOWN OR, FAILING THAT, IF ARCHER COULD SPEAK AT AN APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL LEVEL IN THE DFA OR THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. YOU SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(I) THIS IS AN EMBARRASSING AND DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

(II) FROM THE BEGINNING OF THIS INCIDENT WE HAVE TRIED TO MINIMISE OUR INVOLVEMENT.

(III) WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THE SIX THAT WE WILL NOT ACT AS NEGOTIATORS OR INTERMEDIARIES OVER THE GROUP'S POLITICAL DEMANDS (ALTHOUGH WE ARE READY TO PROVIDE THE FACILITIES FOR THEM TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THEIR INTERMEDIARIES, EG: THEIR LAWYERS).

(IV) WE ARE NOT ABOUT TO EXPEL THEM FORCIBLY

(WE HOPE THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL NOT ASK US FOR ACCESS TO THE CONSULATE TO REMOVE THEM, BUT IF THEY DID, YOU SHOULD EMPHASISE THE INVIOLABILITY OF THE PREMISES AND SEEK INSTRUCTIONS).

(V) WE VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE SIX CAN ACHIEVE EARLY AGREEMENT WHICH WILL RELIEVE US OF THIS EMBARRASSING PROBLEM.

YOU SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES TO COMMENT.

4. WE HAVE JUST SEEN YOUR TELEGRAM NUMBERS 346 AND 347. SUBJECT TO POINTS (IV) AND (V) OF PARAGRAPH 1 ABOVE WE AGREE THAT WE SHOULD STRONGLY RESIST MAKING ANY FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO THE GROUP. WE DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO SET DEADLINES. WE AGREE ACCORDINGLY WITH YOUR TELEGRAM NUMBER 347 WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH THE POINTS YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DEPLOY AT PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE.

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