

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM PRETORIA

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 435

OF 291510Z OCTOBER 85

INFO ROUTINE CANBERRA, OTTAWA, LUSAKA, HARARE, NEW DELHI,

INFO ROUTINE NASSAU, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO SAVING JOHANNESBURG, CAPE TOWN (CONSULATE), DURBAN

MY TELNO 430: SOUTH AFRICA INTERNAL

SUMMARY

1. NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE DISTURBED SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. AUTHORITIES SEEM AT A LOSS HOW TO BREAK THE EVER-INCREASING CYCLE OF VIOLENCE EXCEPT BY STRONG ARM METHODS. TOMORROW'S BY-ELECTIONS AN IMPORTANT TEST OF WHITE SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY OF CONTROLLED REFORM.

DETAIL

2. I CANNOT SEE MUCH HOPE OF ANY EARLY RETURN TO NORMALITY. DAILY CLASHES WITH THE POLICE ARE CONTINUING, AS IS A WIDESPREAD SCHOOL BOYCOTT IN BLACK URBAN AREAS AND A BLACK CONSUMER BOYCOTT IN THE EASTERN CAPE. A PERSON WHO SAT NEXT TO THE MINISTER OF CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AT A RECENT FUNCTION TOLD ME THAT HEUNIS ADMITTED TO THE EASTERN CAPE BEING IN A VIRTUAL STATE OF CIVIL WAR. THE SITUATION IN THE WESTERN CAPE HAS WORSENERED AND FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND EMERGENCY LAWS TO CAPE TOWN AND THE SURROUNDING AREA WHICH INCLUDES A BAN ON A HUNDRED NAMED ORGANISATIONS FROM HOLDING MEETINGS.
3. THE GOVERNMENT HOPE TO HOLD ON TO FIVE PARLIAMENTARY SEATS IN BY-ELECTIONS ON 30 OCTOBER. THE MAIN THREAT IS FROM THE RIGHT-WING CONSERVATIVE PARTY. THIS MAY HELP TO EXPLAIN SOME OF THE RECENT HARD LINE GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS INCLUDING OUTSPOKEN ATTACKS ON THE ANC, CRITICISM OF THE COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVES, AND WARNINGS OF TIGHTER CONTROL ON FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS TO TRY AND PREVENT "IRRESPONSIBLE" REPORTING.
4. THERE ARE ALSO CLEAR SIGNS OF GOVERNMENT EXASPERATION AT LIBERAL ADVICE FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, NOT TO MENTION EXTERNAL PRESSURES. I WAS TOLD BY ONE BUSINESSMAN AMONG THOSE WHO RECENTLY MET TAMBO IN ZAMBIA THAT IN HIS OPINION THE GOVERNMENT WERE NOW CLOSE TO BRINGING DOWN THE SHUTTERS, BY WHICH HE MEANT TURNING THEIR BACKS ON THE WHOLE REFORM EFFORT. I DO NOT THINK SUCH A DECISION IS IMMINENT. BUT IT IS SYMPTOMATIC THAT WE CAN EVEN HEAR RUMOURS OF IT BEING CONTEMPLATED.
5. IF ALL GOES WELL FOR THE GOVERNMENT AT THE BY-ELECTIONS THEY WILL HAVE A MANDATE FOR THE PROGRAMME OF CHANGES ALREADY ANNOUNCED INCLUDING AMENDED CITIZENSHIP PROVISIONS AND PLANNING FOR BLACK URBAN GROWTH. CONVERSELY A STRONG SHOWING BY THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE CAPTURE OF ONE OR MORE SEATS WOULD BE A SEVERE SETBACK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. EVEN A SUCCESSFUL RESULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT HOWEVER IS UNLIKELY TO BE FOLLOWED BY A NEW EMPHASIS ON REFORM, RATHER THAN A STEADY CONTINUATION OF THE EXISTING STRATEGY.
6. AT THIS STAGE THE GOVERNMENT LOOK NO NEARER TO GETTING A REAL DIALOGUE OFF THE GROUND. MINISTERS SEE THE PRIORITY AS AN ENDING OF UNREST. AN OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO IS THAT, AS HAS HAPPENED DURING PREVIOUS OUTBREAKS OF UNREST, THE DISORDER WILL GRADUALLY DIE AWAY AFTER RUNNING ITS COURSE IN THE TRANSVAAL, EASTERN CAPE AND WESTERN CAPE.

CONFIDENTIAL

17.

7. INCREASINGLY THIS LOOKS TO BE AN UNREAL EXPECTATION. THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN BLAMING THE CONTINUED TENSION ON ORGANISED OPPOSITION WHICH THEY ATTRIBUTE PARTICULARLY TO THE INFLUENCE OF THE ANC ON STUDENTS AND SCHOOL CHILDREN. EMERGENCY MEASURES INCLUDE PROVISIONS MAKING IT ILLEGAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS OUTSIDE CLASSROOMS DURING SCHOOL HOURS. SUCH MEASURES APPEAR ONLY TO HAVE HEIGHTENED RESENTMENT.

8. A CONSIDERABLE SHARE OF THE BLAME FOR CONTINUED BITTERNESS AND TENSION IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE WAY IN WHICH FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER AND PARTICULARLY THE POLICE HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING THEMSELVES. THE POLICE HAVE HAD TO FACE SERIOUS PROVOCATION, INSULTS, STONE THROWING, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES OF BLACK POLICEMEN INVOLVED IN COMMANDO SQUADS AND THE DEATH OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE FORCE. HOWEVER, REPEATED OVER-REACTION HAS ONLY HEIGHTENED FEELING AGAINST THE POLICE WITHIN THE BLACK COMMUNITY AND ALIENATED THE HITHERTO QUIET COLOURED COMMUNITY IN CAPE TOWN.

9. A FEATURE OF THE VIOLENCE IS THAT IT IS STILL LARGELY CONFINED TO BLACK OR COLOURED AREAS. BUT A FEW RECENT INCIDENTS IN CENTRAL JOHANNESBURG AND CAPE TOWN HAVE BEGUN TO SHOW THAT WHITES ARE NOT IMMUNE: WHICH IS LIKELY TO RALLY WHITE SUPPORT BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S CRACKDOWN ON LAWLESSNESS BUT MAY ALSO OPEN THEIR EYES TO THE BRUTALITY OF POLICE METHODS. FOR THE FIRST TIME ALSO ENTIRE BLACK TOWNSHIPS ARE BEGINNING TO BECOME NO-GO AREAS FOR WHITES. ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN FOUNDATION HIS WHITE STAFF ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO VISIT SOME OF THE TOWNSHIPS NEAR CAPE TOWN FOR FEAR LITERALLY OF THEIR LIVES.

10. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT MANY MODERATE BLACK LEADERS LIST THE ENDING OF THE EMERGENCY, WITHDRAWAL OF THE ARMY AND SCALING DOWN OF POLICE ACTIVITY AS FUNDAMENTAL FOR ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE OVER-ALL SITUATION.

11. SEE ALSO MIFT.

MOBERLY

SOUTHERN AFRICA
STANDARD (PALACE)
SAFD
OADs
UND
NAD
ECDs
SOVIET D
MR JOHNSON
CABINET OFFICE

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
SOUTHERN AFRICA

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

- 2 -
CONFIDENTIAL