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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 297 OF 4 AUGUST

AND TO PRIORITY CAPETOWN WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK LAGOS

YOUR TELNO 051 TO CAPETOWN PARA 10

SADF OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA/LINKAGE

1. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO HARD INFORMATION ON ANGOLAN CLAIMS AND SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTER-CLAIMS ON MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO TAKE SERIOUSLY ANGOLAN PROTESTATIONS IF ONLY BECAUSE OF THE INTENSITY OF THE FEELINGS WHICH THEY REFLECT. REPORTS SUGGEST THAT SADF ARE IN VIRTUAL CONTROL OF LARGE AREAS OF CUNENE AND CUANDO-CUBANGO PROVINCE. THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN LAYING MUCH STRESS ON THE THREAT WHICH THESE OPERATIONS POSE TO THE STABILITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE COUNTRY. PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS MADE MUCH OF THIS IN A SPEECH ON AUGUST 2 (SEE MIFT). HE PAID TRIBUTE TO CUBA AND THE USSR FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE TO ANGOLA'S DEFENCE FORCES.

2. THE SAG MAY BELIEVE, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, THAT TOUGH MILITARY TACTICS QUOTE-SOFTEN UP-UNQUOTE THE ANGOLANS FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON NAMIBIA AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE ANGOLANS BADLY NEED AND GENUINELY WANT A SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA. BUT MILITARY OCCUPATION OF ANGOLAN TERRITORY BY SOUTH AFRICA PRESENTS THE ANGOLANS WITH A THREAT WHICH THEY CANNOT EVADE. THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT. IF THEY WERE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE NAMIBIA NEGOTIATIONS WERE FAILING OR THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE STEPPING UP THEIR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS THE PRESSURES ON THE MPLA GOVERNMENT TO MOUNT A MORE VIGOUROUS MILITARY RESPONSE WOULD BE GREAT. THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE TO GO INTO THESE ENGAGEMENTS KNOWING, ON PRESENT STRENGTHS, THAT THEY WILL LOSE, IS NOT ONE WITH WHICH WE CAN SAFELY EXPECT THEM TO LIVE INDEFINITELY.

3. IF THE ANGOLANS SEE A THREAT OF QUOTE-THE UNDECLARED WAR-UNQUOTE AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA ESCALATING THERE MUST BE AT LEAST SOME DANGER OF THEM TURNING TO THE SOVIETS AND CUBA FOR INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THEY WOULD CLAIM THAT THIS COURSE HAD BEEN FORCED UPON THEM BY SOUTH AFRICA AND THE U.S.. THE SOVIETS MIGHT EVEN ENCOURAGE SUCH AN INITIATIVE. IF THE SOVIETS WERE TO BEGIN DELIVERING INCREASED CONSIGNMENTS OF MILITARY HARDWARE TO ANGOLA AT THIS POINT IN TIME WE COULD BE IN A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION INDEED.

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4. NOTWITHSTANDING OUR LACK OF FIRM INTELLIGENCE ON MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA THERE IS IN MY VIEW A CASE FOR PERSUADING THE AMERICANS TO URGE THE SAG TO MODERATE THEIR QUOTE-HOT PURSUIT-UNQUOTE OPERATIONS AND TO EVACUATE ANY BORDER AREAS WHICH THEIR FORCES MAY BE OCCUPYING ON A MORE PERMANENT BASIS AT LEAST DURING THIS PERIOD OF THE NAMIBIA INITIATIVE.

FCO PASS

KENNEDY

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