

PS

PS/MR ONSLOW

PS/PUS

SIR J LEAHY

~~SIR L ALLINSON~~ MR SQUIRE

MR ADAMS

MR GILLMORE

HD/SAFD

HD/CAFD

HD/UND

HD/DEF D

HD/NEWS D

MR FREELAND LAGAL ADV. ^{WH. 216.} ~~Rm. K200A~~

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

D.R. Ford,

MR COLLINS D O T

MR A J S GOODALL
CABINET OFFICE

~~PS/No.10~~ DOWNING STREET

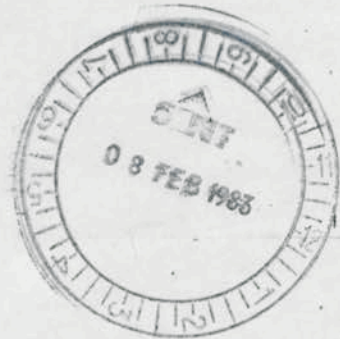
RESIDENT CLERK

CONFIDENTIAL

FM LUANDA 091645Z FEBRUARY 1983

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 94 OF 9 FEBRUARY



PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS

1. I WAS RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS THIS AFTERNOON. I DELIVERED THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE AND MADE THE REPRESENTATIONS IN THE TERMS INSTRUCTED SOLICITING THE RELEASE OF THE BRITISH PRISONERS. I LEFT WITH THE PRESIDENT A 'BOUT DE PAPIER' WHICH SET OUT THE REPRESENTATIONS.

2. THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S CORDIAL AND HELPFUL MESSAGE. HE THANKED ME FOR MY EXPOSITION OF THE GROUNDS ON WHICH WE REQUESTED HIM TO EXERCISE AN ACT OF CLEMENCY ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH PRISONERS. HE WOULD INSTRUCT MINISTER PAULO JORGE TO CONVEY HIS REPLY.

3. THE PRESIDENT AGREED THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS HAD IMPROVED AND WELCOMED THIS FACT. HIS GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD CONCLUDE A GENERAL AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION. THE FOREIGN MINISTER COULD DISCUSS WITH HMG THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT DURING HIS VISIT AND COULD AGREE UPON A DATE AND PLACE FOR THE FORMAL SIGNATURE.

4. PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS SAID THAT HE WAS VERY CONCERNED AT THE TENSE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE WAS NOW PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR AN EARLY SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA. HE WAS LESS HOPEFUL THAN HE HAD BEEN SIX MONTHS AGO. THE

~~LESS HOPEFUL THAN HE HAD BEEN SIX MONTHS AGO.~~ THE REPEATED INSISTENCE OF THE UNITED STATES ON A TIMETABLE FOR CUBAN WITHDRAWAL TO BE DRAWN UP IN ADVANCE OF AN AGREEMENT ON NAMIBIA HAD BROUGHT THE NEGOTIATIONS TO A TOTAL STALEMATE. HIS GOVERNMENT HAD MADE COUNTER-PROPOSALS TO THE UNITED STATES BUT HAD RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES NO REPLY TO THESE PROPOSALS.

5. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO EXERCISE AN ACT OF CLEMENCY IN FAVOUR OF THE BRITISH PRISONERS AND DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF DOING SO NOW BUT HE HAD HOPED THAT SUCH AN ACT COULD HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF GREATER PROGRESS ON THE NAMIBIA PROBLEM. THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE WERE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE FROM SOUTH AFRICA. MERCENARIES, SOME OF RHODESIA ORIGIN, WERE SERVING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARMED FORCES. HE HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT MIGHT ARISE AMONGST ANGOLANS IF HE DID NOT CHOOSE THE RIGHT MOMENT FOR RELEASING THE PRISONERS. THE RELEASE OF THE TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS HAD BEEN MADE ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL BECAUSE THAT HAD FORMED PART OF AN EXCHANGE INVOLVING SOVIET PRISONERS. BUT HE HAD EXPECTED THAT THE RELEASE OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WOULD HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT A GREATER FLEXIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THIS HAD NOT HAPPENED AND THERE HAD BEEN CRITICISM WITHIN THE MPLA LEADERSHIP FOR THE FACT THAT THE EXCHANGE HAD BROUGHT ABOUT NO IMPROVEMENT. HE EXPLAINED THESE POINTS ONLY SO THAT I SHOULD UNDERSTAND HIS POSITION. HE PROMISED TO CONVEY HIS REPLY THROUGH PAULO JORGE. HE BELIEVED THAT THE VISIT OF PAULO JORGE TO BRITAIN WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS.

6. I THANKED THE PRESIDENT FOR AGREEING TO RECEIVE ME AND UNDERTAKING TO CONSIDER OUR REPRESENTATIONS. I EXPLAINED FRANKLY THE EMBARRASSMENT WHICH THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF THE BRITISH PRISONERS ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF THE TWO AMERICAN PRISONERS CAUSED YOU AND MY GOVERNMENT. I SAID THAT BRITAIN COULD HAVE BUT DID NOT DEMAND TO BE INCLUDED IN THE EXCHANGE OF AMERICAN AND SOVIET PRISONERS LAST YEAR. WE HAD RELIED INSTEAD UPON THE JUSTICE AND GENEROSITY OF THE PRESIDENT. WE SHOULD BE PLACED IN A VERY DIFFICULT DILEMMA IF IT SEEMED TO BRITISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, TO THE FAMILIES OF THE PRISONERS AND TO THE BRITISH PUBLIC THAT THIS RELIANCE HAD BEEN MISPLACED. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE FULLY APPRECIATED THE DIFFICULTY WHICH YOU FACED AND REPEATED THAT OUR REPRESENTATIONS WOULD BE CONSIDERED.