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FM PRETORIA 301415Z SEP 83

TO ROUTINE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 361 OF 30 SEPTEMBER

INFO HARARE, WASHINGTON, BONN

INFO SAVING PARIS, OTTAWA, NAIROBI, LAGOS.

SOUTH AFRICA/ZIMBABWE

1. AT DINNER ON 29 SEPTEMBER, GENERAL VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, CHIEF OF STAFF INTELLIGENCE, SAID THE SOUTH AFRICANS CONSIDERED THAT MUGABE, DESPITE HIS FAULTS, WAS A LESS EXTREME LEADER OF ZIMBABWE THAN ANY LIKELY SUCCESSOR. UNHAPPILY, HE OFTEN TOOK AN EXTREME LINE, THOUGH THIS PERHAPS RESULTED AS MUCH FROM PRESSURE FROM EXTREMISTS IN HIS CENTRAL COMMITTEE AS FROM HIS OWN MARXIST VIEWS. VAN DER WESTHUIZEN SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD BEEN WORRIED AT EARLIER REPORTS THAT BRITAIN INTENDED TO RUN DOWN THE BRITISH MILITARY MISSION IN ZIMBABWE. THE FREE WORLD SHOULD MAINTAIN ITS PRESENCE THERE IN EVERY POSSIBLE FIELD. TO GET OUT WOULD LEAVE A VACUUM THAT THE RUSSIANS AND THEIR FRIENDS WOULD BE ONLY TOO PLEASED TO FILL. IT WAS NOT IN SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS TO SEE WHITE EMIGRATION FROM ZIMBABWE. THERE WERE 60,000 SOUTH AFRICAN PASSPORT HOLDERS THERE SEMICOLON SOME HAD LEFT BUT IT WAS SOUTH AFRICA'S POLICY TO ENCOURAGE IMMIGRATION INTO ZIMBABWE.

2. SQUIRE SAID WE TOO BELIEVED IT WAS RIGHT TO MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE IN ZIMBABWE AND TO SEEK TO INFLUENCE MUGABE'S POLICIES. WE WERE CONTINUING BMATT FOR THE TIME BEING THOUGH AT A REDUCED LEVEL. IT WAS VERY USEFUL TO HEAR THAT SOUTH AFRICA TOO SAW THE NEED FOR A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE MUGABE GOVERNMENT. SOME OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FRIENDS ABROAD TOOK A DIFFERENT LINE AND LOBBIED THEIR GOVERNMENTS FOR A CONTRARY POLICY. IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL AS OCCASION OFFERED TO MAKE SOUTH AFRICA'S GENERAL ATTITUDE BETTER KNOWN.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES.

FERGUSON

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

SOUTHERN AFRICA

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

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