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FM WASHINGTON
TO ROUTINE FCO
TELNO 2129
OF 192000Z AUG 86
INFO ROUTINE PRETORIA

FCO TELNO 1464: MESSAGES FROM PRESIDENT BOTHA

1. I SPOKE AS INSTRUCTED TO CROCKER ON 19 AUGUST, LEAVING WITH HIM A PAPER CONTAINING THE POINTS IN PARA 5 OF TUR.
2. CROCKER WAS GRATEFUL FOR THESE VIEWS. HE CONCLUDED THAT THE US AND UK INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BOTHA MESSAGES WERE STILL SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. IN US EYES, THE SAG SEEMED TO BE TRYING HARD TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY HAD NOT WRITTEN OFF THE EPG CONCEPT, AND THAT THE MATCHING COMMITMENTS APPROACH WAS WORTH PURSUING - SUBJECT TO THE SAG RECEIVING TOTAL SATISFACTION ON THE ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRACY. THIS WAS DOUBTLESS AN ATTEMPT TO SEIZE THE HIGH GROUND, AND TO PRESS THE US AND UK OVER VIOLENCE AND DEMOCRACY, BUT THE AMERICANS REMAINED VERY KEEN TO ENCOURAGE ANYTHING THAT MIGHT KEEP THE MATCHING COMMITMENTS APPROACH ALIVE.
3. CROCKER SAID THAT NO DECISIONS HAD YET BEEN TAKEN ON THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY, ALTHOUGH A DRAFT HAD GONE TO SHULTZ IN CALIFORNIA. AS IT STOOD, THIS DRAFT WOULD ASK P W BOTHA TO EXPLAIN HOW HE RECONCILED HIS ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CONTINUED US ENGAGEMENT WITH HIS DENUNCIATION OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE. IT WOULD SEEK EVIDENCE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WERE READY TO MAKE A SERIOUS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS REACHING THE GOALS THEY PROCLAIMED. AND IT WOULD HOLD OUT THE PROSPECT OF A MEETING (DATE UNSPECIFIED) BETWEEN US AND SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS. BUT IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS (AND OTHERS) DID NOT CONFUSE THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY WITH THE DOMESTIC SANCTIONS ISSUE: THAT HAD A LIFE OF ITS OWN, AND THERE WAS NO REALISTIC EXPECTATION THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD DO ANYTHING TO HEAD IT OFF (SEE NIFT). THE ADMINISTRATION WERE TIRED OF TELLING THE SAG ABOUT ALL THE PRESSURE THEY WERE UNDER - AND THE SAG THEMSELVES SEEMED TO WANT TO GET THE SANCTIONS ISSUE OVER AND DONE WITH (FOR THE TIME BEING).
4. CROCKER SAID THAT, IF THE SAG DID TAKE TO THE IDEA OF A MEETING (POSSIBLY IN SEPTEMBER, POSSIBLY LATER) THAT WOULD BE THE BEST TIME TO RAISE FURTHER POINTS, INCLUDING SOME OF THOSE WHICH WE WERE SUGGESTING. BUT CROCKER HAD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT POINT (E). VALID AS THIS NO DOUBT WAS, IF THE SAG WERE ASKED NOT TO DO SOMETHING THEIR INSTINCTIVE REACTION SEEMED TO BE TO GO AHEAD AND DO IT. AND THERE WAS ALSO THE RISK THAT THE SAG WOULD INTERPRET SUCH ADVICE AS EVIDENCE OF WESTERN PANDERING TO THE ANC.

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5. CROCKER THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT A DECISION ON THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY COULD BE TAKEN IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO. HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT BEFORE A DRAFT WAS FINALISED.
6. SEE MY 2 IFTS.

JENKINS

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ORWBAN 3685

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