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6909 - 1

FROM FCO 141700Z SEP 79
TO IMMEDIATE CERTAIN MISSIONS AND DEPENDENT TERRITORIES
GUIDANCE TELEGRAM NUMBER 108 OF 14 SEPTEMBER 1979

fg. (2 files)

SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY TOUR OF BRITAIN

Am

12/5

1. FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE RUGBY UNIONS OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, IRELAND AND WALES THAT THEY HAD INVITED A SOUTH AFRICAN BARBARIANS' TEAM CONSISTING OF 8 WHITE, 8 BLACK, AND 8 COLOURED PLAYERS TO TOUR BRITAIN IN OCTOBER, MR MONRO, MINISTER FOR SPORT, IMMEDIATELY EXPRESSED THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN ON BBC RADIO. HE SUBSEQUENTLY WROTE TO THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE ON 1 SEPTEMBER TO ASK THEM TO CONSIDER THEIR WIDER RESPONSIBILITIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT, AND TO CANCEL THE INVITATION. THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT THE COMMITTEE STOOD BY ITS DECISION AND PROPOSED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE TOUR.

2. THE MINISTER FOR SPORT WROTE A FURTHER LETTER TODAY (TEXT IN MIFGT) TO THE COMMITTEE OF RUGBY UNIONS SEMI-COLON THE FCO SPOKESMAN ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT (SEE RETRACT 710 OF 14 SEPT TO CERTAIN POSTS) RESTATING THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT.

LINE TO TAKE

3. YOU SHOULD NOT INITIATE DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT SEMI-COLON BUT IF QUESTIONED YOU SHOULD SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPT THAT THEY ARE BOUND BY THE 'GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT'. THE PROPOSED TOUR IS A PRIVATE NON-REPRESENTATIONAL ONE WHICH HAS RECEIVED NO FINANCIAL OR OTHER SUPPORT FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. WE WERE NOT CONSULTED OVER THE PROPOSED TOUR AND HAVE MADE EVERY ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE IT, IN FULL CONFORMITY WITH THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT. THERE IS NO VISA REGIME BETWEEN THE UK AND SOUTH AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICAN PASSPORT HOLDERS DO NOT REQUIRE VISAS OR PERMITS IN ORDER TO SEEK TO ENTER THIS COUNTRY.

BACKGROUND (MAY BE DRAWN ON)

/GLENEAGLES

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GLENEAGLES STATEMENT ON APARTHEID IN SPORT

4. THE PROBLEM OF SPORTING CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA WAS DISCUSSED AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN JUNE 1977 AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ENDORSED A STATEMENT (VS NO 153/77) STRONGLY CONDEMNING APARTHEID IN SPORT AND EMBODYING AN UNDERTAKING TO TAKE 'EVERY PRACTICAL STEP TO DISCOURAGE CONTACT OR COMPETITION BY THEIR NATIONALS WITH SPORTING ORGANISATIONS, TEAMS OR SPORTSMEN FROM SOUTH AFRICA'. THE STATEMENT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS FOR EACH GOVERNMENT TO DETERMINE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS LAW, HOW BEST TO DISCHARGE ITS COMMITMENTS.

5. SOME COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES MAY BE UPSET ABOUT THE REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE MODIFICATION OF THE TERMS OF THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT. YOU SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT THE PRESS STATEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE OF POLICY AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS REAFFIRMED ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE AGREEMENT.

PREVENTION OF SPORTING CONTACTS

6. WE MAINTAIN A POLICY OF DISCOURAGEMENT INCLUDING THE WITHHOLDING OF GRANTS IN CASES WHERE CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTS TEAMS ARE INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS. THIS POLICY EXTENDS TO SPORTING CONTACTS WHICH TAKE PLACE IN THIRD COUNTRIES. GIVEN THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUR SPORTING BODIES, OUR EFFORTS MAY NOT ALWAYS BE SUCCESSFUL BUT THEY ARE AN HONEST METHOD OF RECONCILING OUR OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID WITH THE EXPRESSION IN OUR LAWS OF THE FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

LIMITATION ON ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT

7. WE CANNOT FORCE OUR SPORTS BODIES TO TAKE DECISIONS. LIKE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, WE ALSO ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. LESS THAN 4 PER CENT OF ALIENS REQUIRE VISAS TO ENTER BRITAIN. EVEN FOR ALIENS FOR WHOM THERE IS A VISA REQUIREMENT THERE ARE NO GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL UNDER OUR

/IMMIGRATION

IMMIGRATION RULES BECAUSE OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORTING EVENTS. ANY PROPOSAL FOR TIGHTENING OUR PRESENT POLICY BY RESTRICTING THE ENTRY OF SOUTH AFRICAN TEAMS OR SPORTSMEN BY MEANS OF VISAS OR PERMITS WOULD THEREFORE REQUIRE CHANGES IN THE IMMIGRATION RULES APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT. THIS COULD PRESENT CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTIES, AND WOULD HAVE TO ALLOW FOR AN APPEAL SYSTEM. ABOUT 20 PER CENT OF THE WHITE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (UP TO A MILLION PEOPLE) MAY STILL BE ENTITLED TO BRITISH PASSPORTS AND, IN MANY CASES, MAY HAVE THE RIGHT OF ENTRY TO THIS COUNTRY.

IRELAND

8. THE PROPOSED TOUR INCLUDES THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND. THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER ISSUED A STATEMENT AGAINST THE TOUR ON 6 SEPTEMBER. HE ALSO STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE ACTION TO STOP THE TEAM ENTERING THE COUNTRY.

FRANCE

9. A REPRESENTATIVE SPRINGBOK RUGBY TOUR OF FRANCE WAS DUE TO TAKE PLACE IN OCTOBER. THE FRENCH RECENTLY INTRODUCED A VISA REQUIREMENT FOR SOUTH AFRICANS WHICH CAME INTO EFFECT ON 1 SEPTEMBER. THE FRENCH HAVE SAID THEY INTEND TO REFUSE VISAS TO MEMBERS OF THE SPRINGBOK TEAM. THEIR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT AGAINST THE TOUR ON 1 SEPTEMBER.

OLYMPICS

10. RUGBY IS NOT AN OLYMPIC SPORT. HOWEVER, IN FRANCE THE RUGBY FEDERATIONS BELONG TO THE FRENCH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE. THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC) BANNED SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT IN 1970 AND DISCOURAGES AFFILIATED SPORTS BODIES FROM HAVING CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. THE PRESIDENT OF THE IOC THEREFORE HAD GROUNDS FOR PROTESTING TO THE FRENCH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE ABOUT THE SPRINGBOK TOUR. IN BRITAIN THE RUGBY UNIONS ARE NOT AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH OLYMPIC

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ASSOCIATION. IT IS FOR THE IOC TO DECIDE WHICH COUNTRIES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

11. YOU WILL BE AWARE FROM PRESS REPORTS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER RECENTLY VISITED FRANCE AND THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN OFFICE MINISTERS ON 12 SEPTEMBER. YOU CAN CONFIRM REPORTS THAT MINISTERS INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT BRITAIN INTENDED TO STAND BY THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT. THE SOUTH AFRICAN MFA HAS RECENTLY WARNED THE SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY BOARD OF THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR GOING AHEAD WITH THE TOUR IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE.

FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION

12. THE HOME SECRETARY HAS POWERS TO PROHIBIT THE ENTRY INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM OF INDIVIDUALS WHOSE PRESENCE WOULD NOT BE CONDUCIVE TO THE PUBLIC GOOD. THEY HAVE NOT IN THE PAST BEEN USED TO PREVENT THE ENTRY OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN SPORTING ACTIVITIES. MINISTERS HAVE DECIDED THAT THEIR USE ON THIS OCCASION IS INAPPROPRIATE.

CARRINGTON

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STOCKHOLM
BUENOS AIRES

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GUIDANCE TELEGRAM NUMBER 109 OF 14 SEPTEMBER 1979

MIPGT: SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY TOUR

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO J.G.M. HART, HON. SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOME UNIONS, FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF 2 SEPTEMBER, CONFIRMING THE INTENTION OF YOUR COMMITTEE TO GO AHEAD WITH ITS INVITATION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN BARBARIAN RUGBY CLUB TO TOUR THE UNITED KINGDOM NEXT MONTH.

IN YOUR LETTER YOU POINT OUT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE JUNE 1977. THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISE THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN SOUTH AFRICA TOWARDS INTEGRATION IN CERTAIN SPORTS. BUT OUR VIEW IS THAT THIS PROGRESS IS NOT YET SUFFICIENT TO MERIT MODIFICATION OF THE TERMS OF THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT.

EARLIER TODAY THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT, A COPY OF WHICH I ENCLOSE. AS YOU SEE WE ARE WATCHING FOR SIGNS OF REAL PROGRESS TOWARDS INTEGRATION. WHEN WE JUDGE THAT SUFFICIENT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE WE SHALL BE READY TO DISCUSS WITH COMMONWEALTH COLLEAGUES THE POSSIBILITY OF MODIFYING THE GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT. BUT THAT TIME HAS NOT YET COME.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMITTEE'S WISH TO ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL SPORTING ACTIVITIES. BUT WE MUST CONSIDER THE FACTS IN EACH CASE AND WE CAN'T YET ACCEPT THE CONTENTION THAT SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY IS NON-RACIAL. THE GOVERNMENT THEREFORE REGRETS THE POSITION THAT YOU HAVE SO FAR TAKEN UP.

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