SECRET

PAGE 01  PRETOR 04238  201033Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01  ISO-00  A001 W
------------------117497  201038Z /15
O 201013Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECFIN WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8499

SECRET PRETORIA 4238
NODIS CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PARM, SF
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

REF: STATE 198014,

1. I SAW BRAND FOURIE AT 10:00 AND MADE THE POINTS CONTAINED
REFTEL.

2. HE SAID HE COULD NOT GET THROUGH TO VORSTER AND BOTHA
UNTIL AFTER THE CAUCUS MORNING SESSION IN CAPE TOWN, BUT
WOULD BE SURE TO DO SO THEN. HE WAS NOT CERTAIN HOW FAST HE
COULD GET ME AN ANSWER. THERE ARE POLICY QUESTIONS INVOLVED,
HE NOTED, AND DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE THE PM TO
TOUCH THE NECESSARY BASES. LOOKING OVER THE THREE
AFFIRMATIONS REQUESTED, HE EXPRESSED A PERSONAL OPINION
THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THEM COULD BE MADE WITHOUT
DIFFICULTY. HE REGRETTED THAT THIS MATTER HAD COME UP OVER
A WEEKEND WHEN ALL THE PRINCIPAL POLICY MAKERS WERE OUT OF
TOWN CONCENTRATING ON ANOTHER ISSUE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO
SOUTH AFRICA. HE UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEM WE FACE AT
LAGOS AND THE UN AND WANTS TO BE HELPFUL.

3. FOURIE EXPRESSED NO WILLINGNESS TO INVITE AN ON-SITE
INSPECTION OF THE KALAHARI SITE. DURING OUR BRIEF CON-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02  PRETOR 04238  201033Z

VERSATION HE AGAIN NOTED THAT THIS WAS A SECRET MILITARY
INSTALLATION REQUIRING THE APPROVAL OF MILITARY AUTHORITIES.
HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT "OUR MILITARY NO MORE WANTS
FOREIGNERS PRYING AROUND THEIR SECRET INSTALLATION THAN
YOURS DO."

4. SPEAKING OF THE LONGER TERM PICTURE, FOURIE EXPRESSED
CONCERN THAT US-SA NUCLEAR COOPERATION HAD FALLEN OFF DURING THE PAST 3-4 YEARS. IF THIS COOPERATION HAD REMAINED HIGH, HE OBSERVED, THE PRESENT MISUNDERSTANDING MIGHT NOT HAVE ARISEN. PREFACING HIS NEXT REMARKS WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT HE WAS NOT SUGGESTING BARGAINING OR HORSETRADING, HE SAID THAT IT WOULD HELP A GREAT DEAL IF THE US AND SA COULD DISCUSS SOUTH AFRICA'S NUCLEAR FUEL REQUIREMENTS AND REACH SOME KIND OF AN UNDERSTANDING. AS LONG AS YOU TRY TO CUT US OFF, HE ADDED, YOU MUST EXPECT THAT WE WILL SEARCH FOR OTHER WAYS TO SATISFY OUR NEEDS.

5. FOURIE AND I HAVE COORDINATED OUR WEEKEND PROGRAMS SO THAT WE CAN EXPEDITE SENDING RESPONSE AS SOON AS RECEIVED FROM CAPE TOWN.

6. DEPT PASS TO BONN, LONDON AND PARIS AS APPROPRIATE.

BOWDLER

SECRET

NNN