

AN-Commonwealth-Africa; BGT; 0607
BUDGET

By DENNIS PASSA

CANBERRA (CP) - SOUTH AFRICA'S AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA ACCUSED THE COMMONWEALTH OF TRYING TO "GET RID OF" THE PRETORIA GOVERNMENT ON SATURDAY AS FOREIGN MINISTERS FROM EIGHT COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES BEGAN ARRIVING FOR A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE.

IN A PAID ADVERTISEMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN, A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER, AMBASSADOR DAVID TOTHILL SAID: "FOR SOME TIME NOW THE COMMONWEALTH HAS CLAMORED FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S HEAD."

"ALTHOUGH OTHER MOTIVES ARE GIVEN OUT, AMONG THEM THE NEED TO PRESSURIZE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH ITS INTERNAL OPPONENTS; THE HIDDEN AGENDA IS GET RID OF THE GOVERNMENT."

ALTHOUGH THE ADVERTISEMENT DID NOT MENTION THE COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA THAT BEGINS MEETING IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL ON MONDAY, THERE WAS LITTLE DOUBT AS TO THE TIMING OF THE LENGTHY AD AND FOR WHOM IT WAS INTENDED.

A SENIOR CANADIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN SAID TOTHILL'S ADVERTISEMENT UNDERLINES THE EFFECT COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES ARE HAVING ON SOUTH AFRICA.

"IT SIGNALS THE IMPORTANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICA THAT THEY WOULD GO THE TIME AND EXPENSE TO ISSUE THIS," HE SAID. "IT INDICATES WE ARE HAVING AN IMPACT."

THE MEETING, CHAIRED BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER JOE CLARK, WILL DISCUSS ISSUES SUCH AS SOUTH AFRICA'S LINKS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL COMMUNITY, FINANCIAL SANCTIONS, AND WAYS TO COUNTERACT SOUTH AFRICAN PROPAGANDA AND CENSORSHIP OVER APARTHEID.

EIGHT COUNTRIES

CLARK AND THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF AUSTRALIA, GUYANA, INDIA, NIGERIA, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE WILL MEET IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL IN CANBERRA - A WELL-PLANNED CAPITAL CITY BUILT ON THE SITE OF AN OPEN RANGE WHERE GRAZING SHEEP AND KANGAROOS ONCE ROAMED.

FINELY MANICURED STREETS EMANATE IN A SPOKE-LIKE FASHION FROM THE NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE ON CAPITAL HILL ON ONE SIDE OF A LAKE, AND THE SAME PATTERN IS REPEATED FROM THE VERNON (CITY) CIRCLE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

THE FOREIGN MINISTERS COMMITTEE WAS CREATED BY THE VANCOUVER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN 1987 TO PROVIDE FURTHER COMMONWEALTH OBJECTIVES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA.

THE CANBERRA CONFERENCE IS THE FOURTH AND LIKELY FINAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE BEFORE IT PREPARES A REPORT FOR THE NEXT COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, IN OCTOBER.

IN THE ADVERTISEMENT ENTITLED SOUTH AFRICAN OPINION: A PERSONAL VIEW BY DAVID TOTHILL, THE AMBASSADOR WARNED OTHER COUNTRIES THAT THEY COULD ONE DAY FACE THE SAME PROBLEMS AS SOUTH AFRICA'S.

"WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT IF SOUTH AFRICA IS TODAY'S POLECAT, TOMORROW'S COULD WELL BE AUSTRALIA OR CANADA OR SOMEONE ELSE AND PRECEDENTS ESTABLISHED IN RESPECT OF SOUTH AFRICA WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN."

POSSIBLE BOYCOTT

ANOTHER ISSUE LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE CANBERRA MEETING IS A POSSIBLE BOYCOTT OF NEXT YEAR'S COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, BY BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES UPSET ABOUT BRITISH CRICKETERS' PLANS TO PLAY IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE NEXT TWO SEASONS.

SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE SUGGESTED A BOYCOTT IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DOESN'T CONDEMN THE TOUR. THE 1986 EDINBURGH COMMONWEALTH GAMES WERE SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED BY AN AFRICAN BOYCOTT OVER BRITAIN'S SPORTING LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

IN LATE JUNE, CLARK ANNOUNCED CANADA WOULD TIGHTEN ITS BAN ON SPORTING CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA, EXTENDING IT TO INCLUDE ALL SUCH CONTACTS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

CLARK IS TO HOLD A WORKING DINNER TONIGHT IN CANBERRA WITH THE OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS. THE OFFICIAL CONFERENCE OPENING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY MORNING AT THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

THE MEETINGS CONCLUDE WEDNESDAY, AND CLARK IS SCHEDULED TO HOLD BILATERAL TALKS THURSDAY WITH AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER GARETH EVANS.

IN BETWEEN, CLARK IS TO MEET AUSTRALIA PRIME MINISTER BOB HANKE AND ATTEND A DINNER HOSTED BY GOV. GEN. BILL HAYDEN.

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