

~~SECRET//NF~~

ENVELOPE

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

HEADER

R
180453Z AUG 88
FM JCS WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEALGX/SAFE
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172048Z AUG 88
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC/ [redacted] (b)(3):10
USC 424

TO DIACURINTEL

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(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

BT

CONTROLS

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

[redacted]

PASS: (b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i),(b)(6)

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

SERIAL: DIADIN 230-8A

BODY

SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICA: MANDELA'S HEALTH. (U)
DOI: 17 AUG 88 (AS OF 1630 EDT)
TEXT: 1. (U) THE JAILED HEAD OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) AND THE MOST WIDELY RECOGNIZED BLACK LEADER IN SOUTH AFRICA, NELSON MANDELA, IS REPORTEDLY SUFFERING FROM TUBERCULOSIS.

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PAGE 02 (b)(3):10 USC 424 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MANDELA'S ATTORNEY RELEASED THE INFORMATION TO THE PRESS, BUT SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS DECLINED TO CONFIRM IT.

2. (U) MANDELA, 70, WAS ADMITTED TO CAPE TOWN'S TYGERBERG HOSPITAL

ON 11 AUGUST FOR TREATMENT OF A PLEURAL EFFUSION, FLUID IN THE PLEURA SURROUNDING THE LUNGS. HOSPITAL OFFICIALS SAID HIS CONDITION

WAS IMPROVING STEADILY, AND THEY STATED THAT THE PLEURAL DRAIN HAD BEEN REMOVED AND HIS LUNG WAS FULLY EXPANDED. MANDELA'S ATTORNEY SAID THAT HIS CLIENT LOOKED VERY THIN AND MUCH OLDER THAN HE HAD LOOKED JUST 2 WEEKS AGO. THE ATTORNEY DID NOT KNOW WHEN MANDELA WOULD BE DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL. TUBERCULOSIS CAN BE TREATED WITH VARIOUS MEDICINES, BUT SEVERAL MONTHS MAY BE NEEDED TO RESTORE MANDELA TO HEALTH.

3. (U) THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT INDICATED WHETHER IT WOULD SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER MANDELA HIS RELEASE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. NONETHELESS, MINISTER OF JUSTICE COETSEE WAS REPORTED TO BE PERSONALLY REVIEWING THE SITUATION.

4. ~~(S)~~ COMMENT: PRETORIA IS CAUGHT IN A DILEMMA OF ITS OWN MAKING. MANDELA'S DEATH IN PRISON COULD SPARK VIOLENCE MORE WIDESPREAD THAN ANY WITNESSED PREVIOUSLY IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO FEARFUL, HOWEVER, THAT IF IT RELEASES MANDELA, HE

PAGE 03 (b)(3):10 USC 424 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WILL BE ABLE TO UNIFY OPPOSITION TO MINORITY RULE. IF HIS HEALTH IMPROVES, PRETORIA MAY FEEL LESS INCLINED TO RESPOND TO DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO RELEASE THE ANC LEADER. REGARDLESS, THE GOVERNMENT IS UNLIKELY TO TAKE ANY STEPS BEFORE THE OCTOBER ELECTIONS.

ADMIN

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(6)

DECL: OADR

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