

PRIME MINISTER

SOUTH AFRICA

Robin Renwick has just called me from South Africa. De Klerk had telephoned him a few minutes ago to say that he had spent several hours with Mandela today. Mandela does not want to be released immediately: he still has problems to resolve with the ANC as well as personal problems (presumably Mrs Mandela!). De Klerk will therefore announce tomorrow that Mandela will be released, without giving a date. He also intends to announce other major steps which he thinks will satisfy you. He was very anxious for you to know that tonight.

Robin thinks we should warmly welcome the steps when they are announced tomorrow. This will require a more positive statement than the one in your box. I will draft it first thing tomorrow morning.

*AScola*

*PP*

C. D. POWELL

1 February 1990

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CONFIDENTIAL  
DEDIP  
FM CAPE TOWN  
TO FLASH FCO  
TELNO 38  
OF 012115Z FEBRUARY 90  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

PS/NO 10

Downing ST

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MANDELA

1. PRESIDENT DE KLERK HAS JUST TELEPHONED ME TO SAY THAT A GREAT DEAL OF CONFUSION HAS BEEN CAUSED BY THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT THAT 'IF MANDELA IS RELEASED TOMORROW AS EXPECTED, PRESIDENT BUSH WOULD INVITE HIM FOR TALKS AT THE WHITE HOUSE'.
2. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE HAD JUST TALKED AT LENGTH TO MANDELA AND THERE WAS A PROBLEM AS MANDELA DID NOT WANT TO BE RELEASED FORTHWITH. THERE WERE SOME PERSONAL PROBLEMS AS WELL AS OTHER MATTERS TO SORT OUT. THE WHITE HOUSE WERE BEING ASKED TO CORRECT THEIR STATEMENT.
3. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE WOULD ANNOUNCE TOMORROW THAT IT WAS HIS FIRM INTENTION THAT MANDELA WOULD BE RELEASED. I URGED HIM TO BE EXPLICIT ABOUT THIS AND TALK OF A 'DECISION' RATHER THAN 'INTENTION' TO RELEASE MANDELA AND HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION HE WOULD SAY THIS TOMORROW.
4. DE KLERK SAID THAT HE INTENDED TO MAKE DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENTS ON OTHER ISSUES. HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR OUR SUPPORT AND WAS NOT GOING TO DISAPPOINT US. HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE A BIG ADVANCE.
5. DE KLERK SAID THE ACTUAL MOMENT OF MANDELA'S RELEASE HAD TO BE AT A TIME WHEN IT WOULD CAUSE MINIMUM DANGER IN SECURITY TERMS AND BRING MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE IN POLITICAL TERMS BY TRIGGERING A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION.
6. I THANKED DE KLERK FOR THIS MESSAGE AND SAID IT WOULD BE PASSED IMMEDIATELY TO THE PRIME MINISTER.
7. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO NO. 10.

RENWICK

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