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Political Matters - India

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ACTION IO-00

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| INFO | LOG-00 | ACDA-10 | ACDE-00 | AF-01 | AID-00 | ACQ-01 | CIAE-00 |
| | SMEC-00 | DASY-00 | DUDE-00 | DOEE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00 | EAP-01 |
| | EUR-01 | FBIE-00 | H-01 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | L-01 | ADS-00 |
| | M-00 | NEA-01 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | DIC-02 | OMB-01 | PA-00 |
| | PM-00 | PRS-00 | P-00 | CIU-00 | SP-00 | SS-00 | TRSE-00 |
| | USIE-00 | SA-01 | PMB-00 | DSCC-00 | PRME-01 | DRL-09 | G-00 |

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3839

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY DHAKA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY HARARE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ PRETORIA 003045

LONDON FOR YOUNG; PARIS FOR MORAN

E.O. 12958: 4/4/02

TAGS: PREL, UNSC, NAM, IN, BG, SF
SUBJECT: MANDELA VISITS INDIA/BANGLADESH

REFS: (A) NEW DELHI 3332 (NOTAL); (B) 96 PRETORIA
12144; (C) PRETORIA 2473; (D) 96 PRETORIA 11720

1. CLASSIFIED BY DCM ROBERT PRINGLE PER 1.5 (B) AND (D).

2. (C) SUMMARY: THE SIGNING OF THE BILATERAL "RED FORT
DECLARATION" IN INDIA (TEXT TRANSMITTED REF A) WAS THE
CORE EVENT OF PRESIDENT MANDELA'S LATE MARCH VISIT TO
INDIA AND BANGLADESH. THE DECLARATION, THE PRODUCT OF AN

INTENSE SCHEDULE OF HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS OVER THE PAST
FOUR MONTHS, INDICATES THAT ALREADY CLOSE BILATERAL
RELATIONS BETWEEN DELHI AND PRETORIA WILL CONTINUE TO
INTENSIFY. THE DECLARATION ALSO SETS THE STAGE FOR

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EXPANDED COOPERATION IN THE MULTILATERAL CONTEXT,
PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE NAM AND THE UN (MOST NOTABLY UNSC
REFORM - SEE PARA 8). THE DECLARATION SHOULD BE VIEWED
AS PART OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ATTEMPT TO POSITION ITSELF AS A
LEADER OF THE "SOUTH" -- ASPIRATIONS THAT WILL CERTAINLY
BE GIVEN A BOOST WHEN PRETORIA HOSTS THE 1998 NAM SUMMIT.
HOWEVER, RIVALRIES WITHIN THE NAM SHOULD POSE OBSTACLES
TO SOUTH AFRICAN AND INDIAN EFFORTS TO SHAPE A NAM
CONSENSUS, PARTICULARLY REGARDING THE UN REFORM DEBATE.
END SUMMARY.

3. (U) PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA VISITED BANGLADESH AND

INDIA MARCH 25-29, MEETING WITH KEY GOVERNMENT AND
OPPOSITION FIGURES IN BOTH COUNTRIES AND PARTICIPATING IN
THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF BANGLADESHI
INDEPENDENCE. POLOFF MET WITH INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION
FIRST SECRETARY BHAGWANT BISHNOI APRIL 2 AND DFA SOUTH
ASIA AND AUSTRALASIA DIRECTOR MXOLISI MSATYWA APRIL 3 FOR
READOUTS ON THE TRIP.

BANGLADESH

4. (C) MSATYWA ADMITTED THAT SOUTH AFRICAN-BANGLADESHI
RELATIONS HAD NOT BEEN INTENSE PRIOR TO MANDELA'S VISIT.
INDEED, THE DFA HAD BEEN "VERY SURPRISED" THAT MANDELA
ACCEPTED THE INVITATION TO THE SILVER JUBILEE
INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS. DFA HAD RECOMMENDED GIVING IT
A PASS, BUT MANDELA PERSONALLY DECIDED TO GO. MSATYWA
SAID MANDELA WANTED TO EXPRESS SOUTH AFRICA'S

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APPRECIATION FOR THE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY BANGLADESH TO THE ANC DURING THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE. MANDELA ALSO HAD HIS EYE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S DOMESTIC CONSTITUENCY OF BENGALI DESCENT -- AS A RESULT, TRANSPORT MINISTER MAC MAHARAJ, WHO IS OF BENGALI DESCENT, WAS INCLUDED ON THE 13 PERSON SAG DELEGATION. MANDELA'S VISIT, MSATYWA NOTED, HAD FORCED THE CREATION OF A BILATERAL AGENDA. THE TWO SIDES SIGNED A DECLARATION OF INTENT TO NEGOTIATE TRADE AND TECHNICAL/CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS.

INDIA - HIGH COMMISSION PERSPECTIVE

5. (C) BISHNOI SAID MANDELA'S TRAVEL TO INDIA (HIS SECOND TRIP -- HE ALSO VISITED IN 1995) WAS A "REAFFIRMATION OF THE CLOSE POLITICAL AND PERSONAL TIES BETWEEN THE GOI AND THE SAG/ANC." THE TIMING OF THE VISIT, ON THE EVE OF THE APRIL 7-8 DELHI NAM FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, WAS VERY SYMBOLIC AND REFLECTED A COMMON DESIRE TO SHAPE THE NAM AGENDA. THE SIGNING OF

THE RED FORT DECLARATION WAS THE CENTERPIECE OF MANDELA'S VISIT. THIS WAS NOT A BUSINESS TRIP. BUSINESS LEADERS HAD ACCOMPANIED DEPUTY PRESIDENT MBEKI ON HIS DECEMBER 1996 TRIP TO INDIA (REF B).

6. (C) BISHNOI SAID THE DECLARATION WAS A LOGICAL NEXT STEP FOLLOWING MBEKI'S DECEMBER 1996 CALL TO BUILD A "STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP" BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND INDIA.

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INDIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATIONS MET ON THE MARGINS OF THE SINGAPORE WTO MINISTERIAL, THE MARCH FOUNDING CONFERENCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ORGANIZATION IN PORT LOUIS, AND IN PRETORIA LATER IN MARCH TO HAMMER OUT THE DECLARATION. BISHNOI SAID THE INTENSIFIED BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION OUTLINED IN THE DECLARATION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED VIA THE FOREIGN POLICY COMMITTEE OF

THE INDIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN JOINT COMMISSION.

7. (C) BISHNOI EXPECTED THAT BOTH THE INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER WOULD VISIT SOUTH AFRICA BY THE END OF 1997. HE ALSO PREDICTED THE CONTINUATION OF FREQUENT, HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN POLICY CONSULTATIONS, PARTICULARLY AS INDIA HAS PROMISED TO HELP THE SAG PREPARE FOR THE 1998 NAM SUMMIT.

UNSC REFORM

8. (C) ASKED ABOUT THE DECLARATION'S STRESS ON "THE NEED FOR AN EQUITABLE BALANCE IN THE COMPOSITION OF AN EXPANDED UNSC TO PROVIDE A CONSTRUCTIVE VOICE TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES" (REF A PARA 10), BISHNOI SAID THIS WAS A CONCEPT AND THAT NEITHER COUNTRY HAD A SPECIFIC PLAN ON HOW TO SHAPE THE UNSC REFORM DEBATE. HE DID NOTE THAT DELHI HOPED TO HARNESS MANDELA'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION TO HELP ACHIEVE INDIAN POLICY OBJECTIVES, INCLUDING A MORE "FAIR" SECURITY COUNCIL. (NOTE: IN REMARKS TO THE PRESS AFTER SIGNING THE DECLARATION, MANDELA REPORTEDLY WENT ONE STEP FURTHER

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AND CALLED FOR THE END OF THE P-5 VETO MONOPOLY. HE ALSO
REPORTEDLY IMPLIED THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD SUPPORT AN
INDIAN BID FOR A PERMANENT SEAT ON THE UNSC. BACK IN
PRETORIA, DEPUTY PRESIDENT MBEKI ECHOED MANDELA, TELLING
THE PRESS MARCH 29 THAT "YOU CAN'T CONTINUE TO HAVE A
WORLD AGENDA THAT IS LARGELY DETERMINED BY SMALL GROUPS
OF COUNTRIES AND WHICH EXCLUDES THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD.
THERE HAVE TO BE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY
COUNCIL COMING OUT OF THE THIRD WORLD, WITH THE SAME
STATUS AS ANY OTHER PERMANENT MEMBER.")

INDIA - DFA PERSPECTIVE

9. (C) MSATYWA CHARACTERIZED INDIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN
RELATIONS AS "INTENSE" AND FUNDAMENTALLY COLORED BY THE

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PROFOUND GRATITUDE THAT PRESIDENT MANDELA HAS FOR INDIA'S LEADING ROLE IN "INTERNATIONALIZING THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID." MSATYWA ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE DOMESTIC CONSTITUENCY WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA (THE OVER ONE MILLION LARGE COMMUNITY OF SOUTH AFRICANS OF INDIAN DESCENT) FOR CLOSE BILATERAL TIES AND THE FACT THAT BOTH COUNTRIES ARE DOMINANT IN THEIR SUB-REGIONS AND ENJOY SIMILAR LEVELS OF OVERALL DEVELOPMENT.

10. (C) MSATYWA SAID RED FORT WAS A CALL FOR THE "SOUTH" TO TRY TO ADDRESS ITS OWN PROBLEMS AND ADVANCE ITS OWN INTERESTS BEFORE LOOKING "NORTH." IT WAS AN

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ATTEMPT TO "SHAPE A NEW WORLD ORDER" AND "REDEFINE WHAT IS GENERALLY KNOWN AS ALLIANCE FORMATION." RED FORT "CONCRETIZED" THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND ITS

AMBITIOUS AGENDA WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED VIA THE INDIA-SOUTH AFRICA JOINT COMMISSION. MSATYWA CONFIRMED BISHNOI'S CLAIM THAT INDIA HAD AGREED TO HELP SOUTH AFRICA PREPARE FOR THE NAM SUMMIT. MSATYWA SAID THE INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD SENT A LARGE DELEGATION TO PRETORIA IN MARCH AND HELD A WORKSHOP DESIGNED TO BUILD SOUTH AFRICAN NAM KNOWLEDGE/CAPACITY. MSATYWA DENIED THAT SOUTH AFRICA AND INDIA WOULD TRY TO "SELL" THE NAM ON AN AGENDA DREAMED UP IN DELHI AND PRETORIA. THE NAM WOULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE BY CONSENSUS AND SOUTH AFRICA WOULD CONSULT WIDELY AS IT GEARED UP FOR THE 1998 SUMMIT.

11. (C) MSATYWA SAID THAT MANDELA EXPRESSED HIS SUPPORT FOR RESOLVING THE KASHMIR DISPUTE BUT STRESSED THAT THE SAG WOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN ANY MEDIATION EFFORT. MANDELA SPECIFICALLY ENDORSED THE GUJKAL DOCTRINE, WHICH MSATWYA DESCRIBED AS AN INDIAN EFFORT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. (NOTE - BISHNOI DESCRIBED THE DOCTRINE AS ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT INDIA WOULD "HAVE TO TAKE FIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS FOR EACH STEP TAKEN BY A NEIGHBOR.")

COMMENT

12. (C) SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY HAS SHOWN RENEWED VIGOR IN RECENT MONTHS, BOTH WITHIN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

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(MOST NOTABLY IN TRYING TO MEDIATE IN THE GREAT LAKES CRISIS) AND GLOBALLY (INCLUDING WITH THE U.S. -- WITNESS THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE FEBRUARY MEETINGS OF THE GORE-MBEKI BINATIONAL COMMISSION). WE HAVE ALSO NOTICED INITIAL STEPS TO CARVE OUT A LEADERSHIP POSITION WITHIN THE NAM OR IF YOU PREFER, THE "SOUTH." MANDELA MADE A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SWING THROUGH SOUTHEAST ASIA IN MARCH AND IN PARTICULAR SUCCEEDED IN TAKING AN ALREADY STRONG SOUTH AFRICAN-MALAYSIAN RELATIONSHIP TO NEW HEIGHTS (SEE REF C). BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT CARDOSO MADE A PRODUCTIVE VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA IN NOVEMBER (REF D) AND DFA SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT MANDELA AND/OR MBEKI PLAN 1997 TRAVEL

TO LATIN AMERICA.

13. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: IT APPEARS THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS THUS ACTIVELY PREPARING FOR A NAM LEADERSHIP ROLE TO COMPLEMENT ITS DECISION TO HOST THE 1998 NAM SUMMIT. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE APPARENT SOUTH AFRICAN ASPIRATIONS TO SOLIDIFY THE SOUTH-SOUTH AXIS WILL COME UP HARD AGAINST COMPETING DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS. SOUTH AFRICA REMAINS A COUNTRY WITH ONE FOOT BOTH IN THE FIRST AND THIRD WORLDS. MANY POTENT DOMESTIC INTERESTS WOULD OPPOSE POLICIES WHICH COULD ALIENATE FIRST WORLD MARKETS. ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT, SOUTH AFRICA WILL SOON LEARN THAT NAM SOLIDARITY HAS AND WILL REMAIN AN ILLUSIVE BEAST. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SUB-REGIONAL RIVALRIES THAT WILL COME INTO PLAY DURING THE UNSC EXPANSION DEBATE WILL COMPLICATE ANY EFFORT TO DEVELOP A NAM CONSENSUS ON ALL BUT THE MOST GENERAL TENETS OF A REFORMED UNSC.

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14. (C) THE MARCH 30 EDITION OF THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

RAN AN INTERESTING ARTICLE ENTITLED "VIEW FROM RED FORT."
THE ARTICLE CITED SOME OF THE FACTORS THAT COULD
COMPLICATE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE BILATERAL SOUTH AFRICAN-
INDIAN TIES AND CONCLUDED THAT "IN ALL PROBABILITY,
RHETORIC RATHER THAN POSITIVE ACTION WILL MARK THEIR
RELATIONSHIP." WE TEND TO AGREE AND WOULD ENLARGE THE
THESIS TO INCLUDE PRETORIA'S ASPIRATIONS ACROSS THE
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. JOSEPH

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