



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

NOVEMBER 20 1984

Dear Mr. Crockett:

This is in response to your letter to President Reagan dated October 11, concerning the situation of Winnie and Nelson Mandela in South Africa.

At the request of the Speaker of the House, the Department of State has forwarded House Concurrent Resolution 430, concerning the Mandelas, to State President Botha. We are fully aware of the Mandelas' situation, and indeed share the concern expressed by Congress at the incarceration of Mr. Mandela and the banning of Mrs. Mandela for their political views. We share your own view that the release of the Mandelas would help spur the sort of dialogue between the South African Government and valid black interlocutors which is required if peaceful change away from apartheid is to take place. Our diplomats in South Africa maintain contact with Mrs. Mandela and we pay occasional visits on her in Brandfort, the place to which she was banned.

As you may be aware, there have been reports over the past two years of discussions between the South African Government and Mr. Mandela concerning his possible release. The reports have indicated that Mr. Mandela has refused to accept the condition reportedly attached by the South African Government, that is, that he agree to reside permanently in the Transkei, one of South Africa's so-called independent homelands.

I can assure you that we have frequently raised with the South African Government the issue of political prisoners in that country. In our discussions, we have sought to make explicitly clear to the South African Government the strength of our own feelings, as well as those of the Congress and the

The Honorable  
George W. Crockett, Jr.,  
House of Representatives.

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American people which underlie our desire to bring about a peaceful transition away from apartheid and toward government based on the consent of all South Africans regardless of race.

I hope this information is useful to your needs.

Sincerely,

*W. Tapley Bennett*

W. Tapley Bennett, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary  
Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs