

Report Reveals CIA Played Key Role in Nelson Mandela's 1962 Arrest



Washington, May 16 (RHC)-- A former CIA operative has revealed that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency played a key role in the arrest of Nelson Mandela, which led to the South African anti-apartheid leader's trial and imprisonment for nearly three decades, according to a new report.

Donald Rickard, a former U.S. deputy-consul in Durban and a CIA operative, told British film director John Irvin that he tipped off police to Mandela's whereabouts which led to his arrest in 1962. The Sunday Times reports that the former CIA agent said Mandela's arrest was seen as necessary because the U.S. administration believed he was "completely under the control of the Soviet Union."

"He could have incited a war in South Africa, the United States would have to get involved, grudgingly, and things could have gone to hell," he said. "We were teetering on the brink here and it had to be stopped, which meant Mandela had to be stopped. And I put a stop to it," added Rickard, who died earlier this year, shortly after making his statement.

Irvin's film "Mandela's Gun" is about the time before the revolutionary leader's arrest near Durban in 1962. The film is scheduled to be screened at the Cannes film festival later this week.

Mandela was finally released from prison in 1990. He served as president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999, and was the first South African president to be elected in a fully representative democratic election.

Mandela led the African National Congress (ANC) party in the negotiations that led to multi-racial democracy in 1994. He died in December 2013 at the age of 95 at his home in Johannesburg.

In a statement on Sunday, South Africa's ruling ANC party called the revelation a serious indictment. "We always knew there was always collaboration between some Western countries and the apartheid regime."

ANC spokesman Zizi Kodwa added that the CIA was still interfering in South African politics. He said: "We have recently observed that there are efforts to undermine the democratically elected ANC government. They never stopped operating here."

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