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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: Fw: Kevin Rudd to have heart surgery (The Australian)

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To: NEWS-EAP; NEWS-Mahogany; Austin, Jonathan T; Miranda, Anthony; Quanrud, Pamela G; Kidwell, Michael R
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Subject: Kevin Rudd to have heart surgery (The Australian)

AS Kevin Rudd jetted out of Australia last night on his ninth overseas trip this year, he declared that the heart surgery he will have early next month was simply a "grease and oil change" and he should be able to continue in public life for the foreseeable future.

The Foreign Minister will have surgery to replace a leaky aortic valve that was inserted almost 20 years ago after a childhood brush with rheumatic fever.

That 1993 operation, which took place quietly when Mr Rudd was head of the cabinet office in Queensland, was raised by those questioning his health before his election as prime minister in 2007. But Mr Rudd said yesterday his health remained sound and it was simply time for a new valve. He expected to be out of action for eight weeks.

While Mr Rudd promised to keep his mobile switched off, his surgeon said he could probably work the phones within a week or two of the operation.

"The docs have said, 'Kev, it's time for a new one', so being the obedient soul that I am, I've decided to take their advice and that's what's happening," Mr Rudd said yesterday at a Brisbane school.

But he said he intended to recontest the next election as the ALP candidate for Griffith, and he had been advised by doctors "that I have every expectation of a total recovery, as it happened last time".

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/kevin-rudd-to-have-grease-and-oil-change/story-e6fmg6nf-1226098605587>

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