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Department of State TELEGRAM

CIA REVIEWED 04-Mar-2011: SANITIZED FOR RELEASE IN PART

SECRET NOD754

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAR ES SALAAM 2574

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TAGS: PINS, CASC (SMUTS, BARBARA) (SMITH, KENNETH STEVEN)
(HUNTER, CARRIE JANE)

SUBJ: KIDNAPPED AMERICANS

REF: A) STATE 166498 B) DAR 2525 C) STATE 168184

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: I SHARE DEPT'S CONCERN THAT OUR SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF TWO STUDENTS INCLUDED USG EMPLOYEE, ALBEIT NOT OFFICER. JUDGMENT TO DO THIS WAS MADE BY ME AT THE TIME IN THE BELIEF THAT TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD ENDANGER THE LIVES OF THE THREE STUDENTS BY ABORTING THE LABORIOUSLY ARRANGED RENDEZVOUS WITH THE KIDNAPPERS. I HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED THE RECORD (WHICH FOLLOWS) OF THE COMPLEX AND THREATENING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED ME TO APPROVE THIS COURSE OF ACTION, WHILE SOMBRE OVER THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH THIS MAY CAUSE ELSEWHERE, I REMAIN UNSHAKEN IN MY BELIEF THAT THIS RISK HAD TO BE CALCULATEDLY TAKEN TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF THE PRISONERS' DEATH. I ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS DEPARTURE FROM THE DEPT'S INSTRUCTION. END SUMMARY

BEGIN REPORT

2. KIGOMA IS NEARLY 1,000 AIR MILES FROM THIS EMBASSY. COMMUNICATIONS MAINTAINED WITH USG OFFICIALS THERE BY E&E RADIO. TRANSMISSION INTERMITTENTLY POSSIBLE DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. NIGHT RADIO CONTACT RARE. TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION LESS RELIABLE. DESPITE NEAR-CONTINUOUS ATTEMPTS OVER SEVEN WEEKS OF KIGOMA OPERATION, WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ONLY TEN CALLS.

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3. FOLLOWING FOUR WEEKS OF EFFORTS TO TRY TO ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION WITH THEM ACROSS THE LAKE AND DOWN THE ZAIRIAN SIDE FROM BUJUMBURA, ON WEEKEND OF JUNE 20 TWO PRP REPRESENTATIVES WALKED INTO CHANCERY. THE WEEKEND OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRP REPS WAS DIFFICULT AND WENT ON THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.

4. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH PRP REPS THAT MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 23, STANFORD REP, PARENTS, BRYCESON AND PRP REPS WOULD TAKE OFF FOR KIGOMA WITH EXPECTATION THEY WOULD LATER SAME DAY EFFECT RELEASE OF REMAINING THREE STUDENTS. AGREED PLAN WAS TO USE BAPTIST MISSION BOAT TO CARRY ONE PRP REP AND REV. MARROW, RETURN WITH THE FREED STUDENTS, COLLECT THE RANSOM ON THE KIGOMA SIDE AND THEN TRANSPORT THE PRP PERSON OR PERSONS BACK ACROSS.

5. TIME RAN OUT ON US ON MONDAY. PLANE DEPARTED LATE FROM DAR. REFUELING PROBLEMS AT TABORA CAUSED FURTHER DELAY. PLANE ARRIVED KIGOMA TOO LATE MONDAY AFTERNOON TO UNDERTAKE A DAYLIGHT LAKE CROSSING WHICH PRP REPS INSISTED ON SO THEY WOULD BE RECOGNIZED AND NOT FIRED ON BY THEIR FORCES.

6.

^{25x1} ON SAME SECTOR OF LAKE WHICH WERE TO BEGIN AT 0500 HOURS JUNE 24. MY INSECURE COMMUNICATIONS RULED OUT INFORMING US OFFICIALS IN KIGOMA OF REASON FOR SUDDEN NECESSITY TO ATTEMPT NIGHTTIME CROSSING WHILE URGING THEM TO DO SO. HOWEVER, PRP REPS INSISTED ON DAYLIGHT CROSSING WHICH BEGAN AT FIRST LIGHT MORNING OF JUNE 24. AFTER NEARLY REACHING THE ZAIRIAN SHORE, BOAT WAS FORCED TO RETURN WHEN THEY ENCOUNTERED FAZ NAVAL VESSELS.

7. THREE DAYS LATER ON JUNE 27 ANOTHER EFFORT WAS MADE TO CROSS BEGINNING ABOUT 2000 HOURS ALSO USING THE BAPTIST MISSION BOAT. MISSION ABORTED DUE TO ENGINE FAILURE. ANOTHER CROSSING ATTEMPTED AT ABOUT 2200 HOURS ALSO ENDED DUE TO ENGINE FAILURE. PARTY RETURNED AND ENLISTED ASSISTANCE OF FAO BOAT AND CREW AND GOT UNDERWAY AT APPROXIMATELY 2330 HOURS. ALL COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DAR AND KIGOMA OUT DURING THESE MANEUVERS.

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NO DISSEMINATION



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8. RECONSTRUCTING SITUATION FROM MY NOTES OF DEBRIEFINGS SUGGESTS THE DECISION THAT THE RANSOM WOULD BE TURNED OVER ON THE ZAIRIAN SIDE WHEN THE STUDENTS WERE RELEASED WAS MADE AT THE TIME OF THE SWITCH TO THE SLOWER FAO BOAT. THIS SWITCH OF PLANS WAS NECESSITATED BY ALFRED NONDO'S DEMAND THAT RANSOM ACCOMPANY HIM AND BE EXCHANGED ON PRP QTE TURF UNGTE. HIS INSISTENCE BASED ON FEAR OF POSSIBLE LAST MINUTE TANGOV MOVE IN WHICH PRP MIGHT BE ENTRAPPED ON KIGOMA SIDE AFTER RETURNING STUDENTS.

9. MARROW WAS TO CARRY RANSOM, BUT STUDENTS' PARENTS IN KIGOMA INSISTED IT WOULD NOT BE SAFE FOR HIM TRAVEL ALONE WITH PRP REBELS AND MONEY (FAO CREW BUSY HANDLING BOAT) SO NORMAN HUNTER ADDED TO PARTY. TO BALANCE OUT ADDITION OF TWO PRP REPRESENTATIVES IN KIGOMA AREA WHO SUDDENLY DEMANDED PASSAGE FAO BOAT, WORRIED PARENTS SOUGHT VOLUNTEERS TO ACCOMPANY.

10. CONSUL MACFARLANE, AWARE OF DEPT'S INJUNCTION, EXPLAINED HIS INABILITY TO HELP AND THIS ACCEPTED BY PARENTS. NUGNES EXPLAINED TO PARENTS THAT HE NOT EMBASSY OFFICER WITH DIPLOMATIC RANK BUT C&R STAFF MEMBER AND VOLUNTEERED ACCOMPANY IN OWN PRIVATE CAPACITY.

11. NUGNES HANDLED NO COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT ON TRIP. I COULD NOT BE CONSULTED IN DAR AS THIS DECISION WAS MADE ON THE SHORE AS THE BOAT LEFT, NOR DO I HAVE ANY BASIS FOR OPTIMISM THAT MY COMMUNICATIONS WOULD HAVE FUNCTIONED AT THAT HOUR. RECALLING THE PARTICIPANTS' DESCRIPTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE AT MIDNIGHT ON THE TANZANIAN SHORE, WITH PRP REPS ON THE BOAT, HOSTILE ZAIRIAN FORCES AND THE KIDNAPPERS AHEAD, AFTER LITERALLY DAYS OF FRUSTRATION AND

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UNDER THE EYES OF ANGUISHED PARENTS, I MUST IN ALL HONESTY HAZARD THAT IF I HAD BEEN THERE I DOUBT IF I WOULD HAVE ORDERED NUGNES OFF THE BOAT, PERHAPS ABORTING THE MISSION, CAUSING THE ANGRY WITHDRAWAL OF THE PRP REPS AND AT WORST POSSIBLE DEATHS OF THE STUDENTS.

12. UPON ARRIVING WITHIN 25 YARDS OF ZAIRIAN SIDE OF LAKE THE FAO BOAT WAS MET BY A LARGE CANOE. THE FAO BOAT COULD NOT PULL ASHORE BECAUSE OF ITS DRAFT. AS THE PARTY WAS ABOUT TO DISEMBARK THE DECISION WAS MADE THAT THE MOENY WOULD BE CARRIED ASHORE BY REV. MARROW AND MR. HUNTER WOULD REMAIN ON BOAT WITH FAO CREW. ~~NUGNES ACCOMPANIED REV. MARROW INTO THE CANOE AND TOGETHER WITH THE PRP MEMBERS WENT TO THE BEACH. THEY WERE MET BY APPROXIMATELY TEN PEOPLE. NONDO AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE RECEIVED AS CONQUERING HEROES. NONDO TOLD MARROW THAT THE STUDENTS WERE ON THEIR WAY DOWN THE HILL AND WOULD ARRIVE IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES. FOLLOWING THE ANTICIPATED INTERVAL, A GROUP OF VERY SHARP LOOKING MILITARY, PERHAPS PRP OFFICERS, APPEARED AND ENGAGED IN DISCUSSION WITH NONDO.~~

13. NONDO TALKED WITH MARROW IN SWAHILI. MARROW THEN ASKED NUGNES TO TALK TO NONDO IN FRENCH SAYING IT APPEARED THERE WAS A PROBLEM. NONDO EXPLAINED IN FRENCH TO NUGNES THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED NEW ORDERS FROM KABILA. SMITH WOULD BE HELD FOUR MORE DAYS. THIS WAS TO PUT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON TANZANIA FOR PRISONER RELEASE, BUT WHETHER OR NOT THAT HAPPENED, SMITH WOULD BE RETURNED TO KIGOMA ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 2.

14. IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME THAT CARRIE HUNTER AND EMILIE BERGMANN WERE BROUGHT DOWN FROM THE HILLS TO THE BEACH. THEY REVIEWED THE SITUATION AGAIN WITH ALFERED AND THE PRP REPS ON THE BEACH. THE GIRLS CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT THE ARRANGEMENT, AND REV. MARROW ASKED NONDO IF HE WOULD CONFIRM HIS PROMISE BY SHAKING HIS HAND. NONDO IMMEDIATELY GRABBED MARROW'S HAND WITH BOTH OF HIS AND SAID THAT MARROW HAD HIS PROMISE.

15. THE PARTY WITH THE GIRLS LEFT THE ZAIRIAN SHORE AT APPROXIMATELY 0445 HOURS AND ARRIVED BACK IN TANZANIA AT 0745 HOURS, SATURDAY, JUNE 28. THE FAO BOAT DID CARRY A RADIO BUT IT WAS NOT FUNCTIONING THROUGHOUT THE TRIP. END REPORT

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16. COMMENT: FOREGOING IS A RECONSTRUCTION OF EVENTS FROM NOTES MADE DURING QUICK DEBRIFINGS AND INSECURE COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT. WHEN NUGNES RETURNS FROM LEAVE WITH HIS FAMILY EXPECTED JULY 26 AND HUNTER RETURNS FROM KIGOMA WHERE HE INTENDS REMAINING UNTIL SMITH IS RELEASED, I WILL ATTEMPT CONFIRM THIS ACCOUNT AND PROMPTLY REPORT ANY SIGNIFICANT DISCREPANCIES. REV. MARKOW IS RESIDENT IN KIGOMA, BUT I WILL ALSO REVIEW MATTER WITH HIM WHEN HE COMES TO DAR AFTER THIS TRAGEDY IS ALL OVER.
CARTER

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