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WARNING: TOPIC: TERRORISM, INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL, HUMAN RIGHTS

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COUNTRY: AUSTRALIA, UNITED STATES

SUBJ: US ENVOY COMPARES GUANTANAMO AUSTRALIANS TO WWII GERMAN PRISONERS

SOURCE: MELBOURNE RADIO AUSTRALIA IN ENGLISH 0500 GMT 16 MAR 03

TEXT:

[FBIS TRANSCRIBED TEXT] US ENVOY COMPARES GUANTANAMO AUSTRALIANS TO WWII GERMAN PRISONERS

TEXT OF REPORT BY RADIO AUSTRALIA ON 16 MARCH

THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA SAYS THE TWO AUSTRALIANS BEING HELD IN GUANTANAMO BAY IN CUBA WILL BE DEALT WITH ONCE THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM IS OVER. **DAVID HICKS** AND MAMDOUH HABIB HAVE BEEN IN CUSTODY WITHOUT CHARGE FOR THE PAST 16 MONTHS AFTER THEY WERE ARRESTED, SUSPECTED OF HAVING LINKS TO THE AL-QA'IDAH TERRORIST GROUP. AMBASSADOR TOM SCHIEFFER SAYS THEY ARE BEING TREATED AS A PRISONERS OF WAR.

[SCHIEFFER] IT'S NOT A SITUATION WHERE THEY ARE BURGLARS. THIS IS NOT A THING WHERE THEY'VE BROKEN INTO A HOUSE AND STOLEN A TELEVISION SET. THIS IS A SITUATION WHERE THEY'VE BEEN IN A THEATRE [OF WAR], THEY HAVE BEEN IN ACTIVITIES THAT WERE INVOLVED IN KILLING AMERICANS. IT'S NOT DISSIMILAR TO A SITUATION THAT WOULD HAVE EXISTED IN WORLD WAR TWO IN WHICH GERMANS WOULD BE CAPTURED AFTER A BATTLE.

[DESCRIPTION OF SOURCE: MELBOURNE RADIO AUSTRALIA IN ENGLISH -- GOVERNMENT-FUNDED OVERSEAS SERVICE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION]

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