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INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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ACTION AAA-15

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INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 OM-05 M-02 IHR-1R L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-02 SA-07 SS-15 SOI-05 CA-01 FBI-00
SV-05 SVE-00 Na-05 NSI-02 USSS-00 /079 W

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P 111251Z DEC 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO USICA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4433
ODD WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 4201

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E.O. 12065: NA
SUBJ: POST HANDLING OF U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA JONESTOWN COVERAGE

1. THE SLAYING OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN AND OTHERS AT PORT
KAITUMA AND THE SUBSEQUENT JONESTOWN TRAGEDY ON
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1978 TRIGGERED AN IMMEDIATE AND
MASSIVE MEDIA INTEREST. THE INFUX OF MEDIA REPRESENTA-
TIVES FROM THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES CREATED AN
INSTANTANEOUS AND MONUMENTAL TASK FOR POST AND THE COCC
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION (MOI) WITH POST BEARING THE
BRUNT OF THE REPORTERS' IRE AND IMPATIENCE, AS MOST
OF THE VISITING MEDIA WERE AMERICANS. IN THE TWO
WEEKS FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC INCIDENTS, POST FACILITATED
THE WORK OF MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED MEDIA RE-
PRESENTATIVES, HOSTED TWO FORMAL PRESS BRIEFINGS AT
USICA PREMISES, ARRANGED ANOTHER BRIEFING AT TIMENRI
AIRPORT WHERE THE U.S. JOINT TASK FORCE (USJTF) MADE
ITS TEMPORARY COMMAND POST, HANDLED HUNDREDS OF MEDIA
TELEPHONE CALLS AND RECORDED INTERVIEWS, PROVIDED BACK-
GROUND AND LOCAL INFORMATION FOR SCORES OF REPORTERS,
COORDINATED WITH MISSION STAFF AND MILITARY PUBLIC
INFORMATION OFFICERS (PMIO) ON PRESS RELEASES AND OTHER
PUBLISHABLE INFORMATION, ASSISTED MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES
IN THEIR EFFORTS TO COLLECT NEWS MATERIALS FROM LOCAL
SOURCES, ARRANGED SEVERAL BUS TRIPS FOR THE MEDIA TO
COVER USJTF ACTIVITIES AT TIMENRI AIRPORT, SUPPORTED
AND FACILITATED THE WORK OF THE MOI IN ARRANGING A
CHARTER FLIGHT TAKING 16 MEDIA PERSONS TO JONESTOWN,
ARRANGED APPOINTMENTS WITH AMBASSADOR BURKE FOR ABOUT
A DOZEN REPORTERS, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, PROVIDED
REPORTERS WITH TELEPHONES, TYPEWRITERS, STATIONERY,
AND OTHER FACILITIES WHICH ENABLED THEM TO FUNCTION IN
JONESTOWN WHERE THINGS ARE ALREADY DIFFICULT UNDER
NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. PAO KIBBLE WAS CALLED TO THE EMBASSY AT 19:45
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 18, WHEN INITIAL REPORTS FROM
PORT KAITUMA REACHED U.S. OFFICIALS. THIS WAS THE
BEGINNING OF A MARATHON WATCH, JOINED BY EPRO
STENEGROA AT 4:30 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, WHICH CON-
TINUED ROUND THE CLOCK THROUGH DAWN TUESDAY NOV-
EMBER 21 AS THE MASSIVE PROPORTION OF THE JONESTOWN
TRAGEDY WAS CONFIRMED BY U.S. OFFICIALS WHO WENT TO
THE SCENE. DURING THIS FIRST PHASE, OUR MEDIA CONTACT
WAS MOSTLY BY TELEPHONE WITH QUERIES COMING CONTINUOUSLY
AT ALL HOURS FROM PLACES AS FAR DISTANT AS LONDON AND
SYDNEY. DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTA-
TION WITH THE NORTHWESTERN REGION WHERE THE INCIDENTS
TOOK PLACE PRESENTED A SENSITIVE AND DELICATE TASK FOR
POST PERSONNEL IN TRYING TO COPE WITH MEDIA INSISTENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE CONFIRMATION OF EVERYTHING THEY HEARD AND
RECEIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES.

3. ACAD PATRICIA HODER ARRIVED FROM CARACAS IN THE
EARLY HOURS OF TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, IN TIME TO ASSIST
IN THE OPENING AND OPERATION OF A TEMPORARY "PRESS
CENTER" AT THE GROUND FLOOR OF POST BUILDING. THE
HANDSHIRT CENTER WAS IMMEDIATELY INUNDATED WITH MEDIA
PERSONS, WHO UNTIL THEN HAD NO PLACE TO USE AS A BASE
FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES. FOR MANY OF THEM, THE PRESS
CENTER WAS TO BECOME A HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR A FEW
DAYS. AT THE SAME TIME, ELEMENTS OF THE USJTF BEGAN
TO ARRIVE AT TIMENRI AIRPORT. ITS PMIO CAPTAIN JOHN
MOSCATELLI VISITED THE PRESS CENTER WITHOUT DELAY,
CONFERRED WITH PAO KIBBLE AND STAFF, AND WORKED OUT
A STRUCTURED FORMAT TO INSURE THAT THE MOST TIMELY
INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE MEDIA ON
THE OPERATION OF THE USJTF IN DEALING WITH THE AFTER-
MATH OF THE JONESTOWN TRAGEDY.

4. AN MEDIA COORDINATOR FRED SHAYER ARRIVED FROM
WASHINGTON LATE TUESDAY EVENING, A FEW HOURS AFTER THE
DECISION TO REMOVE ALL THE BOOIES FROM JONESTOWN AND
EVACUATE THEM TO THE U.S. WAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED
WITH THE ACTUAL OPERATION COMMENCING WEDNESDAY, NOV. 22.
ON WEDNESDAY, AS MEDIA PRESSED FOR TRIPS TO JONESTOWN,
WHICH WERE NOT POSSIBLE DUE TO AREA HAVING BEEN DECLARED
A HEALTH HAZARD BY COC AND UNRELIABILITY OF AIR
TRANSPORTATION, THE POST DETERMINED THAT A PRESS BRIEFING
WAS IN ORDER. SHAYER COORDINATED WITH MISSION OFFICERS
AND PMIO IN ORGANIZING THE PRESS BRIEFING HELD AT THE
PRESS CENTER AT 21:00 SAME DAY. THE BRIEFING WAS WELL
ATTENDED WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL MAJOR U.S. TELEVISION
NETWORKS, NEWSPAPERS, AND WIRE SERVICES PRESENT. REPORT-
ERS FROM ALL LOCAL RADIO STATIONS AND NEWSPAPERS WERE AMONG

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NSC-85 PA-82 SP-82 SS-15 SCS-86 CA-81 FBIS-80
SY-85 SYL-80 NA-82 MCT-82 USSS-88 /079 W
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 4701

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THE EIGHT ODD PERSONS AT THE PRESS BRIEFING. THE MORE THAN ONE HOUR SESSION WAS DESCRIBED BY MANY REPORTERS AS "STORNY," BUT IT SERVED TO DEFUSE MEDIA'S CHARGES THAT MISSION HAD BEEN "STONEMALLING." AS THE JONESTOWN OPERATION WENT INTO FULL SWING THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, POST WORKED WITH MOI IN PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND TRANSPORTATION FOR SCORES OF MEDIA PERSONS TO GO TO TITENRI AIRPORT, 25 MILES AWAY, ON FOUR DIFFERENT OCCASIONS.

3. ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, AS REPORTS FROM THE USJTF INDICATED THAT THE ORIGINAL COUNT OF 400 BODIES WAS MUCH TOO LOW, THE MEDIA PRESSED FOR EXPLANATION. ANOTHER PRESS BRIEFING WAS CALLED TO INFORM THE MEDIA OF THE NEW SITUATION. THE SESSION WAS ALSO AS TURBULENT AS THE FIRST ONE. BUT IT PUT TO REST SPECULATIONS THAT HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE'S EMPLER MEMBERS WERE HIDING IN THE DENSE JUNGLE SURROUNDING THE JONESTOWN SITE. SEVERAL REPORTERS ACCEPTED THE ERROR IN THE BODY COUNT AS AN HONEST MISTAKE. BY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, AFTERNOON, AS A JOLLY GREEN GIANT HELICOPTER CAME INTO TITENRI WITH THE LAST BATCH OF JONESTOWN VICTIMS' REMAINS, MEDIA COORDINATOR SHAWER AND APAD SVENSSON WERE THERE WITH A BUCLOAD OF REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS. ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, COVERAGE OF THE WINDING DOWN OF THE USJTF AND ITS IMMINENT WITHDRAWAL FROM GUYANA WAS ARRANGED BY POST WITH ABOUT 20 MEDIA PERSONS INCLUDING A REPORTER FROM THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY. DETAILED REPORTS APPEARED IN ALL LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND THERE WERE BROADCASTS WITH ACTUALITIES BY BOTH LOCAL RADIO STATIONS SAYING THAT U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR EQUIPMENT WERE INDEED LEAVING GUYANA FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THEIR LIMITED MISSION. TDT OFFICERS SHAWER AND WOSER RETURNED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE POSTS ON THE SAME DAY AFTER HAVING GIVEN THIS TWO-OFFICER POST THEIR MUCH NEEDED AND MUCH APPRECIATED EXPERTISE, ENERGY, RESOURCEFULNESS AND PROFESSIONALISM, AT THE HEIGHT OF THE MEDIA INVASION OF GEORGETOWN.

4. MEDIA DEMAND TO VISIT JONESTOWN WAS FINALLY MET MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, WHEN MOI SUCCEEDED IN RENTING A CHARTERED PLANE AND A HELICOPTER TO TAKE 46 MEDIA PERSONS TO THE DESERTED AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT. POST WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TRIP INCLUDING BUS TRANSPORTATION FOR THE GROUP TO AND FROM TITENRI AIRPORT. THE EXODUS OF THE VISITING MEDIA BEGAN OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS CENTER CEASED OPERATION OFFICIALLY ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, THE SEVERAL REMAINING REPORTERS WERE STILL

ALLOWED TO USE THE SAME LOCATION AND FACILITIES FOR THEIR WORK.

7. MEDIA ATTENTION SINCE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON SO CALLED "JONESTOWN SURVIVORS," AND THE GUYANESE AUTHORITIES LOCAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST TWO MEMBERS OF THE CULT. POST HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH U.S. CONSULATE TO KEEP MEDIA INFORMED OF PROGRESS OF THE REPATRIATION OF SURVIVORS WHO DESIRE TO RETURN TO THE U.S.

8. ALTHOUGH MEDIA INTEREST FOR THE PIZARRI AND SENSATIONAL ASPECTS OF JONESTOWN HAS TAPERED OFF, THIS HUMAN TRAGEDY OF UNPRECEDENTED PROPORTIONS AND IMPACT WILL NOT FADE AWAY SOON. THEREFORE, POST ANTICIPATES THAT IN IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, JONESTOWN AND ITS WIDE-RANGING HUMAN, LEGAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS WILL CONTINUE TO ATTRACT THE INTEREST AND ATTENTION OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA OVERSHADOWING MUCH OF THE U.S. MISSION'S REGULAR ACTIVITIES IN GUYANA. POST IS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO RETURN TO NORMAL, AND WILL KEEP AGENCY INFORMED OF THE EFFECT THAT THE AFTERMATH OF JONESTOWN MIGHT HAVE ON POST'S PROGRAMS. POST WOULD APPRECIATE ALL IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THIS MATTER FROM WASHINGTON'S VANTAGE POINT AND PERSPECTIVES. KIBBLE

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