

Info:

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TAGS: CASC ( Stoen, John Victor)

SUBJECT: W/N - John Victor Stoen

State  
Ref: A-4386,

As Post aware, Dept. receiving numerous inquiries from Congress and American public concerning custody case of John Victor Stoen. Most of the inquiries are expressions of support for Stoens or People's Temple without real interest in actual proceedings. However, substantial number of Congressional inquiries in particular involve the actual court proceedings, i.e., what will happen next and are the courts acting impartially and speedily toward resolution.

2. RefAIR outlines circumstances in which principal officer may request authority to retain local counsel to advise <sup>Conan's Office</sup> ~~in ways in which~~ to improve performance of duties. Dept. would find detailed advice from qualified Guyanese attorney ~~on the judicial process in the Stoen case~~ most useful in dealing with domestic interest in Stoen case. Such advice would also prove invaluable should there be other custody cases in the future.

Department - If post believes 2 FAM 283 should be used to retain independent local counsel, please provide pertinent information as set out in 2 FAM 283 - ASAP.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE	
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RDSC or IDENT. DATE	TS AUTH.
ENDORSE	REASON(S)
DECLASSIFIED	RELEASABLE
PA or EXEMPTIONS	

Henry A. Powers

Approved: ARA/MGT - G. Kruger

SA - T. Frucht

SA - ARA/CAR

I. G. ...

and at the end of the Jan 10 hearings the judge took the case under advisement and stated he would study the issues and make a decision. The Stoen's attorneys expressed optimism that the decision would be made shortly but thus far there has been no decision. The decision is whether the September order for Jones to produce the child was legal or not. The custody case has not yet been formally introduced into court.

Mr. Stoen is an attorney and was formerly the assistant District Attorney in San Francisco. He has visited many Senators and Congressmen during the past two weeks and sent mailgrams to 91 members of congress.

On the opposite side the desk has received at least 400 letters from supporters of the group alleging that the Embassy has interfered in the internal workings of the Guyanese government by assisting the Stoens when their visas were suddenly and without reason revoked during the hearings.

As far as SCS and ARA can determine the issue is still a child custody dispute involving all American citizen disputants in Guyana.

We have now received an expression of interest from DHA who feel that the USG should come out openly in favor of the Stoen's case. They are deaf to our reasoning that we are unable to determine the merits of the case, that the court is the proper forum for such a determination and that without any court decision it would be improper for us to attempt to influence the Guyanese government.

EAPowers 2-3-78

SCS auto copy  
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Memorandum Phone Conversation February 16, 1978 Powers SCS - DCM Blacken Guyana

SCS called Embassy to elicit response to State 4386.

DCM informed Dept that reply had been drafted Feb 13.

He regretted we had not received and outlined Embassy

belief that Embassy attorney/advisor not

required as Embassy felt confident of legal issues at stake.

SCS then inquired how long Embassy believed it should

normally take to get decision in type of case held

January 10 in Stoen Jones battle. DCM replied that

given ~~lack~~ lack of clerical assistance etc it

would seem reasonable to wait about two six weeks.

SCS then informed that we were going to instruct Embassy

to inquire of local govt how long we should expect

to wait for decision on hearing held over a month ago.

*[Handwritten signature]*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE - A/EGC/ER	
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(31)  
CCS custody case

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/...

REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

RDS/... DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TS AUTH. \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION(S) \_\_\_\_\_

John Victor Stoen

Memo to the File re John Victor Stoen

2/16/78. Mrs. Jim Jones and three members of the People's Temple met with MS. RALF Postor of Senator Mark Hatfield's office and a representative of Senator Bayh's office. Mr. Postor reported that the purpose of the meeting was to convince the Congressional offices to "stay out of the case." Generally, Mrs. Jones refused to answer questions and referred the inquirers to their attorney, Mr. Charles Geary of San Francisco. However, Mrs. Jones did state that the People's Temple would honor the decision by the Guyanese court.

2/17/78. Mrs. Jim Jones, Terry Redford and another member of the People's Temple, first name Diana, met in the Department with Elizabeth A. Powers and Fred Kessels of CA/SCZ and Frank Tomlinis, ANA/CAE/C. The meeting was at the request of Mrs. Jones. It was apparent that Mrs. Jones and her associates were trying to determine the Department's position concerning the custody case. Mrs. Jones was told that the Department had no position on the merits of the case but was interested only in a fair and impartial determination by the Guyanese court. She was given a copy of the form letter we use in response to Congressional inquiries. It was pointed out to Mrs. Jones that the People's Temple was not at issue and that the Department had no position concerning the Temple. In her comments, Mrs. Jones asserted that her husband was the actual father of the child. She appeared satisfied with the Department's position on the case and was properly appreciative for the meeting.

*[Handwritten signature]*