

WILLIAMS JESSIE M  
79 STATE 113380

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, GY

SUBJECT: EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING OF  
MAY 3 RE GUYANA

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN ON THE RECORD TRANSCRIPT OF  
DEPARTMENT'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING FOR MAY 3, 1979 RE-  
LATING TO THE CRIMMINS-CARPENTER REPORT RE THE JONESTOWN  
TRAGEDY.

BEGIN TEXT:

MR. CARTER:

I JUST WANT TO NOTE FOR THE RECORD MY OWN STRONG OBJECTION  
TO, AND PROTEST OF, THE BREAKING OF THE EMBARGOED STORY  
ON THE REPORT BY TWO RETIRED FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS ON  
THE DEPARTMENT'S HANDLING OF THE GUYANA INCIDENT.

THE REASON I PROTEST PERSONALLY IS THAT HAVING ARRANGED  
TO HAVE THIS THING OUT TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE, YOU HAVE

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JUST MADE -- THROUGH THE WASHINGTON STAR -- THE BEST  
ARGUMENT THIS BUILDING HAS FOR NOT RELEASING INFORMATION  
EARLY AND MAKING IT MORE POSSIBLE TO EXAMINE CLOSELY.  
I UNDERSTAND THAT'S A NEWS MANAGEMENT DECISION AT THE  
STAR. I THINK IT STINKS.

2. HODDING, ABOUT THE GUYANA REPORT. FIRST OF ALL,  
DOES THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DEPARTMENT CONCUR IN THE  
CONCLUSIONS REACHED IN THAT REPORT?

A. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DEPARTMENT ASKED FOR THE  
REPORT. A COPY HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO ALMOST EVERYBODY  
IN THIS BUILDING.

GIVEN THE FACT THAT IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RELEASED FOR  
TOMORROW, I DON'T HAVE AN OFFICIAL POSITION TO GIVE  
ON IT. I STILL WANT TO WAIT FOR TOMORROW MORNING'S  
BRIEFING BY THE AUTHORS OF THAT REPORT FOR A DETAILED  
CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT THEIR FINDINGS WERE, BECAUSE  
OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE QUESTIONS THAT ARE RAISED THAT  
THEY ARE BEST ABLE TO DEAL WITH.

WE WILL, OF COURSE, BE STUDYING IT -- BOTH IN TERMS OF  
A BIT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH, AND AS A GUIDE TO POSSIBLE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/VA	
REVIEWED BY <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <i>2/26/81</i>
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CHANGES. WHAT THOSE MAY BE, I JUST DON'T KNOW. NOW COPIES HAVE BEEN SENT UP TO THE HILL, BUT I WANT TO SEPARATE OUR REPORT FROM WHAT THE HILL IS CONDUCTING ITSELF. THE HOUSE COMMITTEE HAS A FULL INVESTIGATION AND REPORT COMING. I ASSUME THAT THEY WILL DRAW ON THIS TO SOME DEGREE. BUT THEY HAVE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ONE.

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IN ANY CASE, YES, WE WILL BE LOOKING SERIOUSLY -- THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE LEADERSHIP IN THIS DEPARTMENT -- AT THE REPORT, AND ITS CONCLUSIONS.

Q. TO FOLLOW UP ON THE POINT YOU RAISED ABOUT THE FUTURE-ORIENTED APPROACH TO IT. ASIDE FROM WHAT THE REPORT SAYS, HAVE THERE BEEN ANY CHANGES IN PROCEDURES THAT THE DEPARTMENT USES FOR HANDLING CONTROVERSIES INVOLVING AMERICANS ABROAD? HAVE ANY OF THE LESSONS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN LEARNED BEEN PUT INTO PRACTICE?

A. LET ME SAY, WITHOUT TRYING TO ITEMIZE EVERYTHING, THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL STEPS TAKEN -- THIS REPORT BEING ONE -- BUT ALSO SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR AT LEAST IMPROVED FOCUS WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS THAT ARE SO CAREFULLY NOTED IN THIS REPORT ON OUR ABILITY TO DEAL WITH AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD. THERE HAS BEEN AT LEAST AN ATTEMPT TO FOCUS ALL OF OUR POSTS' ATTENTION ON THE KIND OF PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE WHEN YOU HAVE A LARGE CONCENTRATION OF AMERICANS ABROAD IN SPECIFIC KINDS OF SITUATIONS.

THE REQUEST FOR FOCUS PAYS CAREFUL HEED TO THE ABSOLUTE RIGHTS THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS HAVE TO OPERATE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT WAYS GUARANTEED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT, THE CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON US BY THE PRIVACY ACT, AND AT LEAST SOME OF THE CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON US BY THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

Q. HODDING, OBVIOUSLY, LOOKING THROUGH THIS REPORT, IT'S EASY TO SAY IN HINDSIGHT THAT SOME OF THE OFFICERS WHO DISREGARDED OR WHO DIDN'T TAKE SERIOUSLY SOME OF THE WARNINGS THEY GOT SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THEM MORE SERIOUSLY.

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DOES THE DEPARTMENT AGREE WITH THAT? AND IF SO, HAVE ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE HANDLING OF THE CASE -- EITHER HERE OR IN GUYANA -- BEEN REPRI-MANDED, DEMOTED, OR ANY OTHER KIND OF DISCIPLINE?

A. THE ANSWER TO THE LATTER THING IS NO, BECAUSE WE HAVE JUST NOW RECEIVED THE REPORT.

Q. YOU'RE NOT RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THAT MIGHT OCCUR?

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A. I'M NOT RULING ANYTHING ON THAT, BOB. I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY; I DON'T WANT TO TURN IT DOWN. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE MECHANISMS OF THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT DO. WE HAVE TO EXAMINE THE REPORT. I THINK YOU WILL JUST HAVE TO ASK SOMEBODY MORE FAMILIAR THAN I WITH THE WAY THINGS LIKE THAT WORK. LET ME SAY THIS: A FAIR QUESTION TO ASK ME OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, AFTER THIS REPORT HAS BEEN DEIGESTED, IS WHETHER OUR CONCLUSIONS ARE SPECIFIC AS WELL AS GENERAL AS TO WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO OR LEARN FROM IT. BUT AS OF NOW, THERE IS NO ACTION NOR IS THERE ACTION CONTEMPLATED. THE REPORT HAS JUST BEEN RECEIVED. I DON'T, AGAIN, WANT TO TRY TO JUDGE WHAT THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION IS GOING TO BE TO THIS STUDY. BUT I WANT TO REPEAT, IT WAS DONE CAREFULLY AND THOROUGHLY. SOME OF THE POINTS THAT ARE MADE ARE CLEARLY GOING TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. I THINK COORDINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY ARE A PROBLEM IN EVERY ORGANIZATION. I HAD OCCASION TODAY TO LEARN JUST HOW DIFFICULT THAT

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CAN BE IN A NEWSPAPER IN WHICH EDITORS AND REPORTERS DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO TRANSMIT INFORMATION BACK AND FORTH AS TO OBJECTIVE FACTS. SO I'M SURE THAT IT IS A DIFFICULTY IN A BIG, BUREAUCRATIC OPERATION LIKE THIS.

2. WHEN SHOULD WE EXPECT TO HEAR WHAT THE DEPARTMENT IS GOING TO DO ABOUT THE REPORT?

A. I WAS SUGGESTING TO BOB THAT YOU HAVE TO JUST KEEP ASKING ME. I DON'T HAVE A SUGGESTION AS TO THAT.

2. WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THE STAR?

A. (LAUGHTER) IT'S A FREE COUNTRY -- CONSTRAINED BY ALL THE AMENDMENTS THAT I CAN THINK OF.

2. NOW THAT THE REPORT HAS BEEN DONE AND THE BILL IS ABOUT TO APPARENTLY RELEASE SOME KIND OF REPORT, WILL THE DEPARTMENT RELEASE, UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, THE DOCUMENTS THAT WE ALL REQUESTED BACK IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER?

A. I SUPPOSE THAT A LOT OF THE HOLDS THAT WERE PUT ON THAT MATERIAL BECAUSE OF THE TWO INVESTIGATIONS WILL SLIP. BUT I CAN'T SPEAK SPECIFICALLY FOR EVERY DOCUMENT. I DON'T KNOW.

THERE IS A TREMENDOUS BACKLOG OF REQUESTS. THERE IS A FANTASTIC AMOUNT IN THERE. I'M LOOKING AT SEVERAL OF YOU WHO HAVE THEM IN. BUT I HAVE BEEN MADE MORE IRRESPONSIBLE ON THE SUBJECT THAN NOT SINCE THAT WHOLE FUNCTION HAS BEEN MOVED FROM MY BUREAU TO ANOTHER ONE. BUT I WILL SEE WHAT THE SITUATION IS.

2. SOME OF THE INFORMATION WHICH WE REQUESTED, AND HAS

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BEEN UNAVAILABLE FOR MONTHS, IS IN THIS REPORT --  
WHICH, BACK TO THIS QUESTION THEN, WOULD YOU AT LEAST  
CHECK TO SEE NOW IF --

A. YES. I'M TAKING THAT QUESTION AS TO NOW WHAT -- I  
WILL ASK THAT OFFICE, WHICH IS NOW IN LIMBO BETWEEN TWO  
BUREAUS -- WHERE WE ARE.

Q. THIS REPORT HAS A LOT ABOUT OFFICES BEING IN LIMBO,  
POO. (LAUGHTER)

A. I AM FAMILIAR WITH ALL THAT.

END TEXT

2. DEPARTMENT WILL POUCH TAPE OF MAY 4 CRIMMINS-  
CARPENTER PRESS CONFERENCE TO EMBASSY. VANCE

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