

Cable

Declassified Under Authority of the
 Interagency Security Classification
 Appeals Panel, E.O. 13526, sec. 5.3(b)(3)
 ISCAP Appeal No. 2017-190, document 6
 Declassification Date: May 2, 2022

PREC: IMMEDIATE
 CLASS: ~~SECRET~~
 LINE1: OAASZYUW RUEHCAA8531 0162336-SSSS--RHEHAAX.
 LINE2: ZNY SSSSS ZZH
 LINE3: O 162333Z JAN 01 ZFF4
 LINE4: FM SECSTATE WASHDC
 OSRI: RUEHC
 DTG:
 ORIG: SECSTATE WASHDC
 TO: AMEMBASSY ALMATY IMMEDIATE 0000
 INFO: ////
 SUBJ: MI-8 HELICOPTERS REPORTEDLY SEIZED ENROUTE FROM
 KAZAKSTAN TO AFRICA
 TEXT: ~~SECRET~~ STATE 008531

~~NODIS~~

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/12/2011
 TAGS: PREL, KCRM, UNSC, KZ
 SUBJECT: MI-8 HELICOPTERS REPORTEDLY SEIZED ENROUTE FROM
 KAZAKSTAN TO AFRICA

1.4(c)

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY S/NIS DEBRA CAGAN FOR REASONS 1.5
 (B) AND (D).

2. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE.

3. ~~(S)~~ DEPARTMENT NOTED WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST THE
 1.4 (c)

CONCERNING A NOVEMBER INCIDENT INVOLVING EFFORTS TO EXPORT
 MILITARY GOODS FROM KAZAKHSTAN TO SIERRA LEONE. THE 1.4(c)
 TV REPORT ALSO MENTIONS THE OPENING OF A CRIMINAL
 INVESTIGATION CASE BY KAZAKHSTANI CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES.

4. ~~(S)~~ ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME DOUBTS AS TO WHO BEARS
 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS PARTICULAR SHIPMENT, ILLICIT
 SHIPMENTS OF ARMS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION TO STATES

IN CONFLICT AND UNDER UNSC SANCTIONS IN AFRICA IS A
 HALLMARK OF VICTOR BUTT (AKA BOUT, BUT) AND HIS ARMS
 TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION. BASED IN THE UNITED ARAB
 EMIRATES, BUTT AND ASSOCIATES FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE
 UN EXPERTS PANELS' REPORTS ON ARMS FLOWS AND SANCTIONS
 VIOLATIONS IN ANGOLA AND SIERRA LEONE, ISSUED IN DECEMBER.
 THE ANGOLA EXPERTS REPORT IN THIS CONJUNCTION MENTIONED A
 CONNECTION BETWEEN BUTT, ONE OF HIS AIR TRANSPORT
 COMPANIES, AIR CESS, AND IRBIS (AIR CARGO CARRIER) IN
 ALMATY. OTHER CONNECTIONS TO KAZAKHSTAN MAY ALSO EXIST.



5. ~~(S)~~ MOREOVER, IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, THE USG HAS INCREASED ITS SCRUTINY AND COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ON BUTT AND ASSOCIATES. WE BELIEVE THAT PUTTING BUTT AND HIS ASSOCIATES OUT OF THE AFRICAN ARMS BUSINESS IS AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY.

6. ~~(S)~~ ACTION REQUESTED - AS APPROPRIATE, AND WITHOUT REVEALING AT THIS TIME SIGNIFICANT [USG EFFORTS TARGETTING THE BUTT ORGANIZATION, ALMATY SHOULD SEEK TO RAISE THE ATTACHED TALKING POINTS WITH HOST COUNTRY OFFICIALS AND REPORT SOONEST ON THE STATUS OF THE CUSTOMS INVESTIGATION. THE DEPARTMENT IS INTERESTED IN ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION POST MAY BE ABLE TO DEVELOP REGARDING THE ARMS SUPPLY CHAIN ORIGINATING IN COUNTRY. ALMATY MIGHT ALSO WISH TO RAISE INFORMALLY AND REPORT ON ANY CONVERSATIONS REGARDING POSSIBLE LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN THIS INCIDENT.

7. ~~(S)~~. CABLES SHOULD BE SLUGGED FOR THE NSC'S OFFICE FOR TRANSNATIONAL THREATS, RICHARD A. CLARKE AND LEE WOLOSKY, NSC OFFICE FOR AFRICA, GAYLE SMITH AND GRANT HARRIS, FOR AF BUREAU DAS SCHNEIDMAN, AF/RA JWALSER AND INR/AA SWEIGERT AND S/NIS.

8. (U) BEGIN TALKING POINTS:

HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH YOU ON EXPORT CONTROL ISSUES FOR SOME TIME NOW. PLEASED TO SEE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE.

HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW UP ON THE NOVEMBER, 2000 KHABAR TELEVISION REPORT CONCERNING THE RUSSIAN CUSTOMS

SEIZURE OF TWO KAZAKHSTANI HELICOPTERS REPORTEDLY BEING TO SIERRA LEONNE.

WE HAVE FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE WORK OF THE UN EXPERTS PANELS ON ANGOLA AND SIERRA LEONE, WHOSE LATEST REPORTS WERE ISSUED IN DECEMBER, AND THEIR EFFORTS TO UNCOVER THE MEANS BY WHICH ARMS AND LETHAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT ARE INTRODUCED INTO AFRICAN CONFLICTS.

THESE UN PANELS WERE ESTABLISHED IN RESPONSE TO UNSC RESOLUTION 1295 CALLING FOR A MONITORING MECHANISM ON ANGOLA AND UNSC RESOLUTION 1306 ESTABLISHING A BODY OF EXPERTS TO EXAMINE THE DIAMONDS AND ARMS SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE.

THE US, LIKE MOST MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, SHARES A PROFOUND AND CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF UNSC SANCTIONS AND ABOUT THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE AND THE DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY RESULTING FROM PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN ANGOLA SIERRA LEONE AND ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA.

PRESS REPORTS MENTION THE OPENING OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION OF THIS CASE BY GOK CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES. CAN YOU SHARE WITH US ANY INFORMATION YOU HAVE ON THE INCIDENT AND ON WHO YOU BELIEVE MIGHT HAVE ASSISTED IN TRANSPORTING

THESE MILITARY GOODS TO WEST AFRICA?

WHAT STEPS ARE YOU TAKING TO STOP TRANSACTIONS LIKE THIS
IN THE FUTURE? HOW DOES THIS FIT INTO THE RECENT
REORGANIZATION OF YOUR EXPORT CONTROL REGIME?
ALBRIGHT

TOR: 01/16/01 21:02:38

DIST: SIT: Binnendijk Black Elkind Medish SUM2 NODIS
PRT: SIT(C2)
SIT: Wolosky
SIT: BABBITT BYRNE HARRISG SMITH