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HOSTAGES, AND COMMUNICATING MESSAGES BETWEEN THE MRTA AND GOP.

4. (C) IN HIS MEETING WITH POLOFF AND TWO FBI NEGOTIATION EXPERTS DURING THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 21, MINNIG STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HE IS NOT A NEGOTIATOR AND WILL NOT BECOME ONE. HE SAID HE WAS QUITE PLEASED WITH THE ROLE ASCRIBED TO HIM BY THE GOP AS "OFFICIAL MEDIATOR." WHILE ACTING AS THE CONDUIT FOR COMMUNICATION, THE ICRC CHIEF DELEGATE TO PERU SAID HE IS ALSO PUTTING MESSAGES INTO

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"CONTEXT" FOR THE GOP AND MRTA. WE KNOW FROM HIS STAFF THAT HE IS ALSO ACTING AS A REALITY CHECK. WHEN ASKED TO COMMUNICATE THE MRTA'S DEMAND THAT THE GOP RELEASE ALL OF MRTA'S PRISONERS, MINNIG REPORTEDLY RESPONDED THAT THE MRTA SHOULD REALIZE THE GOP COULD NEVER ACCEPT THAT DEMAND BEFORE DULY DELIVERING THE MESSAGE.

(NOTE: MINNIG ALSO HINTED THAT MRTA MAY SEEK THE RELEASE OF ITS PRISONERS AS PART OF A WIDE PEACE PACKAGE WITH THE GOP, AN EVEN MORE UNREALISTIC DEMAND. END NOTE)

5 (C) MINNIG SAID HE CURRENTLY PERCEIVED HIS ROLE AS FOLLOWS:

--- TO ASK THE GOP TO GUARANTEE WATER AND ELECTRICITY TO THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE (NOTE: HE DID NOT BELIEVE RESTORATION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE WAS A HUMANITARIAN REQUIREMENT. END NOTE).

--- TO ASK THE MRTA CAPTORS TO TREAT THE ESTIMATED 350 HOSTAGES HUMANELY (ICRC DOES NOT HAVE A VERIFIED HOSTAGE COUNT; MRTA PROMISED A COMPLETE LIST, BUT HAS NOT PROVIDED IT).

--- TO ENDEAVOR TO "MODERATE" SECURITY CONDITIONS IN THE AREA, WHICH HE HOPES WILL CREATE A MORE FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/01

TAGS: ASEC PTER CASC PE

SUBJECT: TFPE01: ICRC'S MICHEL MINNIG: THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOP AND MRTA.

--- TO BE THE MAILMAN FOR MRTA AND GOP MESSAGES TO EACH OTHER.

6. (C) AS THE AFOREMENTIONED POINTS REFLECT, MINNIG IS CURRENTLY DEFINING HIS MEDIATOR ROLE STRICTLY. HE SAID HE WILL NOT MAKE PROPOSALS FOR SETTLEMENT TO EITHER THE GOP OR MRTA, BUT HE MIGHT ASK BOTH SIDES TO MAKE NEW PROPOSALS. AT THIS TIME HE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE PRESSING EITHER SIDE TO MAKE PROPOSALS TO KEEP THE

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CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES MOVING. MINNIG REVEALED THAT (AS OF DECEMBER 21) THE GOP DID NOT APPEAR DISPOSED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE MRTA AT ALL. HE OPINED THAT THE MRTA'S RELEASE OF 38 HOSTAGES ON DECEMBER 20 WAS A "CLEVER" MOVE TO COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC THE MRTA'S WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE.

THE RIGHT GO-BETWEEN...

7. (C) DESPITE THE STRESS OF THE ONGOING HOSTAGE CRISIS, MINNIG REMAINS ENERGETIC AND LEVEL-HEADED. THE 44 YEAR-OLD MINNIG IS AN INTELLIGENT, DECISIVE AND COMMITTED CHIEF ICRC DELEGATE. ALTHOUGH HE ARRIVED IN PERU ONLY FOUR MONTHS AGO, HE BRINGS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE FROM HIS PREVIOUS TEN YEARS OF ICRC WORK, MOST RECENTLY IN AZERBAIJAN. NO STRANGER TO CRISES, HE HAS ALSO SERVED IN SARAJEVO, IN NICARAGUA, IN VARIOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES, AND IN IRAQ.

8. (C) MINNIG'S BIGGEST ASSET IS HIS IMPARTIALITY. THE MRTA HAS GREAT RESPECT AND CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE WITH THE ICRC FROM THE ICRC'S PRISON VISITS. IN 1995 ICRC DELEGATES IN PERU VISITED 4905 PRISONERS, INCLUDING IMPRISONED MRTA LEADERS AND MILITANTS, AT 187 PLACES OF DETENTION. THE GOP HAS ALLOWED THE ICRC TO WORK IN PERU SINCE 1984, AND IN RECENT YEARS AT LEAST, ICRC PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN VERY SATISFIED WITH THE LEVELS OF ACCESS AND COOPERATION AFFORDED THEM BY THE GOP. FACING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE HOSTAGE CRISIS, THE GOP ALSO KNOWS THE ICRC BRINGS INSTANT INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY TO ITS EFFORTS.

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9. (C) MINNIG ALSO BRINGS COMPETENCE IN THE PROCESS. OVER THE

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COURSE OF A FEW STRESSFUL DAYS, HE HAS MANAGED TO ESTABLISH A ROUTINE DELIVERY OF THREE MEALS A DAY TO THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AS WELL AS DAILY VISITS BY AN ICRC DOCTOR AND NURSE. HE HAS ALSO MANAGED TO EXTRICATE HOSTAGES WHO HAD SERIOUS MEDICAL PROBLEMS. DESPITE THE APPARENT LACK OF REAL SUBSTANTIVE TALKS BETWEEN THE ICRC AND MRTA, HE STILL EXUDES CONFIDENCE IN THE PROCESS AND AN ABILITY TO MANAGE CONFLICT. HE IS A CLEAR COMMUNICATOR AND AN EMPATHETIC LISTENER.

10. (C) MOREOVER, MINNIG IS PATIENT. WHILE NOTING THAT NO HOSTAGE CRISIS CAN BE RESOLVED WITHOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION, HE SAID HE WOULD PRESS ON WITH HIS WORK AS LONG AS NEEDED. WE CONGRATULATED HIM ON PLAYING SUCH A VITAL ROLE IN DEFUSING THE VERY DANGEROUS HOSTAGE CRISIS IN ITS INITIAL STAGES. HE SAID THE ICRC WOULD WITHDRAW ONLY IF THERE ARE ATTACKS ON HUMAN LIVES OR IF ITS DELEGATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HELP THE HOSTAGES.

... WITH INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS

11. (C) MINNIG UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE IS A FINE LINE BETWEEN

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/01
 TAGS: ASEC PTER CASC PE
 SUBJECT: TFPE01: ICRC'S MICHEL MINNIG: THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE
 MEDIATING AND NEGOTIATING, BUT HE IS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE ACTIONS

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THAT MIGHT BE PERCEIVED AS THE LATTER. ABOVE ALL ELSE, HE WILL NOT COMPROMISE HIS INDEPENDENT, HUMANITARIAN ROLE AS ICRC'S CHIEF DELEGATE TO PERU. IN FACT, MINNIG AND HIS STAFF HAVE ALL COMMENTED ON THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PROCEDURES DEVELOPED WITH THE GOP TO ASSIST IN THE HOSTAGE SITUATION AND THOSE USED IN THEIR NORMAL PRISON VISITS. SPEARHEADING THE DIFFICULT JOB OF PROVIDING FOR THE 350 HOSTAGES AND 15-25 MRTA TERRORISTS ALREADY CONSUMES A GREAT

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DEAL OF MINNIG'S TIME AND ENERGY.

12. (C) MINNIG UNDERSTANDS THE NEED TO KEEP THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE GOP AND MRTA MOVING. HE SEEMED TO BE CONSIDERING POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR DOING SO, BUT WITHIN HIS MEDIATING ROLE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE INDICATED THAT THERE MAY BE A NEED FOR ANOTHER, MORE SUBSTANTIVE MEDIATOR WITH FEWER INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS. HE SPECIFICALLY RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN JORGE SANTISTEVAN PLAYING SUCH A ROLE. HE ALSO AGREED THAT BELGIAN PRIEST HUBERT LANSSIERS, A MEMBER OF THE CONGRESSIONALLY-MANDATED AD HOC COMMISSION THAT RECOMMENDS PARDONS FOR PERSONS UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED ON TERRORISM CHARGES, MIGHT BE A GOOD CANDIDATE. BOTH HAVE OFFERED THEIR SERVICES TO THE GOP, BUT HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN.

DISCUSSING THE MEDIATION PROCESS

13. (C) RESPONDING TO MINNIG'S QUERY ABOUT TIMING, FBI NEGOTIATION EXPERTS SAID THAT THE PASSAGE OF TIME WITHOUT VIOLENCE IS GENERALLY HELPFUL TO DEFUSING A HOSTAGE SITUATION, BUT NOTED THAT LETTING TIME PASS WITHOUT INITIATING REAL TALKS IS POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING. MINNIG TOOK SPECIAL NOTE OF FBI REPRESENTATIVE'S COMMENT THAT CAPTORS OFTEN HAVE TWO TYPES OF DEMANDS: EMOTIONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE. THEY NOTED THAT THE MRTA MAY FEEL THAT THE MEDIA PLAY HAS SATISFIED SOME OF THEIR PSYCHIC NEEDS FOR RESPECT, BUT IT APPEARS THAT THE GOP HAS NOT YET ENGAGED THE MRTA AT THAT LEVEL. THEY ALSO CAUTIONED THAT ALTHOUGH THE ICRC DOES NOT BELIEVE IT IS NEGOTIATING, THE GOP MAY BELIEVE OR ALLOW OTHERS TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS DOING SO TO COVER ITS RELUCTANCE TO BEGIN SERIOUS TALKS.

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14. (C) MINNIG ASKED FOR THE USG'S POLICY ON THE SITUATION. POLOFF RESPONDED THAT THE USG HAS A GENERAL POLICY AGAINST MAKING CONCESSIONS TO TERRORISTS AND THAT WE WANTED THE LIVES OF THE SEVEN AMERICANS AND THE OTHER HOSTAGES SAFEGUARDED. POLOFF AND FBI REPS ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT OUR OPPOSITION TO MAKING CONCESSIONS TO TERRORISTS SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE GOP TALKING TO THE MRTA IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE HOSTAGE CRISIS PEACEFULLY. FBI REPS LEFT AN ENGLISH AND SPANISH COPY OF GENERAL POINTS ON THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS THAT COULD BE USEFUL TO MINNIG IN HIS ROLE AS OFFICIAL MEDIATOR. MINNIG THANKED US FOR PROVIDING HIM SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT DURING OUR ONE HOUR DISCUSSION.

COMMENT

15. (C) WE BELIEVE MINNIG HAS DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB OF HANDLING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE HOSTAGE CRISIS. HIS INTERVENTION DRAMATICALLY REDUCED THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE AND HAS ESTABLISHED A COMMENDABLE SYSTEM FOR SAFEGUARDING THE WELL-BEING OF THE HOSTAGES. NEVERTHELESS, MINNIG CANNOT AND WILL NOT PLAY A VERY ACTIVE ROLE IN TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE HOSTAGE CRISIS. HE

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CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT IS UP TO THE GOP AND MRTA OR THE GOOD OFFICES
OF ANOTHER, MORE SUBSTANTIVE MEDIATOR TO CARRY THAT LOAD.

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/01

TAGS: ASEC PTER CASC PE

SUBJECT: TFPE01: ICRC'S MICHEL MINNIG: THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

1. CLASSIFIED BY DENNIS JETT, AMBASSADOR, EMBASSY LIMA, REASON:
 1.5 (D).

2. (C) SUMMARY: INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)
 CHIEF DELEGATE TO PERU MICHEL MINNIG CURRENTLY DEFINES HIS ROLE AS
 OFFICIAL MEDIATOR OF THE HOSTAGE CRISIS NARROWLY. HIS ROLE IN
 FACILITATING THE FLOW OF FOOD, WATER, FAMILY LETTERS, AND MEDICINE

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 TO THE HOSTAGES AND MRTA CAPTORS HAS DIMINISHED THE DANGER OF THE
 STANDOFF CONSIDERABLY, BUT MINNIG CONCEDES THAT THE GOP NEEDS TO
 BEGIN TO ENGAGE THE MRTA IN SUBSTANTIVE TALKS SOON. MINNIG WILL
 NEVER PLAY THE ROLE OF NEGOTIATOR, BUT HE IS NOT AVERSE TO ALLOWING
 ANOTHER NEUTRAL PARTY TO STEP IN BETWEEN THE GOP AND MRTA TO PLAY
 A MORE SUBSTANTIVE ROLE IN TALKS. BASED ON MINNIG'S COMMENTS, THE
 PROSPECT OF A NEGOTIATED PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE HOSTAGE CRISIS
 SEEMS TO BE A LONG WAY AWAY. END SUMMARY.

 FROM HOSTAGE TO MEDIATOR

3. (C) MINNIG WAS AMONG THE SEVERAL HUNDRED GUESTS AT THE
 JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE THAT WERE TAKEN HOSTAGE BY MRTA
 TERRORISTS ON DECEMBER 17. HE QUICKLY CONVINCED THE MRTA TO ALLOW
 HIM TO PLAY THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE CAPTORS AND THE GOP
 AND WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN FACILITATING THE RELEASE OF WOMEN, SENIOR

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CITIZENS, WAITERS, AND PERSONS WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS A FEW HOURS AFTER THE GUERRILLAS STORMED THE JAPANESE RESIDENCE. SINCE THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 17 HE HAS TIRELESSLY PLAYED THE ROLE OF GO-BETWEEN, FACILITATING THE FLOW OF ESSENTIAL HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES TO THE HOSTAGES AND MRTA, ASSISTING WITH THE RELEASE OF ADDITIONAL HOSTAGES, AND COMMUNICATING MESSAGES BETWEEN THE MRTA AND GOP.

4. (C) IN HIS MEETING WITH POLOFF AND TWO FBI NEGOTIATION EXPERTS DURING THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 21, MINNIG STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HE IS NOT A NEGOTIATOR AND WILL NOT BECOME ONE. HE SAID HE WAS QUITE PLEASED WITH THE ROLE ASCRIBED TO HIM BY THE GOP AS "OFFICIAL MEDIATOR." WHILE ACTING AS THE CONDUIT FOR COMMUNICATION, THE ICRC CHIEF DELEGATE TO PERU SAID HE IS ALSO PUTTING MESSAGES INTO

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"CONTEXT" FOR THE GOP AND MRTA. WE KNOW FROM HIS STAFF THAT HE IS ALSO ACTING AS A REALITY CHECK. WHEN ASKED TO COMMUNICATE THE MRTA'S DEMAND THAT THE GOP RELEASE ALL OF MRTA'S PRISONERS, MINNIG REPORTEDLY RESPONDED THAT THE MRTA SHOULD REALIZE THE GOP COULD NEVER ACCEPT THAT DEMAND BEFORE DULY DELIVERING THE MESSAGE. (NOTE: MINNIG ALSO HINTED THAT MRTA MAY SEEK THE RELEASE OF ITS PRISONERS AS PART OF A WIDE PEACE PACKAGE WITH THE GOP, AN EVEN MORE UNREALISTIC DEMAND. END NOTE)

5 (C) MINNIG SAID HE CURRENTLY PERCEIVED HIS ROLE AS FOLLOWS:

--- TO ASK THE GOP TO GUARANTEE WATER AND ELECTRICITY TO THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE (NOTE: HE DID NOT BELIEVE RESTORATION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE WAS A HUMANITARIAN REQUIREMENT. END NOTE).

--- TO ASK THE MRTA CAPTORS TO TREAT THE ESTIMATED 350 HOSTAGES HUMANELY (ICRC DOES NOT HAVE A VERIFIED HOSTAGE COUNT; MRTA PROMISED A COMPLETE LIST, BUT HAS NOT PROVIDED IT).

--- TO ENDEAVOR TO "MODERATE" SECURITY CONDITIONS IN THE AREA, WHICH HE HOPES WILL CREATE A MORE FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR

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	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-02	MCO-01	ADS-00	M-00
	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OIS-01
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SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOP AND MRTA.
--- TO BE THE MAILMAN FOR MRTA AND GOP MESSAGES TO EACH OTHER.

6. (C) AS THE AFOREMENTIONED POINTS REFLECT, MINNIG IS CURRENTLY
DEFINING HIS MEDIATOR ROLE STRICTLY. HE SAID HE WILL NOT MAKE
PROPOSALS FOR SETTLEMENT TO EITHER THE GOP OR MRTA, BUT HE MIGHT
ASK BOTH SIDES TO MAKE NEW PROPOSALS. AT THIS TIME HE DOES NOT
APPEAR TO BE PRESSING EITHER SIDE TO MAKE PROPOSALS TO KEEP THE

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CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES MOVING. MINNIG REVEALED THAT (AS
OF DECEMBER 21) THE GOP DID NOT APPEAR DISPOSED TO NEGOTIATE WITH
THE MRTA AT ALL. HE OPINED THAT THE MRTA'S RELEASE OF 38 HOSTAGES
ON DECEMBER 20 WAS A "CLEVER" MOVE TO COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC THE
MRTA'S WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE.

THE RIGHT GO-BETWEEN...

7. (C) DESPITE THE STRESS OF THE ONGOING HOSTAGE CRISIS, MINNIG
REMAINS ENERGETIC AND LEVEL-HEADED. THE 44 YEAR-OLD MINNIG IS AN
INTELLIGENT, DECISIVE AND COMMITTED CHIEF ICRC DELEGATE. ALTHOUGH
HE ARRIVED IN PERU ONLY FOUR MONTHS AGO, HE BRINGS CONSIDERABLE
EXPERIENCE FROM HIS PREVIOUS TEN YEARS OF ICRC WORK, MOST RECENTLY
IN AZERBAIJAN. NO STRANGER TO CRISES, HE HAS ALSO SERVED IN
SARAJEVO, IN NICARAGUA, IN VARIOUS AFRICAN COUNTRIES, AND IN IRAQ.

8. (C) MINNIG'S BIGGEST ASSET IS HIS IMPARTIALITY. THE MRTA HAS
GREAT RESPECT AND CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE WITH THE ICRC FROM THE
ICRC'S PRISON VISITS. IN 1995 ICRC DELEGATES IN PERU VISITED 4905
PRISONERS, INCLUDING IMPRISONED MRTA LEADERS AND MILITANTS, AT 187
PLACES OF DETENTION. THE GOP HAS ALLOWED THE ICRC TO WORK IN PERU
SINCE 1984, AND IN RECENT YEARS AT LEAST, ICRC PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN
VERY SATISFIED WITH THE LEVELS OF ACCESS AND COOPERATION AFFORDED
THEM BY THE GOP. FACING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM FOREIGN

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GOVERNMENTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE HOSTAGE CRISIS, THE GOP ALSO KNOWS THE ICRC BRINGS INSTANT INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY TO ITS EFFORTS.

9. (C) MINNIG ALSO BRINGS COMPETENCE IN THE PROCESS. OVER THE [REDACTED] AL

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COURSE OF A FEW STRESSFUL DAYS, HE HAS MANAGED TO ESTABLISH A ROUTINE DELIVERY OF THREE MEALS A DAY TO THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AS WELL AS DAILY VISITS BY AN ICRC DOCTOR AND NURSE. HE HAS ALSO MANAGED TO EXTRICATE HOSTAGES WHO HAD SERIOUS MEDICAL PROBLEMS. DESPITE THE APPARENT LACK OF REAL SUBSTANTIVE TALKS BETWEEN THE ICRC AND MRTA, HE STILL EXUDES CONFIDENCE IN THE PROCESS AND AN ABILITY TO MANAGE CONFLICT. HE IS A CLEAR COMMUNICATOR AND AN EMPATHETIC LISTENER.

10. (C) MOREOVER, MINNIG IS PATIENT. WHILE NOTING THAT NO HOSTAGE CRISIS CAN BE RESOLVED WITHOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION, HE SAID HE WOULD PRESS ON WITH HIS WORK AS LONG AS NEEDED. WE CONGRATULATED HIM ON PLAYING SUCH A VITAL ROLE IN DEFUSING THE VERY DANGEROUS HOSTAGE CRISIS IN ITS INITIAL STAGES. HE SAID THE ICRC WOULD WITHDRAW ONLY IF THERE ARE ATTACKS ON HUMAN LIVES OR IF ITS DELEGATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HELP THE HOSTAGES.

... WITH INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS

11. (C) MINNIG UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE IS A FINE LINE BETWEEN [REDACTED]

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	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-02	MCO-01	ADS-00	M-00
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MEDIATING AND NEGOTIATING, BUT HE IS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE ACTIONS THAT MIGHT BE PERCEIVED AS THE LATTER. ABOVE ALL ELSE, HE WILL NOT COMPROMISE HIS INDEPENDENT, HUMANITARIAN ROLE AS ICRC'S CHIEF DELEGATE TO PERU. IN FACT, MINNIG AND HIS STAFF HAVE ALL COMMENTED ON THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PROCEDURES DEVELOPED WITH THE GOP TO ASSIST IN THE HOSTAGE SITUATION AND THOSE USED IN THEIR NORMAL PRISON VISITS. SPEARHEADING THE DIFFICULT JOB OF PROVIDING FOR THE 350 HOSTAGES AND 15-25 MRTA TERRORISTS ALREADY CONSUMES A GREAT

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DEAL OF MINNIG'S TIME AND ENERGY.

12. (C) MINNIG UNDERSTANDS THE NEED TO KEEP THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE GOP AND MRTA MOVING. HE SEEMED TO BE CONSIDERING POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR DOING SO, BUT WITHIN HIS MEDIATING ROLE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE INDICATED THAT THERE MAY BE A NEED FOR ANOTHER, MORE SUBSTANTIVE MEDIATOR WITH FEWER INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS. HE SPECIFICALLY RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN JORGE SANTISTEVAN PLAYING SUCH A ROLE. HE ALSO AGREED THAT BELGIAN PRIEST HUBERT LANSSIERS, A MEMBER OF THE CONGRESSIONALLY-MANDATED AD HOC COMMISSION THAT RECOMMENDS PARDONS FOR PERSONS UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED ON TERRORISM CHARGES, MIGHT BE A GOOD CANDIDATE. BOTH HAVE OFFERED THEIR SERVICES TO THE GOP, BUT HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN.

DISCUSSING THE MEDIATION PROCESS

13. (C) RESPONDING TO MINNIG'S QUERY ABOUT TIMING, FBI NEGOTIATION EXPERTS SAID THAT THE PASSAGE OF TIME WITHOUT VIOLENCE IS GENERALLY HELPFUL TO DEFUSING A HOSTAGE SITUATION, BUT NOTED THAT LETTING TIME PASS WITHOUT INITIATING REAL TALKS IS POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING. MINNIG TOOK SPECIAL NOTE OF FBI REPRESENTATIVE'S COMMENT THAT CAPTORS OFTEN HAVE TWO TYPES OF DEMANDS: EMOTIONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE. THEY NOTED THAT THE MRTA MAY FEEL THAT THE MEDIA PLAY HAS SATISFIED SOME OF THEIR PSYCHIC NEEDS FOR RESPECT, BUT IT APPEARS THAT THE GOP HAS NOT YET ENGAGED THE MRTA AT THAT LEVEL. THEY ALSO CAUTIONED THAT ALTHOUGH THE ICRC DOES NOT BELIEVE IT IS NEGOTIATING, THE GOP MAY BELIEVE OR ALLOW OTHERS TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS DOING SO TO COVER ITS RELUCTANCE TO BEGIN SERIOUS TALKS.

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14. (C) MINNIG ASKED FOR THE USG'S POLICY ON THE SITUATION. POLOFF RESPONDED THAT THE USG HAS A GENERAL POLICY AGAINST MAKING CONCESSIONS TO TERRORISTS AND THAT WE WANTED THE LIVES OF THE SEVEN AMERICANS AND THE OTHER HOSTAGES SAFEGUARDED. POLOFF AND FBI REPS ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT OUR OPPOSITION TO MAKING CONCESSIONS TO TERRORISTS SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE GOP TALKING TO THE MRTA IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE HOSTAGE CRISIS PEACEFULLY. FBI REPS LEFT AN ENGLISH AND SPANISH COPY OF GENERAL POINTS ON THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS THAT COULD BE USEFUL TO MINNIG IN HIS ROLE AS OFFICIAL MEDIATOR. MINNIG THANKED US FOR PROVIDING HIM SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT DURING OUR ONE HOUR DISCUSSION.

COMMENT

15. (C) WE BELIEVE MINNIG HAS DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB OF HANDLING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE HOSTAGE CRISIS. HIS INTERVENTION DRAMATICALLY REDUCED THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE AND HAS ESTABLISHED A COMMENDABLE SYSTEM FOR SAFEGUARDING THE WELL-BEING OF THE HOSTAGES. NEVERTHELESS, MINNIG CANNOT AND WILL NOT PLAY A VERY ACTIVE ROLE IN TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE HOSTAGE CRISIS. HE

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CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT IS UP TO THE GOP AND MRTA OR THE GOOD OFFICES
OF ANOTHER, MORE SUBSTANTIVE MEDIATOR TO CARRY THAT LOAD.

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NOTE BY SO/DO: NOT PASSED.

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