SECRET PTQ5003

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D), B6

PAGE 01 NIAMEY 00265 191555Z
ACTION INRD-00

INFO LOG-00 CCO-00 SAS-00 /000W
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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7762
INFO AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

S E C R E T NIAMEY 000265

NDJAMENA FOR POLMIL

ROGER CHANNEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2012
TAGS: PTER, ETTC, EMIN, PINR, NG, IZ
SUBJECT: NIGER: TAKING ANOTHER HARD LOOK AT GON URANIUM SALES

REF: (A) STATE 22529; (B) OO NIAMEY 00131 (NOTAL); (C) 01
NIAMEY 1778

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR BARBRO OWENS-KIRKPATRICK FOR
REASONS 1.5 B/D

TAKE A HARD LOOK AT NIGER'S URANIUM SALES
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1. (S/NF) REF A PROVIDES SUFFICIENT DETAILS TO WARRANT
SECRET

PAGE 02 NIAMEY 00265 191555Z
ANOTHER HARD LOOK AT NIGER'S URANIUM SALES. THE NAMES OF
THE GON OFFICIALS CITED IN THE REPORT TRACK CLOSELY WITH
THOSE WE KNOW TO BE IN THOSE, OR CLOSELY-RELATED POSITIONS.
HOWEVER, THE PURPORTED 4000-TON ANNUAL PRODUCTION LISTED IS
FULLY 1000 TONS MORE THAN THE MINING COMPANIES CLAIM TO
HAVE PRODUCED IN 2001.

PRESSING THE GON FOR ASSURANCES NOW
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2. (S/NF) AMBASSADOR MET WITH FORMIN MINDAOUDOU ON FEBRUARY
18 AND -- WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO REF A -- ASKED FOR AN
UNEQUIVOCAL ASSURANCE THAT NIGER HAS STUCK TO THE
COMMITMENT THEN PRESIDENT-ELECT TANDJA MADE TO U/S

DECAPTIONED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: HARRY R MELONE
DATE/CASE ID: 08 AUG 2006 200603054

PICKERING IN DECEMBER 1999 NOT TO SELL URANIUM TO ROGUE STATES (REF B). AMBASSADOR LINKED HER QUESTION TO HEIGHTENED USG SECURITY CONCERNS AND TO A COMMENT BY PRIME MINISTER HAMA AMADOU LAST FALL (REF C). FORMIN PROMISED TO SEEK THE ASSURANCES THE AMBASSADOR REQUIRED AND TO RAISE THE ISSUE THE SAME DAY WITH PRESIDENT TANDJA. ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2001 THE PM TOLD US THAT THERE WERE BUYERS LIKE IRAQ WHO WOULD PAY MORE FOR NIGER'S URANIUM THAN FRANCE. HAMA AMADOU QUICKLY ADDED THE COMMENT "OF COURSE NIGER CANNOT SELL TO THEM." THAT DID NOT DEFLECT OUR IMMEDIATE, STRONGLY WORDED WARNING THAT ANY SUCH SALE WOULD BE WRONG AND DISASTROUS FOR NIGER'S RELATIONS WITH THE USG AND OTHERS.

SLOW RESPONSE FROM GON
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3. (S/NF) IN MEETINGS ON OTHER ISSUES TODAY, FEBRUARY 19 (SEPTEL), FIRST WITH THE FORMIN ALONE AND THEN WITH THE FORMIN AND PRESIDENT TANDJA, THE GON OFFICIALS DID NOT RAISE THE URANIUM ISSUE, NOR PROVIDE THE ASSURANCES AMBASSADOR HAD SOUGHT. AMBASSADOR DID NOT RAISE THE ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT OR WITH THE FORMIN AGAIN TODAY, BUT WILL REMIND THE FORMIN THAT WE NEED THE GON'S RESPONSE ASAP. ONE REASON MINDAOUDOU AND TANDJA MAY NEED A FEW DAYS TO RESPOND IS BECAUSE PM HAMA AMADOU IS TRAVELLING AND WILL NOT BE RETURNING UNTIL SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH.

COMMENT/NEXT STEPS
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4. (S/NF) DESPITE TANDJA'S ASSURANCES IN LATE 1999, AND NIGER'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION AGAINST TERRORISM POST 9/11, WE SHOULD NOT DISMISS OUT OF HAND THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME SCHEME COULD BE, OR HAS BEEN, UNDERWAY TO SUPPLY IRAQ WITH YELLOW CAKE FROM HERE. SHOULD SOMETHING LIKE THIS BE ONGOING OR CONTEMPLATED, WE NEED TO SQUASH IT RIGHT AWAY. B1

B1

SECRET

5. WE WILL PRESS FOR A GON RESPONSE BEFORE CINC EUCOM GENERAL FULFORD VISITS NIGER BRIEFLY ON FEBRUARY 24 AND MEETS WITH PRESIDENT TANDJA. WHATEVER THE GON'S RESPONSE, I WILL URGE FULFORD TO UNDERSCORE TO TANDJA THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING URANIUM AWAY FROM ROGUE STATES LIKE IRAQ. WE ALSO SUGGEST THAT WASHINGTON RAISE NIGER'S URANIUM PRODUCTION AND SALES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE. THIS, IN SPITE OF FREQUENT LEAD-PIPE GUARANTEES BY THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR HERE THAT NO URANIUM DIVERSION TO ROGUE STATES IS POSSIBLE,

B1, B6

OWENS-KIRKPATRICK

SECRET

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