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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISHU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7377
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY RIYADH
AMCONSUL JEDDAH
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION GENEVA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL\//POLAD/CCJ2/CCJ4/7-S/CCJ5//

CONFIDENTIAL MOGADISHU 02658

DEPT PASS AID/AFR, OFDA

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PINS, PGOV, KREC, EPET, SO
SUBJECT: WINDS OF PEACE BLOWING EVEN IN NORTHWEST SOMALIA

REF: MOGADISHU 2485

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

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- 2. SUMMARY: TWO DAY TRIP TO NORTHWEST REASSURED US
PRIME MINISTER WAS RIGHT: TENSION IS EASING, ISAACS ARE
RETURNING, AND GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO RESPOND TO
UNCLASSIFIED

REGION’S NEEDS. IT WILL BE A LONG ROAD BACK, HOWEVER.
END SUMMARY.

3. WE WILL REPORT FULLY SEPTEL ON OUR TWO DAY TRIP
VIA EMBASSY C-12 TO BURAO, BERBERA, AND LAS ANOD
(INCLUDING CONOCO DRILLING SITE). HERE ARE SOME
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS:

-- DATT AND I WERE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL UNIMPEDED (ALONG
WITH OTHER EMBASSY, DATT AND USAID PERSONNEL). WE SEEM
TO HAVE AT LAST LIBERATED OURSELVES FROM GSDR TRAVEL
RESTRICTIONS THANKS TO PRIME MINISTER’S INTERVENTION,
AND DEPARTMENT’S TIMELY WARNING TO SOMALI AMBASSADOR.

-- ISAAKS ARE IN FACT RETURNING TO BURAO AND BERBERA IN
GROWING NUMBERS AND, WE WERE TOLD, EVEN LARGER NUMBERS
TO OUTLYING VILLAGES. WE MET AND INTERVIEWED SOME OF
THOSE.

-- GSDR AND SOMALI ARMY SEEM TO BE FACILITATING RETURN
OF DISPLACED PERSONS, AS SAMANTAR PROMISED (MOGADISHU
2485). WE SAW NO SIGN AND HEARD NO REPORT OF ANY
HARASSMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

-- ON THE OTHER HAND, WE SAW PRECIOUS LITTLE EVIDENCE OF
MATERIAL HELP AVAILABLE TO RETURNEES, NOTWITHSTANDING
PRIME MINISTER’S STATEMENT THAT FOODSTUFF, MEDICINES,
AND WATER SUPPLY EQUIPMENT HAVE BEEN SENT TO BURAO.
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-- WE LEAPFROGGED WITH INTERIOR MINISTER’S DELEGATION
TO NORTHWEST. SIGNIFICANTLY, THEY WERE TRAVELING BY ROAD
FROM BERBERA TO BORAMA VIA HARGEISA WHILE WE WERE THERE
AND PLANNED ANOTHER ROAD TRIP FROM BERBERA TO BURAO. THIS
WAS INTENDED TO DRAMATIZED IMPROVED SECURITY (ALTHOUGH ON
OUR RETURN HOME WE HEARD UNCONFIRMED REPORT MINISTERIAL
CONVOY HAD BEEN ATTACKED THIS MORNING).

-- IN GENERAL, SECURITY SITUATION WAS MUCH MORE RELAXED
THAN ON MY LAST VISIT IN DECEMBER. WE HEARD REPORTS FROM
MANY THAT FIGHTING HAD SLACKED OFF GREATLY, ALTHOUGH
ICRC HOSPITAL IN BERBERA WAS NEARLY FULL OF WOUNDED,
THE MAJORITY WITH FOOT AND LEG INJURIES INDICATIVE OF
MINE EXPLOSIONS.
-- SECURITY IN THE CITY OF BURAO DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO CIVILIANS, AS PRIME MINISTER HAD INDICATED IN OUR TALK (WE STRESSED TO GOVERNOR AND DIVISION COMMANDER THAT SAMANTAR'S PROMISE SHOULD BE FULFILLED). ARMY TROOPS WERE QUITE IN EVIDENCE IN THE CITY, ALTHOUGH THEY SEEMED RELAXED.

4. NORTHWEST SOMALIA'S ACE-IN-THE-HOLE MAY BE OIL. CONOCO HAS SPENT DOLS 16 MILLION DRILLING NEAR LAS ANOD, WITH NO RESULTS SO FAR (AT 9800 FEET) BUT THEY REMAIN OPTIMISTIC.

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5. COMMENT: GOVERNOR OF BURAO REGION TOLD US WINDS OF PEACE WERE BLOWING IN OTHER PARTS OF WORLD, AND WE AGREED THEY MIGHT SOON BE BLOWING HERE. WE ALSO AGREED THAT KEY LAY IN PERSUADING ISAAKS GOVERNMENT WAS SINCERE ABOUT REFORMS AND HELPING THEM RETURN TO NORMAL LIVES. CRIGLER

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