
From: Campbell, Kurt M <CampbellKM@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 3:24 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Amelia Earhart Project

One last background piece Madame Secretary. Also need your guidance about the Asia stuff you discussed with Jamie Rubin. Have a good weekend. Kurt

From: Campbell, Kurt M
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 09:21 AM
To: 'liebermane [redacted]' <liebermane [redacted]>; 'pellej [redacted]' <pellej [redacted]>; 'daileyjr [redacted]' <daileyjr [redacted]>
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J; Loi, James L; Stout, Jennifer P
Subject: Amelia Earhart Project

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Evelyn, General Dailey, Under Secretary Pell—

Cheryl Mills, our Chief of Staff here at the State Department, forwarded me your e-mails yesterday and asked me to set up a meeting regarding the Amelia Earhart effort. I have asked my office to be in touch this morning to see if we can find a good time. Evelyn, I currently serve as Secretary Clinton's Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific, but you might remember that we worked closely together on a few projects when I was in the White House during the Clinton Administration (I am married to Lael Brainard now at the Treasury Department). General Dailey, I also had a chance to meet with you on a few occasions during my time at the Pentagon, working for Secretary Perry, and before while in the Navy.

I wanted to make sure I provided you background information before our meeting, and before I'm consumed by the inevitable policy scramble over last night's statements from North Korea that they will be launching another missile in April.

Our intention for the event next Tuesday is to highlight Amelia Earhart as part of Women's Heritage Month, our historic role in the Pacific, and to celebrate the 75th anniversary of her launch for her fateful around-the-world flight.

As part of that effort, and as an example of intrepid diplomacy and adventurous spirit, we are planning to announce some potentially exciting new developments in the long search for her aircraft. We have had a team here at the State Department -- including historians, photo analysts, technical experts and diplomats -- supporting this effort for three years. And we have also engaged extensively with many outside experts in underwater search, reconnaissance capabilities, and DNA analysis. You will see from the forwarded email below that we are also working closely with Robert Ballard (the discoverer of the Titanic, among many other notable achievements), who serves the State Department as a formal advisor in this effort. He plans on being with us next Tuesday, and will be available today to provide any background support for our meeting.

I myself have been to Kiribati on two occasions and have had very extensive dealings with TIGHAR over several years. We have also done very substantial background work in vetting on every aspect of the search plan and organization -- scientific papers, books, satellite pictures, historical documents and their financial records. I am working to ensure that our entire technical team and outside advisory group are available for any discussions today.

The goal here was in no way meant to suggest that these new clues are certain or even highly likely, but rather that in the spirit of adventure of the American pursuit of knowledge it behooves us to explore.

TIGHAR (The International Group for Historical Aircraft Recovery) and its team have allowed their findings to be carefully checked, and there is now an intense bidding war between National Geographic and the Discovery Channel underway for the exclusive rights to cover the search. (The State Department is not involved in that part of the effort or indeed in any other financial dealings of the search or associated organizations.) Lockheed Martin, the builder of the plane that Amelia Earhart flew on her voyage, has seen enough to strongly support the effort, and they will be with us on Tuesday next week as well.

You will note in Dr. Ballard's e-mail below that he mentions the photo of what we believe to be the strut in the rediscovered 1930's black and white photo. We have asked five different technical experts from the US government and intelligence community with decades of experience using our most sophisticated digital imaging and contour resolution technology to judge the veracity of the photo. (This is the island where the artifacts were found – judged to be from the mid- to late 1930's – including a broken pocket knife, a women's compact, and a jar of vanishing cream for freckles.) Their judgment, with varying degrees of certainty, from clear possibility to probability, indicates that the image seen in the water could indeed be the strut of a Lockheed Electra.

We have approached this effort with a healthy dose of skepticism and a need for corroboration at every step. I myself was quite skeptical from the outset but have come around. My personal view is that this is an exciting potentially historic find and deeply worthy of exploration. I've also come to know Ric Gillespie well and find him to be thorough, scientific in his approach, honest, and deeply committed.

I look forward to discussing all of this with you today.

One final note that is unrelated to the State Department role in this but might have some bearing on the Air and Space Museum. This search will proceed shortly under any circumstances. As part of this effort, TIGHAR has graciously negotiated an important provision in their search agreement with the Government of Kiribati that, should they find wreckage of Amelia Earhart's plane, it would be provided to the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum for public display. So I think this means that we need to handle the search effort carefully and with professional respect.

My office will be in touch shortly to set up a meeting.

With all best wishes,
Kurt

Dr. Kurt M. Campbell
Assistant Secretary of State
For East Asian & Pacific Affairs

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Robert Ballard [mailto:[\[redacted\]](#)]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 9:57 PM
To: Campbell, Kurt M
Subject: Amelia Earhart Project

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Dear Secretary Campbell,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be involved in this potentially history search effort.

As you know, I have been involved in a number of search efforts over my 52-year career as an oceanographer including the discovery of the RMS TITANIC, the German battleship BISMARCK, the USS YORKTOWN lost

during the Battle of Midway, President John F. Kennedy's PT-109, and numerous warships lost during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Clearly, finding the wreckage of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Electra ranks near the top of the list, if not at the very top, of historic finds yet to be made.

Over the years, I have spent a considerable amount of time researching the facts surrounding her disappearance as well as watched various groups attempt to locate her downed Electra both at sea and ashore.

I am well aware of the work done by Eric Gillespie and his group and find them to be dedicated individuals who have approached their work in a truly scientific manner. I must say, I admire their "dogged" approach and determination. Having spent some time on isolated atolls in the Pacific myself, I know working in such a location can be a trying and exhausting experience that will test your determination to continue in pursue of your quest year after year.

I have reviewed the evidence he and his team have collected over the years and find it a quite compelling hypothesis that she in fact landed on the outer reef of Gardner Island instead of ditching at sea. Clearly, given the choice of landing on the shallow water reef in protected waters of an island is much preferable to landing in the open ocean.

The eye witness accounts he has documented from natives who moved to the island a few years after her disappearance and the artifacts his team has collected are impossible to ignore.

I have also reviewed the recently rediscovered image taken by Eric Bevington during his photographic survey of Gardner Island in 1937 just months after her disappearance and although I am not an expert in photo-analysis there is little doubt that a vertical strut can be clearly seen projecting out of the water to the north of the SS NORWICH CITY which ran around on Gardner Island November 29, 1929.

The fact that you have had this photograph analyzed by imaging experts who believe it is the landing gear of a Lockheed Electra is yet another fact that can not be ignored.

I have recently been in contact with engineers at Pratt & Whitney that built the two R-85 Wasp Junior SB Radial engines on her plane. These engines each weighed 865 pounds. 113-165 pounds of which consist of aluminum parts but 700-750 pounds consist of steel.

If the vertical strut seen in Eric Bevington's 1937 photograph is in fact the Electra's landing gear then it must be attached to one of these 865 pound engines which even if it is covered by subsequent coral growth, which is more than likely the case, will be relatively easy to locate based upon its strong magnetic signature in a surrounding area of coral limestone made of calcium carbonate that lacks any magnetic signature. A simple proton magnetometer should do the trick.

Finally, I am an Explorer-in-Residence for the National Geographic Society and I have spoken with their senior management about this recent evidence and they and I am sure others are willing to finance an expedition to Gardner Island to verify whether or not the remains of Amelia Earhart Electra are in fact at this location without costing the Federal Government anything.

Given this new evidence and the minor costs involved in verifying the presence of the aircraft remains, I find it well worthwhile mounting an expedition to Gardner Island as soon as possible and I look forward to helping in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert D. Ballard

Professor of Oceanography, Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island and Director of the Center of Ocean Exploration.