

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2012 7:17 PM
To: H
Cc: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Fw: DPB Comments on Tice (Oct 1 - Nov 8, 2012)

From: Bass, John R
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2012 05:42 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: RE: DPB Comments on Tice (Oct 1 - Nov 8, 2012)

To close the loop on the other half of your question this morning (why the Tice family has a different public characterization of who may be holding him than what we've said publicly):

According to NEA, the family indicated in a meeting prior to their departure for Lebanon that the family's professional media advisor indicated that based on information they had received from Tice's editors at the Washington Post and McClatchy, they were 99% sure the government was holding him. However, per the advice of their media advisor, they were opting for a public messaging strategy to not accuse the regime of holding him or contradict the regime narrative (supported by the bogus-looking "jihadi" video of Austin Tice) that terrorists were holding him, in the hopes that the regime would perceive a public-relations benefit in acting as an intermediary to arrange for his release.

Ambassador Connelly will provide a prompt readout after her meeting with the family members visiting Lebanon concludes tomorrow (14 November).

Thanks, JB

From: Toner, Mark C
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2012 5:38 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Bass, John R
Cc: Hammer, Michael A
Subject: FW: DPB Comments on Tice (Oct 1 - Nov 8, 2012)

Cheryl - Here's everything we've said on Tice. Note that she did say at outset we believe he is in regime hands.

From: Lalley, Jonathan P
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2012 9:27 AM
To: PA SPOX
Subject: DPB Comments on Tice (Oct 1 - Nov 8, 2012)

From the November 8 DPB (NULAND):

QUESTION: There was – there's a video out of a journalist, a Ukrainian journalist called Ankhara Kochneva, I believe, though I might have the name wrong. She's asking for help. She's held somewhere within Syria, and I just thought it might be appropriate to ask if you knew anything about this and also whether you had had any news about Austin Tice.

MS. NULAND: On Austin Tice, we have not had any new information. We continue to work through our various channels, including the protecting power, to urge the Syrian regime to be more forthcoming. And with regard to the Ukrainian, I hadn't seen that, but we'll look into it.

From the October 5 DPB (TONER):

QUESTION: Any update on Mr. Tice?

MR. TONER: No. I don't have any other updates.

From the October 4 DPB (NULAND):

QUESTION: Okay. And then I have one that's unrelated to any of this, which is – I don't think you've going to have. Is there anything new on Mr. Tice?

MS. NULAND: There is not.

From the October 3 DPB (NULAND):

QUESTION: And then just tangentially related to this, is there anything new on that – the video and on Mr. Tice?

MS. NULAND: I don't have anything new on Mr. Tice. I wish I did.

QUESTION: Or on the actual video?

MS. NULAND: No, no.

From the October 2 DPB (NULAND):

QUESTION: Sorry. Just on – you think that there's at least one American – I mean, not an official American – in Syria, though, right now. Is there any more update – I presume you meant official American –

MS. NULAND: On Mr. Tice?

QUESTION: On Tice. Right.

MS. NULAND: No, unfortunately, there is not.

QUESTION: No, nothing?

MS. NULAND: Jill.

QUESTION: A question concerning exactly that. There's some media reports that say that that video that appeared on YouTube looks staged. Has the State Department analyzed that video at all? Or have –

MS. NULAND: I don't have anything further to what I said yesterday, where I certainly raised the possibility that it could have been staged for purposes of the regime exculpating itself. Frankly, we just don't know. We don't know if it was him, we don't know what – but we continue to believe, based on the limited information that we have, that he is in regime custody.

From the October 1 DPB (NULAND):

QUESTION: Yes. I just wondered if you guys had seen a video on YouTube that's supposedly of Austin Tice, the American journalist, and whether you're in a position to verify whether it is, in fact, him.

MS. NULAND: We've seen the video. We are not in a position to verify, (a) whether it's him, (b) whether it represents an actual scene that happened or something that may have been staged. There's a lot of reason for the Syrian Government to duck responsibility, but we continue to believe that, to the best of our knowledge, we think he is in Syrian Government custody.

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