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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
2000

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TEXT

TAGS: CASC, US, IS (SELBST, ILAN)  
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE BREAK IN SELBST CUSTODY CASE  
REF: TEL AVIV 13689 AND PREVIOUS  
1. WHITE HOUSE AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST.  
-  
2. ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS OCTOBER 21 PUBLISHED A PHOTOGRAPH OF ILAN SELBST, ALONG WITH A SHORT NARRATIVE AUTHORED BY THE ISRAELI NATIONAL POLICE (INP) GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CASE. THE PHOTO, WHICH APPEARED IN BOTH HEBREW AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES, WAS UNFORTUNATELY MISIDENTIFIED AS THAT OF "ILAN SALVES." AT OUR REQUEST, THE HEAD OF THE INP'S MISSING PERSONS BUREAU, ARNON NAVOT, CAME TO THE EMBASSY OCTOBER 23, AT WHICH MEETING THIS MISUNDERSTANDING (WHICH GREW OUT OF REPEATED TRANSLITERATION AND RETRANSLITERATION IN AND OUT OF HEBREW) WAS CORRECTED. THE PHOTO WAS TO BE REPUBLISHED, AND ATTEMPTS CONTINUED TO HAVE IT BROADCAST ON TELEVISION AS WELL. ON OCTOBER 24, HOWEVER, CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT HAVOT RETURNED TO THE EMBASSY BEARING A PHOTOCOPY OF A LETTER HIS OFFICE HAD RECEIVED EARLIER THAT DAY. POSTMARKED FROM HAIFA, ON OCTOBER 21, THE LETTER STATES, "ILAN SALVES (SIC) IS KIDNAPPED. HE WILL BE KILLED THE 13TH DECEMBER 1985 IF KLAUS BARBIE, PRISON ST. JOSEPH, LYON, FRANCE, IS NOT SET FREE BEFORE THIS DATE AND

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GIVEN 130,000 DOLLARS FOR UNLAWFUL EXTRADITION." THE LETTER GOES ON TO MAKE AN UNRELATED DEMAND THAT AUTHORITIES IN GERMANY, SWEDEN, NORWAY, DENMARK, AND AUSTRALIA BE COMPELLED TO TAKE ACTION UNDER CRIMINAL ASSAULT STATUTES AGAINST JEWS CIRCUMCISING THEIR SONS. A COMPLETE COMPENDIUM OF PHOTOCOPIED LEGAL EXTRACTS FROM THE RESPECTIVE CRIMINAL CODES WAS ATTACHED TO THE LETTER. THE MISSIVE IS INEXPLICABLY DATED SEPTEMBER 13, 1985, AND IS SIGNED, "PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, LEGAL ADVISER OF TRUE LAW", AND INITIALED WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE LETTERS, "D.L."

4. THE LETTER WRITER'S FAILURE TO CORRECT THE MISIDENTIFICATION OF ILAN SELBST COULD BE INDICATIVE OF AT LEAST TWO THINGS IN THE INP'S VIEW. FIRST, IT COULD INDICATE THAT THE LETTER-WRITER HAS NO KNOWLEDGE WHATSOEVER OF ILAN SELBST, AND MERELY SEIZED UPON PUBLICATION OF HIS PHOTO AS A PRETEXT FOR PURSUING A PRIVATE AGENDA. SECONDLY, THE INP HAS NOT RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LETTER ITSELF MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY MEYER SELBST, ILAN'S FATHER, FOR REASON OR REASONS UNKNOWN. WERE HE CLEVER, HE WOULD NOT GIVE HIMSELF AWAY BY REVEALING HIS AWARENESS OF ILAN'S TRUE IDENTITY. AT THIS STAGE, THE INP CONSIDERS IT LEAST LIKELY OF ALL THAT ILAN ACTUALLY IS IN THE HANDS OF REAL TERRORISTS AFFILIATED WITH THE PLO. FINGERPRINTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM THE LETTER, HOWEVER, AND A CHECK (#) IN ISRAEL CAPABLE OF HAVING SUPPLIED THE LEGAL CITATIONS PROVIDED WILL BE MADE.

5. ACTION REQUEST, AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG:  
TO ASSIST IN DETERMINING WHETHER ILAN'S FATHER IS THE AUTHOR OF THE LETTER, THE INP HAS ASKED OUR HELP IN OBTAINING FROM CATHY MESSICK, OR FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE, A SAMPLE OF MEYER SELBST'S HANDWRITING. FYI, THE LETTER IS PRINTED IN BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS, WHICH HAVE TWO DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: THE "K'S" ARE PRODUCED BY ADDING A DOWN-SLOPING LEG TO A "V" AND THE ARCH OF THE CAPITAL "A'S" BEARS A SMALL LOOP IN THE UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER. YOUR ASSISTANCE IN CONTACTING MRS. MESSICK AND, IF POSSIBLE, SUPPLYING THE HANDWRITING SAMPLE VIA THE FASTEST POSSIBLE MEANS, WOULD BE APPRECIATED. FLATEN  
END OF MESSAGE CONFIDENTIAL  
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