

ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 AID-00 AMAD-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 DNI-00 DODE-00
 PERC-00 DS-00 DHSE-00 OIGO-00 VCI-00 DIAS-00 H-00
 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 LAB-01 L-00 ARMY-00 MOFM-00
 MOF-00 VCIE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OMB-00 NIMA-00 DOHS-00
 FMPC-00 SP-00 IRM-00 SSO-00 SS-00 NCTC-00 BBG-00
 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-00 SAS-00 FA-00 SRAP-00 SGC-00
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R 151534Z JAN 10
 FM AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0039
 INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RELEASED IN PART
 B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUXEMBOURG 000005

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/WE VALERIE BELON, S/GC MICHAEL WILLIAMS
 AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA
 AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY
 AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
 AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
 AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA
 AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
 AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/15

TAGS: PGOV, KDRG, PREL, LU

SUBJECT: TO HELL AND BACK: GITMO EX-DETAINEE STUMPS IN LUXEMBOURG

REF: 09 LUXEMBOURG 328; 09 LUXEMBOURG 288; 09 LUXEMBOURG 302

CLASSIFIED BY: Adam Center, Consul; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Former Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) detainee Moazzam Begg met with Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn 14 January 2010 to press the government of Luxembourg to accept GTMO detainees for resettlement. Begg, a British citizen of Pakistani origin, was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 and imprisoned in Kandahar, Bagram, and Guantanamo Bay, before his release to Britain in 2005. In a statement to RTL Television, Asselborn said that Luxembourg will do what is possible and reiterated the government's position to provide financial assistance, training and housing costs, and other technical assistance. Consular officer attended an evening screening of the documentary film "Taxi to the Dark Side," followed by a Q&A session with Begg. When asked if he thought Luxembourg

will do more than contribute financially to the resettlement efforts, Begg replied that he was "pleasantly surprised" with his conversations with MFA officials and "hopeful." END SUMMARY

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AUDIENCE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

2. (C) Ex-GTMO detainee Moazzam Begg, released from Guantanamo Bay in 2005, is barnstorming throughout Europe, pushing governments to accept GTMO detainees for resettlement. Following his release from GTMO, Begg created an NGO dedicated to this cause, called Caged Prisoners. Representatives from two additional NGOs, Reprieve and Center for Constitutional Rights, accompanied Begg on his visit to Luxembourg. Luxembourg media coverage on the Asselborn-Begg meeting was ubiquitous, but superficial. With numerous reports that the meeting occurred, nearly all media outlets were silent on the actual substance of the meeting. Only Begg provided some limited insight into the outcome of the meeting. Speaking later in the evening (see para 4), he responded to an inquiry about the meeting by saying that "without giving anything away," he was "pleasantly surprised" and "hopeful."

ASSELBORN: "WE'LL HELP"/BEGG: "DO MORE"

3. (C) In an interview following his meeting with Begg, Asselborn avoided specifics of the discussion. He reiterated Luxembourg's willingness to provide financial assistance to the resettlement efforts - the GoL party line for many months. Asselborn said, however, that he was in regular contact with American officials, including Special Envoy Dan Fried, as recently as last week.

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In comments to the press following the meeting, Begg only explained what the messages he delivered were - not how those messages were received. Begg's primary message is that European governments have to step up and accept some of the GTMO detainees for resettlement. Begg, an articulate man, argued that there are dozens of prisoners in GTMO just like him - not dangerous to society, able to communicate and assimilate, able to be a contributing and responsible member of society - and they just need governments to stand up and offer them a place to call home. In an interview prior to his meeting with Asselborn, Begg was asked if countries like Luxembourg have a responsibility regarding ex-detainees. Begg

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reportedly responded that it is a European tradition to offer asylum to refugees, and that this tradition also should be extended to former Guantanamo detainees who have not been convicted of crimes, are not dangerous, and are deemed as releasable.

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TAXI TO HELL

4. (SBU) Begg later attended an Amnesty International-hosted screening of 2007 Oscar Winner for Best Documentary "Taxi to the Dark Side" (French translation of film title: "Taxi to Hell"). Conoff attended screening and Begg's Q&A session following the film. The film, a harrowing depiction of alleged torture inside Bagram, Abu Ghraib, and Guantanamo, was an undisguised attack on the Bush Administration, focusing much of its venom on Former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Former Vice President Cheney. Mr. Begg, on the other hand, presented an image of "forgive, but never forget," and has focused his attentions not on the ill treatment he allegedly received, but on what can be done to resettle the remaining "releasable" prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. Reporting officer estimates 100-150 people attended the filming and Q&A session and noted the complete absence of press, other diplomats, or GoL officials.

LOOKING FORWARD, NOT BACKWARD

5. (C) During his presentation, Begg spoke almost exclusively of the future, with hardly any mention of the past. He did not discuss the question of legality of torture. Rather than stressing past injustices, he focused on what to do now. He acknowledged that he lives with the past, but that he now wants to be part of the solution, and is working to convince Luxembourg and other governments - and their populaces - to want the same.

LUXEMBOURGERS NOT SO SURE

6. (SBU) In a 90-minute Q&A session, Begg was asked, how would ex-detainees fit in in Luxembourg. How would it work? Where would they live? How would they be supported? The fear and

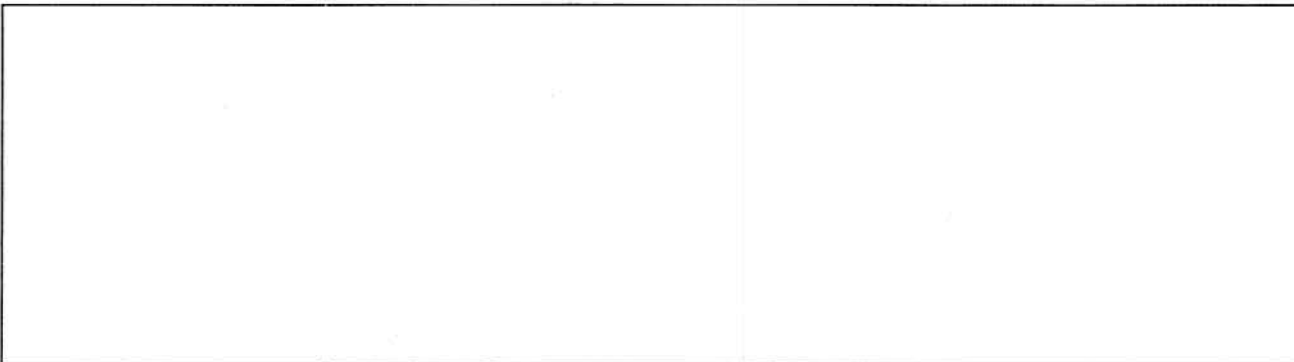
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skepticism was palpable in the audience. Begg and his NGO cohorts stressed that there were Algerians and Tunisians in GTMO who could come to Luxembourg and speak French, one of Luxembourg's official and most-commonly used languages. He stressed that neighboring countries - France, Belgium, Portugal, Ireland - provided examples. Begg even argued that if detainees could fit in in Palau, they could do the same in Luxembourg. Begg deplored that certain people believe the world is not big enough for the ex-detainees. He added that if there were colonies on the Moon, "I'm sure they'd send us there."

7. (SBU) Begg declined to speak about specific physical transgressions against his person. When told how physically well and mentally sound he appeared, he joked, "Well, I used to be taller." Begg spoke articulately, demonstrating minimal ill will toward his captors - even going so far as to say he speaks on the

phone occasionally with his former interrogators. Consular officer took note of the following exchange: Asked if he would ever consider a return to the U.S., Begg replied that he had never been to the U.S., but that the U.S. had come to him. Begg commented that as a British citizen, he could travel to the U.S. without a visa, but that he thinks he would need "a lot more than a visa to get out."

COMMENT



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9. (U) Please see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moazzam_Begg and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxi_to_the_Dark_Side for extensive information on Moazzam Begg and the film "Taxi to the Dark Side."

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