Extent

5 folders, approximately 226 pages

Summary

This collection contains material regarding the Clinton Administration’s use of Wake Island an a detention location for asylum seekers. Claimed by the United States as a territory since 1899, Wake Island is a 5 square mile coral atoll in the Pacific Ocean administered by the United States Air Force. It is also claimed by the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The records in this collection consist of National Security Council (NSC) Cables regarding the detention of migrants on the island, as well as NSC Email correspondence regarding funding for migrant processing and the legal authorities involved interdiction on the high seas.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2022-0596-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related material. This collection contains records regarding the Clinton Administration’s use of Wake Island as a detention location for asylum seekers. Wake Island is a 5 square mile coral atoll in the western Pacific Ocean. The United States has claimed it as a territory since 1899, and it is currently administered by the United States Air Force. It is also claimed by the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Historically, the United States has used Wake Island as Pacific fueling stop and emergency landing area. It has also been a missile launch and test site. The Clinton Administration, however, gave the island a new purpose as a migrant processing center. On July 3, 1995, the United State Coast Guard interdicted the Jung Sheng Number 8, a 160 foot long vessel carrying 147 passengers and 12 crew members near Hawaii. The conditions on board, particularly for the passengers, were inhumane and the Coast Guard took possession of the ship and transported those on board to Wake Island. The U. S. Government formed a Joint Task Force (JTF) of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air

Force in the Pacific Command to house and process the migrants on the island, and to eventually repatriate them. The JTF completed its mission between July 21 and August 10, 1995. The Administration did at times consider Wake Island for future migrant processing efforts, but often discarded it as an option due to its limited size and the expense associated setting up housing there. The records processed in response to this FOIA include National Security Council (NSC) cables and emails. The cables primarily consist of State Department and military communications regarding the Jung Sheng migrants on Wake Island, including copies of JTF orders, press guidance, and legal discussions. The NSC Emails contain updates on the Jung Sheng migrants and discussions regarding funding for migrant processing. These include an August 1995 discussions with members of Congress and drafts of a memo for Sandy Berger regarding these issues. There is also some discussion from late 1996 onwards regarding the legal authorities involved in interdiction on the high seas. Many of the records related to this FOIA case are closed for national security reasons.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in this collection area—Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management Systems.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2022. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2023-02-22

Container List

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2022-0596-F:
Box 1
Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System (continued)
NSC Cables
Jan 1993-Dec 1994 [OA/ID 505000]
[Wake Island…]
[02/06/1993]
Jan 1995-Dec 1996 [OA/ID 510000]
[Wake Island…]
[07/22/1995 – 11/12/1996]

NSC Email
MSMail-Record (Mar 94-Sept 97) [OA/ID 590000]
[Wake Island…]
[07/26/1995-02/27/1999]
Exchange-Record (Sept 97-Jan 01) [OA/ID 620000]
[Wake Island…]
[09/09/1998 – 04/04/1999]
Exchange-Non-Record (Mar 97-Jan 01) [OA/ID 630000]
[Wake Island…]
[09/11/1998 – 08/24/1999]