Extent

16 folders, 1,590 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records related to Viktor Bout (or Butt). The records include cables, email, and other documents related to notifications of upcoming NSC meetings regarding Bout and mention of a New York Times article about the suspected arms smuggler. In addition, there is material related to the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Curbing Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The majority of this FOIA case is currently withheld under PRA and FOIA restrictions.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2006-0684-F are a selective, not necessarily all inclusive, body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. In the last years the of the Clinton Administration, several directorates from the National Security Council (which included African Affairs under Gayle Smith) attempted to build a case against Viktor Bout (or Butt), a high profile air cargo supplier and suspected international arms smuggler. The White House Staff and Office Files contain correspondence, emails, newspaper articles and faxes. Nearly all of this material deals with the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Curbing Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons. Endorsed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Group sent letters to President Clinton and National Security Advisor Samuel Berger trying to enlist their help, in what amounted to, a truly noble endeavor. Berger referred them to a specialist on the NSC and said he hoped they would meet with success in such a grand gesture. In other words, the records opened here would be of little value to the researcher. FOIA request 2006-0684-F also consists of electronic records in the form of cables and emails. It should be noted that because of sensitivities associated with Bout and arms trafficking the majority of this FOIA request is closed in full. The few documents

that are open are notifications of upcoming NSC meetings regarding Viktor Bout and the mention of a New York Times article about the arms smuggler.

Biographical Note

The so called "Merchant of Death," Viktor Bout made his money, at least initially, selling weapons in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola. Later on, his markets included Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Colombia. According to a recent magazine article, Bout escaped capture for so long because he supplied useful information to among others, the Americans, in exchange for protection. But all of this ended when Bout was apprehended in Bangkok, Thailand in March 2008. His arrest came about as the result of an undercover DEA operation. In a press release the United States government said it planned to extradite Bout from Thailand. However, on August 11, 2009, Thai Court ruled in favor of Viktor Bout, denying the U.S. its request for extradition based on the lack of legal basis and political motivation behind the case. The United States demanded his extradition, which was eventually mandated by the Thai High Court in August 2010.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that were responsive to this FOIA request were found in two collection areas—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files and 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 USC 2201) and the Freedom of

Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 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 (Title 17, USC 101) 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).

Subject Headings

Bout, Viktor

Topical Subjects

Illegal arms transfers

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2009. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2011-12-22

Container List

Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
Box 1
National Security Council
African Affairs
Smith, Gayle et al
Africa – Arms [1] [OA/ID 2853]
Africa – Arms [2] [OA/ID 2853]
Byrne – Victor Butt [OA/ID 3061]
Victor Butt [1] [OA/ID 3514]
Victor Butt [2] [OA/ID 3514]
Victor Butt [3] [OA/ID 3514]
Victor Butt [4] [OA/ID 3514]
Box2
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management Systems
NSC Cables
Jan 1997-Dec 1998
[Butt and SmithG…]
[12/02/1998-12/11/1998] [OA/ID 520000]
Jan 1999-Dec 2000
[Butt and SmithG…]
[01/22/1999-01/06/2000] [OA/ID 530000]
NSC Emails
Exchange-Record (Sept 97-Jan 01)
[Butt and Smith…]
[06/19/2000-08/30/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
[08/31/2000-09/29/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
[10/02/2000-10/31/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
[11/01/2000-11/20/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
[11/21/2000-12/27/2000] [OA/ID 620000]
[01/10/2001-01/13/2001] [OA/ID 620000]
Exchange-Non-Record (Mar 97-Jan 01)
[Butt and Smith…]

[01/11/1999-07/06/2000] [OA/ID 630000]

Box 3

[07/07/2000-07/13/2000] [OA/ID 630000]
[07/17/2000-08/14/2000] [OA/ID 630000]
[08/22/2000-09/22/2000] [OA/ID 630000]
[09/24/2000-10/18/2000] [OA/ID 630000]
[10/24/2000-10/27/2000] [OA/ID 630000]
[10/30/2000-12/05/2000] [OA/ID 630000]
[12/06/2000-01/19/2001] [OA/ID 630000]