

*** Document 46 of 25 for FBIS ***

DOCN 000502387

PDTG P 181335Z SEP 95

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RUDKVN/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS

RUEABND/DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMIN HQ WASHINGTON DC//OIS//

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA

RUEHVK/AMEMBASSY MINSK

RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW

RUERWAA/DIR OPERATIONS GROUP CARISLE BKS PA

RUESME/FBIS MOSCOW RS

RUEFBJA/CDR USASETAF VICENZA IT//AESE-CMO//

RUEBABA/CG III MEF//G-2//

RUWTAEA/NAIC WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OH//TAI//

RXDBHW/CINCNORTHWEST//UAJ//

RXFNDA/COMNORTH//JOINTINT//

RXFPSH/SHAPE BE//PIO//

ACCT FBWS-EWDK

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CLAS UNCLAS 3I/MMU

WARN WARNING: ATTN WSPPOPO

SERI SERIAL: WS1809133595

PASS PASS: ATTN WIRE SELECT

COUN COUNTRY: BELARUS

SUBJ SUBJ: TAKE 1 OF 2 -- DETAILS OF INQUIRY INTO U.S. BALLOON DOWNING

REF REF: MM1509180795 AND ADD MOSCOW KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA RUSSIAN 16
SEP -- MORE ON FINDINGS ON BALLOON SHOOTDOWN

SOUR SOURCE: MINSK ZVYAZDA IN BELARUSIAN 16 SEP 95 PP 1,3

TEXT TEXT:

(((REPORT BY SYARHEY KHRYPACH: "THE BELARUSIANS, SWISS, AND
POLES ARE 'BLAMED' FOR THE DEATH OF U.S. BALLOONISTS. WHERE IS THE
TRUTH?" -- FIRST PARAGRAPH PUBLISHED IN BOLDFACE; PASSAGE WITHIN
SLANTLINES PUBLISHED IN ITALICS)))

((FBIS TRANSLATED TEXT)) A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS AND VERSIONS
IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDED THE UNIQUE TRAGEDY OF THE U.S. BALLOON WHICH
WAS DOWNED OVER THE COUNTRY'S TERRITORY. SO WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED
IN BYAROWZAWSKI RAYON, BREST OBLAST? WAS IT A WAFT OF A NEW "COLD
WAR," WHICH WOULD BE VERY ILLOGICAL AND SENSELESS IN THE CURRENT
POLITICAL SITUATION? OR WAS IT ABSURDITY THAT CLAIMED THE LIVES OF
TWO PEOPLE? TO PUT IT BRIEFLY, BELARUS HAS FOUND ITSELF FACING A
LARGE INTERNATIONAL SCANDAL: ON THE ONE SIDE OF THE BARRICADE THERE
IS A SMALL, INDEPENDENT, AND NEUTRAL STATE WHICH IS JUST GAINING
PRESTIGE AND RENOWN IN THE WORLD, AND ON THE OTHER SIDE IS THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, A STATE POWERFUL IN ALL RESPECTS.

TO REMOVE ALL DOUBTS AND INSINUATIONS, AS WELL AS TO ISSUE AN
OFFICIAL STATEMENT FOR THE FOREIGN PRESS, THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE
COMMISSION FOR INVESTIGATING THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT, WHICH WAS SET UP
AT THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL INSTRUCTION, PROVIDED DETAILS OF THEIR
INVESTIGATION ON 14 SEPTEMBER. THEY WERE REPORTED BY YURY SIVAKOW,

Approved for Release

2/2010

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COMMISSION DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF OF THE BELARUSIAN SECURITY COUNCIL OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENT, FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VALERY TSAPKALA, AND STATE AVIATION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RYHOR FYODARAW.

SO, ON 12 SEPTEMBER AT 0914, THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSE DETECTED A BALLOON IN BELARUSIAN AIRSPACE. THE SERVICEMEN WERE SURPRISED BY THE BALLOON'S UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE, SINCE THEY HAD NO INFORMATION ABOUT IT. THE CENTRAL COMMAND POST EXAMINED ALL APPLICATIONS ((FOR FLIGHT PERMITS)). AS A RESULT OF THE EXAMINATION, THEY CONCLUDED THAT THIS FLYING OBJECT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IN THAT PLACE AT THAT TIME, SINCE THERE WAS NO APPLICATION CONCERNING IT. FOLLOWING THIS, MAJOR GENERAL VALERY KASTENKA, COMMANDER OF THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH NORMATIVE ACTS, DECIDED TO ANNOUNCE THE HIGHEST ALERT.

AT 1136 A TAKE-OFF ORDER WAS SENT TO PRUZHANY AIRFIELD. A MI-24 COMBAT HELICOPTER TOOK OFF WITH THE MISSION TO CLARIFY ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION ABOUT THE AIRCRAFT AND TO IDENTIFY IT. IN PARTICULAR, THE CREW WAS INSTRUCTED NOT TO APPROACH THE OBJECT CLOSER THAN 50 METERS.

* AFTER A PERIOD OF TIME, THE CHOPPER APPROACHED THE "UFO" AT 100 METERS. THIS TOOK PLACE 4 KILOMETERS AWAY FROM ANOTHER AIRBASE -- ASOWTSY. THE HELICOPTER CREW REPORTED THE FOLLOWING:

/"WE CAN SEE A SMALL BALLOON OF A 3- OR 4-METER DIAMETER. AN ATTACHMENT RESEMBLING A CLOSED FREIGHT CONTAINER HANGS ON THE ROPE. THE ENTIRE CONSTRUCTION WEIGHS APPROXIMATELY 1 TONNE. THERE ARE NO IDENTIFICATION SIGNS. NOBODY IS ANSWERING INQUIRIES ON THE 121.5 MHZ INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY FREQUENCY. THE OBJECT IS MOVING AT AN ALTITUDE OF 2,300 METERS IN A NORTH-EASTERLY DIRECTION OVER A MILITARY AIRFIELD AND NEAR A DEPLOYMENT SITE OF STRATEGIC MISSILE TROOP UNITS."/

THE MI-24 FIRED WARNING SHOTS FROM 600 METERS: THERE WAS NO REACTION. FOLLOWING THIS, THE AIR DEFENSE COMMANDER HIMSELF GAVE THE ORDER TO DESTROY THE BALLOON. THE HELICOPTER MANEUVERED, MADE A 180-DEGREE TURN, AND AT 1154 -- THREE MINUTES AFTER FIRING THE FIRST ROUND -- THE YOUNG CAPTAIN AGAIN PULLED THE TRIGGER OF THE HEAVY MACHINE GUN. SOME 20 BULLETS PIERCED THE BALLOON, AND THE GONDOLA PLUNGED FROM 2,300 METERS AND CRASHED 8 KILOMETERS EAST OF BYAROZA, IN A FOREST NEAR THE VILLAGE OF KRUHLAYE.

SOON AFTER THIS, ANOTHER TWO BALLOONS WERE DETECTED. THEY WERE ALSO WARNED BY A HELICOPTER, BUT IT DID NOT COME TO SHOOTING, SINCE THEIR CREWS RESPONDED TO RADIO INQUIRIES AND IDENTIFIED THEIR NATIONALITY BY DISPLAYING U.S. FLAGS. THE FIRST BALLOON LANDED IN THE VICINITY OF ZELVA AT 1500, AND THE SECOND LANDED NEAR LUNINETS AT 1815, AND SERVICEMEN FROM DAWYD-HARADOK ACCOMMODATED THE CREW IN THEIR BARRACKS.

(MORE) 16 SEP [REDACTED] 11809.026 18/1334Z SEP

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