

RELEASE IN PART
B1,1.4(D),B6

From: Campbell, Kurt M <CampbellKM@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 1:03 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Amelia Earhart Project

Madame Secretary -- thanks for the time today -- tough following Clooney. Up late dealing with

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B1

Just wanted to keep you up to speed on Earhart email from Ballard and my meeting Friday with Air and Space guy.

Will let you know how it goes. Best Kurt

From: Campbell, Kurt M
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 12:24 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J; Reines, Philippe I; Stout, Jennifer P; Patel, Nirav S; Loi, James L
Subject: Fw: Amelia Earhart Project

Cheryl -- thanks for taking the time to meet with me today at State. I will be meeting with the General from the Air and Space Museum in the morning. We will be sure to be well prepared.

As I told you, Oceanographer Robert Ballard (of Titanic fame) has been serving as an advisor to the State Department as part of our extensive vetting and historical research process that has been underway for months. He will be with us next Tuesday for the event and has agreed to strongly endorse the effort. The attached email speaks for itself. He has agreed to join the meeting by phone and we will also link in two other experts as well. We will see how it goes. Dr. Ballard reported to me this evening that there is now a bidding war underway between National Geographic and Discovery for the exclusive rights to this expedition.

We have one sensitivity here completely unrelated to State for which I would appreciate your guidance. The Tighar group has taken pains to negotiate a very gracious agreement with the Kiribati government that would allow the wreckage of Earhart's plane to be exhibited at the Air and Space Museum if found. The expedition will go whether we are involved or not, but it will be very awkward if AASM is dismissive of the search that finds the plane (!) Perhaps our meeting Friday can help allay these concerns. Thanks for the chance and will report to you what we learn.

Also on the point of the photo analysis that Ballard refers to -- we now have asked five different technical analysts with decades of experience to examine the enlarged grainy blowup of the strut. All have indicated that there is somewhere between a clear possibility and probability that this is indeed a Lockheed Electra strut.

Also Cheryl Dr. Ballard indicated that he is very comfortable should you decide to share his email (and mine) with Evelyn who I remember very fondly from my time in the Clinton administration.

Best Kurt

From: Robert Ballard [mailto:
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 09:57 PM
To: Campbell, Kurt M
Subject: Amelia Earhart Project

B6

Classified by DAS, A/GIS, DoS on 10/30/2015 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~ Reason: 1.4(D) ~ Declassify on: 03/15/2027

Dear Secretary Campbell,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be involved in this potentially history search effort.

As you know, I have been involved in a number of search efforts over my 52-year career as an oceanographer including the discovery of the RMS TITANIC, the German battleship BISMARCK, the USS YORKTOWN lost during the Battle of Midway, President John F. Kennedy's PT-109, and numerous warships lost during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Clearly, finding the wreckage of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Electra ranks near the top of the list, if not at the very top, of historic finds yet to be made.

Over the years, I have spent a considerable amount of time researching the facts surrounding her disappearance as well as watched various groups attempt to locate her downed Electra both at sea and ashore.

I am well aware of the work done by Eric Gillespie and his group and find them to be dedicated individuals who have approached their work in a truly scientific manner. I must say, I admire their "dogged" approach and determination. Having spent some time on isolated atolls in the Pacific myself, I know working in such a location can be a trying and exhausting experience that will test your determination to continue in pursue of your quest year after year.

I have reviewed the evidence he and his team have collected over the years and find it a quite compelling hypothesis that she in fact landed on the outer reef of Gardner Island instead of ditching at sea. Clearly, given the choice of landing on the shallow water reef in protected waters of an island is much preferable to landing in the open ocean.

The eye witness accounts he has documented from natives who moved to the island a few years after her disappearance and the artifacts his team has collected are impossible to ignore.

I have also reviewed the recently rediscovered image taken by Eric Bevington during his photographic survey of Gardner Island in 1937 just months after her disappearance and although I am not an expert in photo-analysis there is little doubt that a vertical strut can be clearly seen projecting out of the water to the north of the SS NORWICH CITY which ran around on Gardner Island November 29, 1929.

The fact that you have had this photograph analyzed by imaging experts who believe it is the landing gear of a Lockheed Electra is yet another fact that can not be ignored.

I have recently been in contact with engineers at Pratt & Whitney that built the two R-85 Wasp Junior SB Radial engines on her plane. These engines each weighed 865 pounds. 113-165 pounds of which consist of aluminum parts but 700-750 pounds consist of steel.

If the vertical strut seen in Eric Bevington's 1937 photograph is in fact the Electra's landing gear then it must be attached to one of these 865 pound engines which even if it is covered by subsequent coral growth, which is more than likely the case, will be relatively easy to locate based upon its strong magnetic signature in a surrounding area of coral limestone made of calcium carbonate that lacks any magnetic signature. A simple proton magnetometer should do the trick.

Finally, I am an Explorer-in-Residence for the National Geographic Society and I have spoken with their senior management about this recent evidence and they and I am sure others are willing to finance an expedition to Gardner Island to verify whether or not the remains of Amelia Earhart Electra are in fact at this location without costing the Federal Government anything.

Given this new evidence and the minor costs involved in verifying the presence of the aircraft remains, I find it well worthwhile mounting an expedition to Gardner Island as soon as possible and I look forward to helping in away possible.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert D. Ballard

Professor of Oceanography, Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island and Director of the Center of Ocean Exploration.