

UNCLASSIFIED

516b

RELEASED IN FULL

T O M C R U I S E

May 31, 2003

Richard Lee Armitage
Deputy Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

A
JUN 2003
Dep Sec
Has Seen

Pfarrer Thomas Gandow
Heimat 27
14165 Berlin
Fon 030 / 815 70 40
Fax 030 / 845 09 640
pfarrer.gandow@berlin.de
www.dialogzentrum.de

Dear Mr. Armitage:

I would like to start by thanking you for the State Department's annual human rights and religious freedom reports, which do an indispensable job of highlighting human rights abuses around the world.

I understand from Helen Ellis in your office that unfortunately our schedules will not coincide while I am in Washington in mid June. Given current world circumstances and particularly with the President and Secretary Powell being abroad, I can appreciate the incredible pressures that must exist on your time and availability.

As you may already know, for some time I have been concerned about human rights and religious freedom in Europe. Members of my Church, including American artists, continue to be discriminated against, especially in Germany, France and Belgium. I have taken it upon myself to become somewhat educated in these matters and to stay abreast of what continues to occur.

Therefore, I can fully appreciate your recommendation of meeting with Ambassador Hanford and while I am sure my speaking with him would be helpful, I am frankly most interested in speaking with you. I am familiar with your history and your duties as the Deputy Secretary and I am certain that I can, in a brief amount of time, communicate to you what is on my mind. I feel that we might do well to work together on this matter.

You must know from your Ambassadors that last year I did a series of visits to the U.S. Embassies in Germany, France and Spain and spoke to each Ambassador about the problems of religious intolerance in those countries. I was very grateful for the assistance given by Ambassador Argyros in Madrid, and I am happy to say that the situation I discussed with him is now fully resolved.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK H PEREZ
DATE/CASE ID: 05 APR 2006 200305088

UNCLASSIFIED

Pfarrer Thomas Ga.
Heimat 27
14165 Berlin
Fon 030 / 815 70 40
pfarrer.gandow@berlin.de
www.dialogzentrum.de

UNCLASSIFIED

T O M C R U I S E

Ambassador Coats and his staff have continued to be very helpful, and I have also appreciated the efforts of the U.S. Embassy staff in Paris.

I do keep a close watch on the situations in these countries and within the last month, I learned of attempts to sabotage the performances of two American artists solely because they are members of the Church of Scientology. I would be happy to give you the details of these situations, but incidents such as these in Germany and France have been recorded in the State Departments Human Rights reports for nearly a decade.

Scientology is fully recognized as a tax-exempt, bona fide religion in the United States, yet these actions by German officials are unfortunately representative of the intolerance that members of my religion and other minority religions face in Germany.

Religious freedom is very important to me as it is to every true American. I know you share these values, and I appreciate the invaluable assistance the State Department has given members of my Church in protecting their rights, especially in Europe.

Lastly, I am scheduled to travel to Europe in January to promote my next film and am planning on again meeting with our Ambassadors in France, Germany and possibly Belgium to work with them on pressing these nations for more dialogue and action to resolve these matters.

However, despite the circumstances of my visits to Europe, this situation is by no means a publicity activity for me. This is a matter that is both important and personal, and that is why I am looking to my government's assistance in the hopes of finding a resolution to what has becoming a very saddening and unnecessary human rights situation.

As you already know, I expect to be in Washington, D.C., around June 11-13. I know you are not available on those dates but I am interested to know when else you would be available.

I am also endeavoring to meet with Vice President Cheney on this matter while I am in Washington. Should you or your office need to reach me, I can be contacted through my associate Tom Davis at [REDACTED] or through my assistant, Michael Doven, at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

