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Envoy's demotion fought by victims

The demotion of W. Beverly Carter Jr., ambassador to Tanzania, has elicited vows of an unrelenting counterattack from the Stanford students he helped rescue from Zairean rebels.

"We plan to go to Washington and do what we can to persuade anyone we can that the ambassador did an incredible job against terrible odds," said Stephen Smith, the last student to be released.

Carter, 54, was demoted by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger yesterday, reassigned to the U.S. Information Agency at a reduction in status and pay. He had reportedly been scheduled to become ambassador to Denmark.

In Washington, D.C., columnist Carl T. Rowan called Kissinger's action "rank hypocrisy."

"For although Kissinger maintains the pretense of never dealing with kidnapers and terrorists, authorities here have told me that the money used to ransom two of the four students kidnaped in Tanzania . . . was transported from London to Dar es Salaam in a diplomatic pouch carried by a U.S. courier," Rowan said.

Prior to his demotion, Carter was praised by the State Department for his actions in the affair. Three Stanford students and a Dutch woman were kidnaped May 19 from an animal research station in Tanzania by guerrillas from the Popular Revolutionary Party of neighboring Zaire.

Kissinger's action against Carter was believed to have stemmed from the ambassador's involvement in the payment of a reported \$400,000 ransom to the rebels.

State Department policy forbids negotiating with terrorists or paying ransom. In this case, ransom money was reportedly raised by the students' parents and friends.

Smith, his parents and parents of the other students have reacted with outrage to the treatment Carter has received.

"Firing the ambassador is an outrage," said Robert Smuts, whose daughter Barbara had been the first student to be released.

"The ambassador had no choice, if he cared at all about those kids," said Smuts from his home in Ann Arbor, Mich.

"If he had not allowed the

negotiations to be established, three young people would have been killed," he said.

Mrs. Joseph Smith, whose son Stephen, 22, spent 67 days in captivity, felt Kissinger's attitude reflected what she called the general callousness of the U.S. State Department.

Columnist Rowan said sources within the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs sent Carter a telegram of commendation and congratulations on July 25 after Stephen Smith was released.

"However, before Carter finished smiling over this telegram he got another from Laurence Eagleburger, Deputy Undersecretary of State for Management and Kissinger's long time 'action man,' calling Carter home for 'consultations.'

"Carter came home expecting to be told officially that he was going to Denmark (the Danish press already had run many reports that this black diplomat was on the way)."

"Perhaps if they had been his own children, he might have acted differently," she said of Kissinger.

Her son said he hoped Kissinger would change his mind, once he knew all the circumstances.

"The ambassador worked day and night against incredible odds and I might not be here today, if it had not been for him," he said. None of the parents involved would confirm or deny reports that ransom was paid. They had said earlier that a condition of release was that no details would be disclosed.

Any action by the students will probably await the return Jane Hunter of Atherton, who is still being treated at the London Center for Tropical Diseases.

Her father, Norman Hunter, restaurant chain owner, was out of town and unavailable for comment, but Smith said all the families were united in support of Carter.

Late yesterday, a spokesman for the State Department categorically denied that Carter had been fired or reprimanded by Kissinger.

But spokesman Robert Funneth refused to comment on the report that Carter would be reassigned to the U.S. Information Agency at a lower salary.