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Press Release

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Statement by U.S. Ambassador to France Charles Rivkin
On the Request of the Hopi Nation for a Delay in a Planned Auction of
Sacred Hopi Cultural Objects

Representatives of the Hopi Nation recently contacted the U.S. Embassy in Paris to ask for our assistance in requesting the delay of a proposed sale of Hopi sacred objects planned for April 12 at the auction house of Néret-Minet, Tessier and Sarrou in Paris.

Members of the Hopi Tribe identified some of the objects being advertised in the planned sale as sacred “Katsinam,” and are requesting a delay in order to better identify and determine the provenance of the objects. The Tribe would also like to determine whether they may have a claim to recover the items under the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property or other laws.

Embassy representatives have relayed the Hopi request for a delay of the sale to our partners in the French Government, and to the auction house. I am grateful for the efforts by our counterparts in the French Government to make the position of the Hopi Nation known.

I also call upon the private parties in this matter to consider the importance of these sacred objects to the Hopi Nation, and to reconsider the moral implications of the decision to move forward with the planned sale tomorrow, when a delay would simply allow the creators of these sacred objects the chance to determine their possible rights.
