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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6104  
INFO RUFHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0585  
RUEHCR/AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE 0899  
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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PREL, FR, NS  
SUBJECT: FRENCH CONTINGENCY PLANNING ON SURINAME

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. DURING A DECEMBER 4 CALL TO DISCUSS THE SURINAMESE SITUATION (SEPTEL), FRENCH CHARGE LE PAUDERT SAID THAT THE MILITARY STAND-OFF THAT HE EXPECTED COULD BE A DANGEROUS TIME IN PARAMARIBO. THERE WOULD BE FOOD SHORTAGES, UTILITIES BREAKDOWNS AND POSSIBLY SOME VIOLENCE. HE HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROACHED BY SOME OF THE APPROXIMATELY 300 FRENCH NATIONALS, MOSTLY FROM GUYANA AND THE ANTILLES, ABOUT THEIR OWN SAFETY, AND HE HAD THEREFORE GIVEN SOME THOUGHT TO THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR AN EVACUATION. HE HAD CONCLUDED THAT IN A WORST-CASE SCENARIO HE WOULD HAVE TO ASK FOR NAVAL VESSELS FROM FRENCH GUYANA PLUS A LANDING FORCE OF SUFFICIENT SIZE TO PROTECT ASSEMBLY POINTS AND KEEP OPEN ACCESS TO THE SHIPS. IN RESPONSE TO LE PAUDERT'S REQUEST, THE AMBASSADOR OUTLINED OUR OWN PLANNING AND OFFERED TO GO INTO MORE DETAIL, IF CIRCUMSTANCES WORSENE.
3. THE AMBASSADOR RECOMMENDS TO THE DEPARTMENT, AS HE DID TO LE PAUDERT, THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF EVACUATION COOPERATION BE DISCUSSED WITH THE FRENCH AT THE GOVERNMENT LEVEL.
4. COMMENT: IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT WHILE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES OBLIGE ALL OF US TO CONSIDER THE HYPOTHESIS OF A MILITARY-ASSISTED EVACUATION, THAT WOULD BE THE LAST AND WORST OF THE VARIOUS POSSIBLE EVENTUALITIES. EVEN ASSUMING THAT THE SITUATION IN TOWN WILL DETERIORATE, THE MOST LIKELY REASON FOR PEOPLE TO LEAVE WOULD BE A DETERIORATION IN DAILY LIFE RESULTING FROM FOOD SHORTAGES AND UTILITIES DISRUPTIONS PLUS A FEELING OF INSECURITY. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AN "EVACUATION" WOULD CONSIST OF PHASED, VOLUNTARY AND QUIET DEPARTURES VIA SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. WE SHOULD TAKE CARE THAT THE NEED FOR PLANNING NOT TAKE ON A MOMENTUM THAT ITSELF BECOMES A DETERMINANT OF EVENTS. BARBOUR  
END OF MESSAGE

~~SECRET~~