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RELEASE IN FULL

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00
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AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0524

E.O. 12065: GDS 03/18/88 (LA ROCHE, RICHARD R.) OR-M
TAGS: PINS PINT NS
SUBJECT: BRIEFING BY MILITARY AUTHORITY

REF: A) PARAMARIBO 0504 B) BEHREND-LAROCHE TELCON MARCH 18

1. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. NATIONAL ARMY COMMANDER BOUTERSE ACCOMPANIED BY BATTALION
COMMANDER FERNANDES AND ACTING PRESIDENT RAMDAT-MISIER GAVE
AN HOUR-LONG BRIEFING FOR ASSEMBLED HEADS OF MISSION AT THE
PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 18. THE
ABSENCE OF GARRISON COMMANDER HORB, THE THIRD MEMBER OF
THE MILITARY AUTHORITY, WENT UNEXPLAINED. BOUTERSE SAID
THAT ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER NAARENDORP HAD BEEN
INVITED BUT HAD BEEN PREVENTED FROM ATTENDING BY ILLNESS.
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BOUTERSE SPOKE IN DUTCH USING PRESIDENT SPOKESMAN PETZOLDT
TO INTERPRET INTO ENGLISH.

3. BOUTERSE, WHO DID VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE TALKING, SAID
HIS PURPOSE WAS TO REVIEW EVENTS OF PAST WEEK AND TAKE
QUESTIONS MISSION REPRESENTATIVES MIGHT HAVE. HE ASSURED
ALL PRESENT THAT THE MILITARY AUTHORITY HAD FULL CONTROL
ONCE MORE AND THAT ALL EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO "NORMALIZE"
THE SITUATION. WE WOULD NOTE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ABSENCE OF
ANY ABNORMAL MILITARY PRESENCE ON PARAMARIBO'S STREETS.

**REVIEW AUTHORITY: Leonard Kusnitz, Senior
Reviewer**

4. FROM INFORMATION DEVELOPED DURING THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COUP ATTEMPT, BOUTERSE SAID THERE WERE BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS TO THE COUP. CONSPIRATORS HAD CONSIDERED THREE POSSIBLE PLANS FOR ASSASSINATION OF THE MILITARY AUTHORITY: BY INVITING THEM TO A RELIGIOUS GATHERING IN A TEMPLE; BY KIDNAPPING THEM FIRST DURING THE GATHERING AT THE PALACE ON THE HINDU FESTIVAL DAY OF HOLI PHAGWA (MARCH 10); AND BY INVITING THEM TO A DINNER AT THE HOME OF ONE OF THE INITIATORS. THE MILITARY ACTION, WHICH TOOK PLACE EARLY ON THE FOLLOWING DAY WAS, THEREFORE, JUST ONE ELEMENT OF A TOTAL PLAN.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, BOUTERSE TOLD THE GROUP THAT IN SPITE OF THE PREDOMINANCE OF HINDUSTANIS AMONG THOSE THUS FAR IMPLICATED IN THE COUP ATTEMPT, THE MILITARY AUTHORITY CONSIDERED IT TO BE POLITICALLY AND NOT RACIALLY MOTIVATED. OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL MILITARY MEN INVOLVED, SGT. HAWKER HAD BEEN SHOT "ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF A MILITARY COURT IN THE FIELD AND LT. RAMBOCUS WOULD SHORTLY BE TRIED BY A SIMILAR MILITARY COURT." PRESSED ON RAMBOCUS, BOUTERSE OFFERED AS BACKGROUND THAT HE HAD ALREADY BEEN IMPLICATED IN A PRIOR COUP ATTEMPT (AGAINST FORMER ARRON GOVERNMENT), BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD BEEN GIVEN A CHANGE TO GO ABROAD. WHEN HE RETURNED TO SURINAME, HE WAS WELCOMED BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY. THE GOS HAD EVEN OFFERED RAMBOCUS A CHANGE TO JOIN ITS FOREIGN SERVICE. RAMBOCUS WOULD NOW FACE TRIAL FOR WHAT BOUTERSE SEEMED TO IMPLY WERE HIS MISDEEDS AGGRAVATED BY INGRATITUDE.

6. CHARGE ASKED ABOUT NATURE OF MILITARY COURTS AND BOUTERSE ASSISTED BY RAMDAT-MISIER SAID A MILITARY COURT "IN THE FIELD" COULD APPROPRIATELY TRY BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFENDERS. THE COURTS COULD ALSO REFER CASES TO THE REGULAR MILITARY COURT. IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, SAID BOUTERSE, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT "EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES" REQUIRED THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL DECREES TO DEAL WITH THOSE INVOLVED IN THE COUP PLOT. THE DECREES WOULD BE PUBLISHED TODAY OR TOMORROW.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO FACTUAL INFORMATION ON CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING HAWKER'S DEATH, LEGAL BASIS FOR WHAT HAPPENED SEEMS TO US A FABRICATION WHICH BOUTERSE IS USING TO COVER WHAT WAS PROBABLY A SUMMARY EXECUTION AND A CLEAR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION. AMBASSADOR HOEKMAN (SEE SEPTTEL ON CONVERSATION WITH HOEKMAN) IS CONVINCED THAT BOUTERSE SIMPLY ACCEPTED BAD ADVICE AND IS NOW BOUND TO PERPETRATE A LIE. BOUTERSE'S LEAD INTO THE RAMBOCUS STORY SEEMED TO HAVE AS A POINT PERSUADING THE DIPLOMATS THAT RAMBOCUS WAS AN ENEMY TO THE STATE WHO DESERVED NO FURTHER CHANCES TO MAKE MISCHIEF. HOEKMAN LEARNED FROM BOUTERSE

JUST AFTER THE BRIEFING THAT RAMBOCUS WOULD BE TRIED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, PROBABLY BY FRIDAY.

8. IN RESPONSE TO A CLOSING QUESTION, BOUTERSE SAID A NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INSTALLED BY MARCH 26. ALMOST ALL MINISTERS HAD BEEN CHOSEN BUT THREE "CANDIDATES" REMAINED UNDER CONSIDERATION.
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