



Department of State

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ADS-00 DODE-00 SS-15 INRE-00 INR-10
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 H-01 PM-05 TRSE-00
OPIC-07 DCT-02 SP-02 OMB-01 EB-08 COME-00 L-03
PA-01 ICAE-00 SY-05 SYE-00 AID-07 PC-01 ANAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6092
INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CURACAO PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE PRIORITY
HQ USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HGTS PANAMA PRIORITY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

OCT 17 1988

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TS authority to:
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 DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C, OADR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0408

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/4/86 (OSTRANDER, NANCY) OR-M
TAGS: PINT NS
SUBJECT: COUP AFTERMATH: SOME NEW DEVELOPMENTS, SIDELIGHTS

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. THIS MORNING'S PAPERS GIVE MUCH SPACE TO MEETING YESTERDAY (3/3) BETWEEN SURINAMESE PRESIDENT FERRIER AND MEMBERS OF THE "NATIONAL MILITARY COUNCIL" (NMR), BUT LITTLE DETAIL OTHER THAN PUBLICATION OF A FIVE-POINT "COMMUNIQUE" ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT. FULL TEXT BEING FORWARDED SEPTEL. WHILE COMMUNIQUE ITSELF DOES NOT SAY MUCH, AND WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO GET READOUT FROM OTHER SOURCES, SIGNIFICANTLY IT SPEAKS
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OF A GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN A "CITIZENS COUNCIL," DOES QUOTE THE

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MILITARY LEADERS AS CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT TO "REMAIN WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION" AND AIM ALL HIS ACTIVITIES AT "THE INTERESTS AND THE WELFARE OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF SURINAME." KEY POINTS OF AGREEMENT, ACCORDING TO COMMUNIQUE, ARE (A) CALL FOR APPOINTMENT OF A NEW GOVERNMENT "WITHIN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME... TO CARRY OUT THE POWERS ENTRUSTED TO IT BY THE CONSTITUTION," AND (B) OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCING

POSTPONEMENT OF THE MARCH 27 GENERAL ELECTIONS, WITH DATE FOR NEW ELECTIONS TO BE SET "IN THE FUTURE." COMMUNIQUE ALSO SPEAKS OF CONSIDERING "HOW THE CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE CHANGED," BUT EMPHASIZES THAT ANY CHANGES WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE SURINAMESE PEOPLE.

3. THUS OUR INITIAL REACTION, SUBJECT TO FURTHER CHECKING OUT, IS THAT THE PRESIDENT MAY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN SELLING HIS FORMULA FOR CONSTITUTIONALITY TO THE NMC. IF SO, THIS WOULD SEEM A HIGHLY POSITIVE INDICATOR FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, AND ALSO IMPLY THAT FERRIER IS BEGINNING TO ESTABLISH A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MILITARY WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM.

4. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS: BANKERS AND BUSINESSMEN HERE WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED ALL SEEM TO HAVE A CAUTIONSLY POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST WEEK. WHILE THEY ALL PROFESS A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE AT THE START; WHAT COMES THROUGH IN THE COURSE OF CONVERSATIONS IS A REASONABLY HIGH LEVEL OF APPROVAL (AND SOME ADMIRATION), FOR A GROUP WHICH DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY TO GET THINGS DONE AND NOW PROMISES TO CUT AWAY MUCH OF THE STIFLING BUREAUCRACY WHICH OFTEN MADE IT HARD TO DO BUSINESS HERE, WITH SUCCESS A MATTER OF CRONYISM IN MANY CASES. BANKERS

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REPORT AN INITIAL SURGE OF PANIC WITHDRAWALS WHICH TERMINATED SPONTANEOUSLY WITHIN 24 HOURS; THE PREEXISTING SYSTEM OF EXCHANGE EXPORT CONTROLS REMAINS IN PLACE, WITH NO INDICATION THAT SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL FLIGHT IS IN THE OFFING. BUSINESSMEN ARE AN ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT GROUP HERE; THOUGH MOST STAY FAR BEHIND THE POLITICAL SCENE, THEIR FUNDS AND SUPPORT ARE THE FUEL WHICH DRIVES THE MACHINE. SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION BY THIS GROUP WOULD BODE ILL FOR THE FUTURE OF SURINAME, AND THE FACT THAT MOST APPEAR CAUTIONSLY OPTIMISTIC SEEMS TO US ANOTHER GOOD SIGN.

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5. MILITARY OUTSIDE PARAMRIBO: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE. SMALL (PLATOON-SIZE) DETACHMENTS ARE STATIONED AT NICKERIE AND ALBINA. TOGETHER WITH A FEW SQUAD-SIZE UNITS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE INTERIOR, THESE UNITS PATROL THE RIVERS. WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED THE SITUATION IN NICKERIE AS APPEARING ESSENTIALLY PRE-COUP, DUE TO CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN CIVIL AND MILITARY THERE. IN ALBINA, WE UNDERSTAND, THE POLICE FORMED UP WHEN THE NEWS CAME THROUGH ON THE 25TH, BUT QUIETLY STOOD DOWN AND DISMANTLED ONE OR TWO HASTY BARRICADES AS THE SITUATION BECAME CLEARER, FINALLY PLACING THEMSELVES AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE SMALL ARMY UNIT THERE. A BRITISH ARMY OFFICER (HERE ON A CARTOGRAPHIC MISSION) WHO MADE A SWING THROUGH THE INTERIOR BY LIGHT PLANE LATE LAST WEEK REPORTS THAT MILITARY PATROLS ALONG THE BORDER RIVERS HAVE CEASED, BUT THAT OTHERWISE LIFE APPEARS UNCHANGED. HE REPORTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ELEVEN-MAN DETACHMENT AT COEROENIE IN THE FAR SOUTHWEST KNEW OF THE COUP BUT HAD RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS AND WERE SIMPLY SITTING AROUND, AS BEFORE. IN SUMMARY, IT IS PROBABLY FAIR TO SAY THAT THE MILITARY OUTSIDE PARAMARIBO IS NOT A FACTOR, BUT THAT CIVIL AUTHORITIES THERE HAVE ACCEPTED THE FACT OF THE MILITARY TAKEOVER AND WOULD COOPERATE WITH ANY INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE NMC. EMBOFF PLANS A SWING TO THE EASTERN BORDER THIS WEEKEND TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER AND ALSO CHECK OUT POSSIBLE NEW E AND E ROUTES.

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6. FOR THE RECORD, THE SENIOR HEALTH OFFICIAL HERE TELLS US THE FINAL COUNT WAS SIX DEAD, 29 WOUNDED AS A RESULT OF THE DISTURBANCES ON FEB. 25.

7. FINAL . PRC AMBASSADOR LI CHAO CALLED ON AMBASSADOR TODAY. WHILE POORLY INFORMED ON SOME DETAILS, HE AGREES BASICALLY WITH OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THERE WAS NO IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATION WHATEVER IN THIS COUP, EITHER NATIVE OR FOREIGN. BUT HE FEARS POSSIBILITY OF CUBAN INFLUENCE GROWING, EITHER THROUGH RAVALES OR VOLKSPARTIJ'S LIE PAUW SAM. OSTRANDER

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