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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-12 SS-10 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 H-01 NSC-01 NSAE-00 HA-06 L-03 PM-09  
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P 161921Z JUL 82  
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8864  
INFO AMEMBSSY BRASILIA 0795  
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
USCINCSO QUARRY HGTS PN

**RELEASED IN FULL**

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 1531

E.O. 12065: GDS 07/16/88 (LA ROCHE, RICHARD R.) OR-M  
TAGS: PINT NS  
SUBJ: POSSIBLE JOINT INITIATIVE OF THE NPS-VHP

REF: PARAMARIBO 656

1. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. IN A CONVERSATION JULY 16, DUTCH CHARGE HELDRING TOLD CHARGE THAT LEADERS OF THE TWO LARGEST FORMER POLITICAL PARTIES, THE UNITED HINDU PARTY (VHP) AND THE NATIONAL PARTY OF SURINAME (NPS) HAD NEARLY REACHED AGREEMENT OVER AN INITIATIVE INVOLVING A PUBLIC STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED JOINTLY AND A REQUEST TO THE GOS FOR PERMISSION TO HOLD TWO MASS MEETINGS, ONE EACH FOR MEMBERS OF THE RESPECTIVE PARTIES. THE ACTIONS WERE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS.

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3. ACCORDING TO HELDRING, ALL THE LEADERS OF THE VHP HAD ENDORSED THE INITIATIVE (ITS ORIGIN WAS NOT DISCLOSED) AND ALL BUT THE TITULAR HEAD OF THE NPS, FORMER PRIME MINISTER HENK ARRON, HAD SAID YES FOR THAT PARTY. THE AIM OF THE INITIATIVE WAS TO EMBARRASS THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND TO POINT OUT THE FALSENESS OF THE MILITARY'S CLAIM THAT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS WERE GUARANTEED BY THE DECREES WHICH MADE UP THE SO-CALLED "INTERIM CONSTITUTION." (COMMENT: DECREE A-11 OF MARCH 31, 1982 IS ENTITLED "STATUTE ESTABLISHING THE BASIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE SURINAME PEOPLE." ONE ARTICLE OF

**REVIEW AUTHORITY: Adolph Eisner, Senior Reviewer**

THAT DECREE DECLARES "THERE EXISTS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AND FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY." (SEE REFTEL.)

4. HELDRING UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TWO PARTIES WOULD FIRST ISSUE A JOINT STATEMENT OF POLICY WHICH HE FELT PARTY LEADERS COULD READILY HAVE PUBLISHED IN ONE OR TWO OF SURINAME'S NEWSPAPERS SINCE THEIR EDITORS WERE SYMPATHETIC TO THE THEMES LIKELY TO BE CONTAINED IN THE STATEMENT. ALTHOUGH THE PRECISE CONTENT OF THE STATEMENT HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED, HELDRING BELIEVED THAT AMONG OTHER THINGS IT WOULD CRITICIZE THE DEVELOPING TIE WITH CUBA, URGE A RETURN TO TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC FORMS, AND APPEAL FOR AN ELECTION SCHEDULE. WHILE THE STATEMENT WAS LIKELY TO BE STRONGLY NATIONALISTIC, IT WAS NOT EXPECTED TO BE SHARPLY PROVOCATIVE OR TO TAKE AIM AT PERSONALITIES. HELDRING, WHO NAMED SEVERAL FORMER NPS MEMBERS WHO ARE NOW MEMBERS OF GARRISON COMMANDER ROY HORB'S CABINET AS SUPPORTERS OF THIS PLAN, BELIEVED THAT HORB HIMSELF WAS AWARE OF THE INITIATIVE AND HAD, THEREFORE, GIVEN TACIT AGREEMENT TO ITS GOING FORWARD. HE HAD NO EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT HORB HAD BEEN INFORMED.

5. THE SECOND PART OF THE SCHEME INVOLVED A REQUEST TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOS BY BOTH PARTIES FOR PERMISSION TO HOLD TWO MASS MEETINGS, ONE EACH AT THE RESPECTIVE PARTY HEADQUARTERS. THE REQUEST WOULD BE MADE WITH THE FULL EXPECTATION THAT IT WOULD BE REFUSED. SUCH REFUSAL WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC ALONG WITH THE FACT OF THE REQUEST AND THESE WOULD CONSTITUTE PROOF THAT FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND EXPRESSION DID NOT EXIST UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME.

6. COMMENT: IF THESE ACTIONS DO TAKE PLACE, THEY WILL CAUSE THE GOS ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT. THE VHP AND NPS HAVE A COMBINED FOLLOWING WHICH INCLUDES MANY THOUSANDS AND THE FACT THAT AFTER LYING DORMANT POLITICALLY FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS, THEY HAVE COME TO JOINT ACTION -- EVEN IF IT DOES NOT ATTACK THE LEADERSHIP WITH SPECIFICITY -- MUST BE INTERPRETED BY BOUTERSE AS A DANGEROUS THREAT. BOUTERSE HAS A FRAGILE POWER BASE COMPRISED OF A FEW LEFT ACTIVISTS, SOME CIVILIANS (MOSTLY CREOLES FROM THE LOWER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATA), AND SOME MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY (ALSO, MAINLY CREOLES). THE FACT THAT THE NPS, WHICH IS THE MAIN CREOLE PARTY, IS PUBLICLY CHALLENGING HIS ROLE AS LEADER EXPOSES HIS FAILURE TO ATTRACT A SIGNIFICANT FOLLOWING EVEN FROM AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE. THERE IS NO WAY TO PREDICT THE SCOPE OF PUBLIC REACTION OR JUST HOW THREATENING BOUTERSE WOULD FIND THE MOVE TO BE.

7. HELDRING'S BELIEF THAT HORB HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THE PREPARATION FOR THIS POTENTIALLY CRUCIAL POLITICAL MOVE AND IS NOT ACTING TO PREVENT IT IS INTERESTING BUT DIFFICULT TO UNDER-

STAND. HORB IS KNOWN TO BE UNSYMPATHETIC TO SOME ASPECTS OF BOUTERSE'S POLITICAL COURSE, PARTICULARLY ITS LEFT-INTERNATIONALIST TONE. HE MUST CERTAINLY BE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT ROUSED PUBLIC FEELINGS DIRECTED AGAINST THE MILITARY'S CONDUCT OF ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE WOULD THREATEN HIM TOO. HORB IS NOT A COMMUNIST BUT NEITHER IS HE A DEMOCRAT, AND HIS ACQUIESCENCE IN THE NPS-VHP PLAN COULD ONLY BE EXPLAINED IF HE EXPECTED THE PARTIES' CRITICISMS TO BE NARROWLY FOCUSED ON THOSE ELEMENTS OF BOUTERSE'S POLICIES TO WHICH HE HIMSELF OBJECTS. HORB  
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MAY FURTHER BELIEVE THAT A STRONG PUBLIC SHOWING OF SUPPORT FOR THE CRITICISMS WILL LEAD TO THE ADJUSTMENTS IN PRESENT POLICIES HE SEEKS. LA ROCHE

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