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ACTION EUR-01

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	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	PA-01	PM-00	PRS-01	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SSD-01	PMB-00	DRL-09
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O 131654Z OCT 95
 FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0082
 INFO SECDEF WASHDC
 NATO EU COLLECTIVE
 AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
 AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
 AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
 USDELTC BRUSSELS
 USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
 JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 THE HAGUE 005512

E.O. 12356: DECL: 10/13/15
 TAGS: MARR, PREL, UN, NATO, BK, NL
 SUBJECT: DUTCH REPORT ON SREBRENICA TO OFFER GRIST
 FOR DEFENDERS AND DETRACTORS OF BLUE HELMET ACTIONS

REFS: A) THE HAGUE 5452

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Homme, Senior Reviewer

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1. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY

2. THE OFFICIAL MOD REPORT ON DUTCH ACTIONS DURING AND AFTER THE FALL OF SREBRENICA IS LIKELY TO OFFER SOME GRIST FOR BOTH DEFENDERS AND DETRACTORS OF DUTCH ACTIONS, ACCORDING TO AN MOD OFFICIAL FAMILIAR WITH THE REPORT. THE MOD BELIEVES THE REPORT -- SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE OCTOBER 23 -- WILL CLARIFY A NUMBER OF MISPERCEPTIONS REGARDING DUTCH ACTIONS THAT HAVE APPEARED BOTH IN THE DUTCH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA IN RECENT WEEKS. IN PARTICULAR, THE REPORT WILL HIGHLIGHT THE MILITARY LIMITATIONS UNDER WHICH THE DUTCH OPERATED AND THE RISKS TO REFUGEES AND BLUE HELMETS ALIKE IF THE DUTCH RESPONSE HAD BEEN MORE AGGRESSIVE. ON THE DOWNSIDE FOR THE MOD AND GON, THE REPORT WILL CONTAIN REFERENCES TO MISBEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF DUTCH TROOPS, INCLUDING SELLING OF WEAPONS, RIGHT-WING SYMPATHIES, AND POOR TREATMENT OF WOMEN THAT WILL NOT HELP THE ARMY'S EMBATTLED IMAGE.

3. ALTHOUGH THE REPORT COULD BE DAMAGING POLITICALLY TO DEFENSE MINISTER VOORHOEVE, MOD OBSERVERS DO NOT SEE A HIGH RISK OF HIS BEING FORCED TO RESIGN. AS SEPTTEL WILL ELABORATE, THE REPORT IS LIKELY TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE DECISIONMAKING PROCESS RELATING TO PEACEKEEPING PARTICIPATION. AT THIS STAGE WE DO NOT SEE, EXCEPT IN CERTAIN QUARTERS, ANY SIGNS OF REDUCED

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DUTCH WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE SUCH MISSIONS
GENERALLY. THIS CONTROVERSY HAS ALSO MOTIVATED DUTCH
EFFORTS WITH THEIR EU COLLEAGUES TO GET SOMETHING IN
A BOSNIA PEACE SETTLEMENT REQUIRING AN ACCOUNTING OF
THE MEN TAKEN AWAY IN SREBRENICA AND ZEPA. END
SUMMARY.

REPORT NOT TO PULL PUNCHES

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4. AN MOD OFFICIAL FAMILIAR WITH THE DEFENSE
MINISTRY'S SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED REPORT ON DUTCH
ACTIONS DURING AND AFTER THE FALL OF SREBRENICA SAFE
AREA INDICATED THAT THE REPORT WOULD CONTAIN
INFORMATION THAT COULD BE USED TO BOLSTER THE
ARGUMENTS OF BOTH DEFENDERS AND DETRACTORS OF DUTCH
ACTIONS. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED THE REPORT
WOULD OFFER A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MILITARY
ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION IN SREBRENICA, PARTICULARLY
THE LIMITATIONS UNDER WHICH THE TROOPS OPERATED AND
THE RISKS OF ALTERNATIVE, TOUGHER ACTIONS. FOR
EXAMPLE, THE REPORT POINTS OUT THAT DUTCH FORCES
LINED UP OBSERVING REFUGEES BOARD A BUS -- A
PHOTOGRAPH OF WHICH HAS BEEN USED TO DEPICT THE DUTCH
AS HAVING COLLUDED IN ETHNIC CLEANSING -- HAD IN FACT
FORMED A COLUMN TO PREVENT WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM
BEING TRAMPLED IN THE RUSH FOR THE BUSES.

IN DEFENSE OF DUTCH ACTIONS

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5. AMONG THE KEY POINTS THE REPORT WILL EMPHASIZE TO
BACK UP DUTCH ACTIONS ARE:

-- THE DUTCH TROOPS DID UNDERTAKE MILITARY MANEUVERS
PRIOR TO AND DURING THE COURSE OF THE SERB ATTACK TO
PREVENT THE TAKEOVER OF THE SAFE AREA.

-- FOLLOWING THE TAKEOVER, THE DUTCH TROOPS' FREEDOM
OF MOVEMENT WAS SHARPLY CIRCUMSCRIBED, LIMITING THEIR
ABILITY TO WITNESS EVENTS OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND.

-- GIVEN THIS RESTRICTED MOVEMENT, THE TROOPS HAD NO
MEANS OF KNOWING THAT MASS EXECUTIONS WERE TAKING
PLACE.

-- ACTIVE DUTCH RESISTANCE TO THE SERBS WOULD NOT

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HAVE PREVENTED THE SERB TAKEOVER, AND COULD HAVE RESULTED IN HIGH CASUALTIES AMONG REFUGEES. THE REPORT NOTES THAT THE POTOCARI COMPOUND, WHERE THE DUTCH AND MUSLIM REFUGEES WERE CONCENTRATED, WAS

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O 131654Z OCT 95
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0083
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
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JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 THE HAGUE 005512

E.O. 12356: DECL: 10/13/15

TAGS: MARR, PREL, UN, NATO, BK, NL

SUBJECT: DUTCH REPORT ON SREBRENICA TO OFFER GRIST FOR DEFENDERS AND DETRACTORS OF BLUE HELMET ACTIONS

SURROUNDED BY SERB ARTILLERY. ANY USE OF THAT ARTILLERY COULD HAVE KILLED HUNDREDS OF REFUGEES.

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POTENTIALLY DAMAGING REVELATIONS

6. ON THE DOWNSIDE OF THE LEDGER, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTS THAT COULD CAUSE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FOR THE MOD. ALTHOUGH SOME REVELATIONS RELATING TO THE PERSONAL BEHAVIOR OF SOLDIERS ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY RELEVANT TO THE ISSUE OF WHETHER THE DUTCH DID ALL THEY COULD TO AVERT HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES, THEY ARE LIKELY TO BECOME INEXTRICABLY INTERWOVEN WITH PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY PERCEPTIONS OF THE DUTCH ROLE IN SREBRENICA. THESE INCLUDE:

-- THE DUTCH DID NOT REPORT EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF ATROCITIES TO THE U.N. UNTIL THEY WERE DEBRIEFED IN ZAGREB JULY 22 OUT OF A DESIRE NOT TO ANTAGONIZE THE SERBS AND ENDANGER THE SAFETY AND SAFE DEPARTURE OF THE TROOPS.

-- THERE WERE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AMONG THE DUTCH FORCES THAT INCLUDED SELLING EQUIPMENT, EXTREME RIGHT-WING SYMPATHIES, AND POOR TREATMENT OF WOMEN, SPECIFICALLY WOMEN WITHIN THEIR OWN UNITS.

COMPREHENSIVE AND UNJUDGMENTAL

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7. THE FINAL REPORT, WHICH WILL BE RELEASED
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FOLLOWING CABINET REVIEW OCTOBER 23, IS BASED ON
INTERVIEWS WITH 490 OF THE 499 SOLDIERS IN SREBRENICA
CONDUCTED BY 189 DEBRIEFERS. EACH INTERVIEW TOOK AN
AVERAGE OF FOUR HOURS, WITH SOME LASTING UP TO TEN
HOURS. ACCORDING TO THE MOD, THE REPORT DOES NOT
PRESCRIBE A JUDGEMENT, BUT IS DESIGNED TO LET PEOPLE
COME TO THEIR OWN -- BUT BETTER INFORMED -- OPINIONS,
WHICH THEY HOPE WILL LEAD TO A MORE NUANCED
PERSPECTIVE OF DUTCH ACTIONS.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IFOR

8. NEITHER MOD NOR MFA OFFICIALS EXPECT THE REPORT
WILL NEGATIVELY AFFECT DUTCH PARTICIPATION IN IFOR.
IN FACT, THE MOD SAID THEY EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO POINT
TO IFOR'S MORE ROBUST APPROACH AND BETTER COMMAND AND
CONTROL MECHANISMS AS EVIDENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT
AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAVE DRAWN THE LESSONS OF
THE FAILURE OF SREBRENICA AND HAVE ALREADY MOVED TO
ENSURE SUCH EVENTS DO NOT OCCUR AGAIN. NEVERTHELESS,
ALL FUTURE DEPLOYMENTS, INCLUDING IFOR, WILL BE MORE
CLOSELY SCRUTINIZED AND HIGHLY POLITICIZED.

SEEKING AN ACCOUNTING IN PEACE ACCORD

9. AS THE DEPARTMENT MAY BE AWARE, MFA OFFICIALS
HAVE INDICATED THAT THE NETHERLANDS HAS BEEN WORKING
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WITHIN THE EU TO SEEK TO BUILD INTO AN EVENTUAL PEACE
SETTLEMENT A REQUIREMENT FOR AN ACCOUNTING OF THE MEN
WHO WERE TAKEN AWAY OR OTHERWISE MISSING FROM
SREBRENICA AND ZEPA. THEY FEAR THAT IF NOTHING IS
WRITTEN INTO THE SETTLEMENT NOW, THERE WILL NEVER BE
AN ADEQUATE ACCOUNTING.

COMMENT

10. THERE HAS BEEN SOME LIMITED SPECULATION THAT
ELEMENTS OF THE REPORT COULD DAMAGE DEFENSE MINISTER
VOORHOEVE POLITICALLY, AND POTENTIALLY FORCE HIS
RESIGNATION. GIVEN THE REPORT'S MIXTURE OF GOOD AND
BAD NEWS, THE KEY FACTOR WILL BE WHAT USE PARLIAMENT
CHOOSES TO MAKE OF THE REPORT. IF THEY ARE LOOKING
TO PUT THE ISSUE TO REST, THE REPORT WILL GIVE THEM
THE MEANS TO DO SO; CONVERSELY, IF THEY WANT A
SCAPEGOAT, THEY COULD FIND ENOUGH AMMUNITION TO
DAMAGE VOORHOEVE. MOST OF OUR CONTACTS (INCLUDING IN
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, MFA, AND MOD) DOUBT

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O 131654Z OCT 95
 FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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VOORHOEVE IS AT RISK. THEY BELIEVE PARLIAMENT IS
 INCREASINGLY COGNIZANT OF THE DAMAGE THEIR CONTINUED
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 FOCUS ON THE ISSUE IS DOING TO THE DUTCH REPUTATION
 INTERNATIONALLY, AND WILL LIKELY LET THE ISSUE GO
 AFTER A THOROUGH AIRING OF THE REPORT.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED
 DORNBUSH

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