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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CEBU 0094

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV, SCOM, RP, US  
SUBJECT: CEBU CITY: REACTIONS TO ALLEGED STATEMENTS OF  
CONG. JERRY LEWIS

1. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS LAST WEEK CARRIED STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CONGRESSMAN JERRY LEWIS (WHO HEADED PRESIDENTIAL OBSERVER TEAM THAT VISITED CEBU FEBRUARY 6-8) HIGHLY CRITICAL OF NAMFREL. REACTION BY NAMFREL VOLUNTEERS AND OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS HAS BEEN VOCAL AND SHARP. COLUMNISTS AND BROADCASTERS HAVE ALSO HAD A FIELD DAY.
2. NEVERTHELESS, LOCAL NAMFREL OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN MOST MODERATE IN THEIR RESPONSE, BELIEVING LEWIS WAS MISQUOTED. THEY HAVE URGED MODERATION ON OTHERS. LOCAL NAMFREL HEAD ERNEST ABOITZ IS PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO AVOID AN ANTI-AMERICAN REACTION TO GARBLED STATEMENTS MADE IN THE U.S.
3. OVER THE WEEKEND, ABOITZ TALKED WITH BROTHER-IN-LAW IN THE U.S. WHO APPARENTLY HAD SEEN LEWIS ON T.V., AND TOLD ABOITZ THAT CONG. LEWIS MADE NO RPT NO DEROGATORY STATEMENTS ABOUT NAMFREL. APPARENTLY, ABOITZ'S COMMENTS ABOUT THIS CONVERSATION MADE THEIR WAY TO A JOURNALIST AND AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN FEBRUARY 16 "INQUIRER" STATING THAT ABOITZ HAD PERSONALLY TALKED WITH CONG. LEWIS, WHO DENIED MAKING THE INITIALLY REPORTED STATEMENTS BLASTING NAMFREL. NOW ABOITZ IS CONCERNED THAT CONG. LEWIS WILL HEAR OF THIS ERRONEOUS STORY AND BELIEVE THAT ABOITZ IS SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION.
4. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE INFORM CONGRESSMAN JERRY LEWIS OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION, AND ASSURE HIM THAT ERNEST ABOITZ MADE NO RPT NO CLAIM TO HAVE DISCUSSED HIS STATEMENTS PERSONALLY WITH HIM. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY TRANSCRIPT AND/OR ANY CLARIFICATION OF LEWIS' COMMENTS RE HIS OBSERVATIONS HERE IN CEBU. PORTER  
END OF MESSAGE

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