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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~--NOFORN

DIST: 6 JUNE 2000

COUNTRY: GUYANA

SUBJ: GROWING CONCERN AMONG THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY REGARDING THE JANUARY 2001 ELECTIONS

DOI: [REDACTED]

SOURCE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
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SUMMARY: NONE

TEXT: 1. [REDACTED], PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP) GENERAL SECRETARY DONALD ((RAMOTAR)) HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY WORRIED THAT THE PPP WAS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE AND COULD LOSE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR 17 JANUARY 2001. RAMOTAR WAS CONCERNED THAT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF REGULAR PPP VOTERS WERE BEING WON OVER BY GUYANA INDIAN FRIENDSHIP TRUST (GIFT) LEADER RAVI ((DEV)), AND THAT ADDITIONAL VOTERS ALSO WERE BEING WOODED AWAY BY FORMER PRESIDENT JANET ((JAGAN))'S SON CHEDDI ((JAGAN)), JR. FURTHER, RAMOTAR BELIEVED THAT ENOUGH PPP VOTERS WERE SUFFICIENTLY DISILLUSIONED WITH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT TO SIMPLY REFRAIN FROM VOTING. RAMOTAR BELIEVED THAT THOSE THREE FORCES, IF NOT CONTROLLED, COULD ADD UP TO A PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) VICTORY AT THE POLLS.

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2. RAMOTAR WAS ALSO CONCERNED THAT IF THE PPP MANAGED TO WIN THE ELECTION, THERE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT THREAT OF VIOLENCE FROM THE PNC, WHOSE LEADERS WOULD CLAIM THE ELECTION WAS STOLEN FROM THEM. [REDACTED] COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PPP LEADERS WITHIN THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE WERE CONVINCED THAT VIOLENCE WAS LIKELY, THEY BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD RIDE OUT ANY RESULTING DEMONSTRATIONS AS THEY DID AFTER THE 1997 ELECTION.) NEVERTHELESS, THE PPP DID NOT WISH TO DELAY THE ELECTION UNTIL TRANSPARENCY MEASURES WERE IN PLACE BECAUSE IT WORRIED THAT, IN THE INTERIM, THE ECONOMY COULD DETERIORATE SUFFICIENTLY TO ENSURE THE PPP'S LOSS OF THE ELECTION.

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3. ANOTHER ISSUE OF CONCERN EXPRESSED BY RAMOTAR WAS THE RETIREMENT OF FORMER GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE (GDF) CHIEF OF STAFF MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH ((SINGH)). RAMOTAR VIEWED SINGH AS A STABILIZING FORCE IN GUYANA AND A CHECK ON THE POSSIBLE EXPLOITATION OF THE LARGELY AFRO-GUYANESE GDF BY THE PNC. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO RAMOTAR WAS THE PPP "OLD GUARD'S" INSISTENCE THAT SINGH'S REPLACEMENT, BRIGADIER MICHAEL ((ATHERLY)), BE REPLACED BY COLONEL CHABILAL ((RAMSAROOP)). SINGH'S LOSS, COUPLED WITH THE RACIALLY CHARGED PROMOTION OF AN INDO-GUYANESE OFFICER OVER AATHERLY, WHO IS AFRO-GUYANESE,

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COULD EASILY BE EXPLOITED BY THE PNC. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE, ACCORDING TO RAMOTAR, BECAUSE RAMSAROOP WOULD FIRST HAVE TO BE PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER BEFORE HE COULD REPLACE ATHERLY. BOTH RAMOTAR AND PRESIDENT BHARRAT ((JAGDEO)) WERE VIGOROUSLY OPPOSING ANY MOVE TO REPLACE ATHERLY.

[REDACTED] COMMENT: THE TOP THREE OFFICERS IN SENIORITY AND RANK WITHIN THE GDF ARE ATHERLY, COLONEL EDWARD ((COLLINS)), AND RAMSAROOP, OF WHICH RAMSAROOP IS BY FAR THE LEAST PREPARED AND COMPETENT. COLLINS IS ALSO AFRO-GUYANESE, BUT IS CURRENTLY ATTENDING A U.S. MILITARY SCHOOL.)

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POC: [REDACTED] COMMENTS, EVALUATIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS WELCOME.

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