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ANNONBON DELEGATION SEEKS UN HELP

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1. UNDP RESREP WOLFF TOLD ME AUGUST 22 THAT HE HAD RECEIVED SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER A DELEGATION FROM ANNOBON, ISOLATED ISLAND OFF COAST OF GABON (LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 2 DEGREES SOUTH LATITUDE, 6 DEGREES EAST LONGITUDE) WHICH IS NOMINALLY PART OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA.

2. ACCORDING TO MEMBERS OF DELEGATION, ANNOBON IS TOTALLY IGNORED BY GOEG, AND HAS NO CONTACT WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN MALABO. POPULATION, WHICH THEY ESTIMATED AT 4,000, LIVES ON FISH AND FEW CROPS IT CAN GROW ON ISLAND'S VOLCANIC SOIL AND RECEIVES NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE AT ALL. ACCORDING TO DELEGATION, FOOD IS OFTEN IN SHORT SUPPLY AND MEDICINES ARE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT.

3. DELEGATION APPEALED TO WOLFF FOR UN AID, PARTICULARLY IN FORM OF FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES. UNDP RESREP HAS PROMISED FORWARD REQUEST TO NEW YORK BUT MADE NO OTHER COMMITMENT.

4. WOLFF SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED SUBJECT INFORMALLY WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOCAL SPANISH AMBASSADOR, WHO PROVIDED HIM WITH SOME BACKGROUND ON ANNOBON DURING PERIOD OF SPANISH RULE BUT HAD NO CURRENT INFORMATION. IN OUR CONVERSATION, I TOLD WOLFF THAT VESSELS OF US TUNA FLEET HAD CALLED AT ANNOBON DURING THEIR FISHING SEASON IN THESE WATERS LAST FALL, AND HAD REPORTED CONDITIONS PRETTY MUCH AS DESCRIBED BY DELEGATION WHICH HAD CALLED ON HIM. TUNA FLEET CREWMEN PROVIDED SOME HELP FOR ISLANDERS ON PERSONAL BASIS IN FORM OF FOOD AND MATERIALS (SEVERAL SAILORS FURNISHED PAINT FOR CHURCH, FOR EXAMPLE), AND SPOTTER AIRCRAFT FOR TUNA BOATS RAN OCCASIONAL ERRANDS FOR PEOPLE ON ANNOBON. AIRCRAFT PILOT HAD ESTIMATED ANNOBON POPULATION AT 500, BUT HAD NOT GONE BEYOND IMMEDIATE AREA OF AIRPORT.

5. COMMENT: WOLFF IS IN DILEMMA AS TO HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO DELEGATION REQUEST FOR HELP. HE IS RELUCTANT RAISE SUBJECT WITH GOEG THROUGH UNDP RESREP IN MALABO FOR FEAR OF CAUSING TROUBLE FOR ISLANDERS, BUT CLEARLY CANNOT RECOMMEND UN ASSISTANCE TO PART OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA WHICH BYPASSES GOVERNMENT HOLDING SOVEREIGNTY OVER ANNOBON. ANY SUGGESTIONS ADDRESSEES MIGHT OFFER WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.STEIGMAN

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References to this document in other cables 1976STATE217327

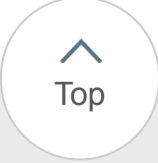
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