

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 INR-05 NSC-05 CIAE-00 SP-02

L-01 PRS-01 /042 W
----- 085812

P R 270717Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3812
INFO DOD WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USLO PEKING
CINCPACREPPHIL SUBIC
CDR 13TH AF CLARKIMB RP

S E C R E T MANILA 7196

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TAGS AND SUBBJ

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, RP
SUBJ: SPRATLEY ISLANDS

REF: A) MANILA 5612; B) DAO MANILA 220705Z

1. DURING DINNER CONVERSATION MAY 25, GEN ESPINO, AFP CHIEF OF STAFF, TOLD ME THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM INSPECTION VISIT TO PHILIPPINE GARRISON IN SPRATLY ISLANDS. HE SAID THAT PHILIPPINE FORCES HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM PAROLA (NORTHEAST CAY) AND ONE OTHER ISLAND (POSSIBLY LIKAS (WEST YORK)), WHICH ARE THOSE ISLANDS CLOSEST TO POSITIONS OCCUPIED BY VIETNAMESE.

2. ESPINO SAID WITHDRAWALS HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS AND PHILIPPINE FLAG WAS LEFT FLYING AS
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MARK OF PHILIPPINE CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY, BUT THAT TOTAL

PHILIPPINE MILITARY PRESENCE IS NOW CONCENTRATED ON ISLAND OF PAGASA (THITU), IN THE KALAYAAN GROUP. THIS ISLAND IS DESCRIBED AS BEING SEVENTEEN KILOMETERS FROM NEAREST VIETNAMESE POSITION.

3. IN FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION MAY 27 WITH CAPT BARTOLOME, N-2, NAVAL ATTACHE WAS TOLD THAT AFP HAD VACATED ONLY PAROLA ABOUT ONE WEEK AGO, AND ONLY OVER STRONG OBJECTION OF NAVY AND MARINES. BARTOLOME CONFIRMED THAT TROOPS ON PAROLA HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO PAGASA. HOWEVER, HE SAID AFP REMAINED ON WEST YORK, NANSHAN AND FLAT ISLANDS IN ADDITION TO PAGASA.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE PHILIPPINE ACTION IN WITHDRAWING UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS, LACK OF ACTIVITY ON PAROLA, WHICH IS ONLY 3,000 METERS AWAY FROM SOUTHEAST CAY, WILL SOON BECOME APPARENT TO VIETNAMESE. I WOULD, THEREFORE, EXPECT THAT, IN SHORT WHILE, VIETNAMESE WILL OCCUPY PAROLA AND DEMONSTRATE THEIR WARM FEELINGS OF FELLOWSHIP WITH THEIR PHILIPPINE NEIGHBORS.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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