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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/12

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SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENT

1. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED QUOTE
 DON'T KNOCK STATE UNQUOTE, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2,
 1978, IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

2. QUOTE: THE MASS SUICIDE IN GUYANA MAY HAVE BEEN INCOM-
 PREHENSIBLE, BUT SOME PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN SCURRYING
 AROUND TRYING TO FIT THE DISASTER INTO THE ORDINARY CATE-
 GORIES OF AMERICAN POLITICS. THEY'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE
 TO BLAME, AND THE MOST READILY AVAILABLE TARGET TURNS OUT
 TO BE THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT.

CONGRESSMAN PHILIP CRANE HAS WHIPPED IN FOR "THE
 AMERICAN TAXPAYER," ASKING THE DEPARTMENT WHY IT'S USING
 PUBLIC MONEY TO BRING THE BODIES HOME. OTHER INTERESTED
 PARTIES ARE CRITICIZING STATE'S BEHAVIOR BEFORE THE EVENT
 AND ACCUSING OUR DIPLOMATS OF VARYING DEGREES OF IGNORANCE.

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INVESTIGATION AND CONSTRUCTION.

MEMBERS FOR A GROUP OF PEOPLES TEMPLE DEFECTORS HAVE
 TESTIFIED THAT THEY EXPLICITLY WARNED STATE ABOUT THE DANGER
 TO AMERICAN LIVES IN GEORGETOWN. THEY PRODUCED AFFIDAVITS
 ATTESTING THAT THE REVEREND JIM JONES WAS "SICK" AND
 PREDICTING "MASS SUICIDE FOR SOCIALISM." THEN, THEY ADMIT,
 THE STATE DEPARTMENT DID LODGE A FORMAL PROTEST WITH THE
 GUYANAIAN GOVERNMENT IN A LEGAL DISPUTE BETWEEN JONES AND
 A DEFECTOR OVER CUSTODY OF A SIX-YEAR-OLD CHILD. BUT
 MANY DEFECTORS COMPLAIN THAT THE DEPARTMENT NEVER PROPERLY
 INVESTIGATED THE MATTER THROUGH ON THE ACTION.

WHEN CONGRESSMAN RYAN'S INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL, WHO
 ACCOMPANIED THE LAST CONGRESSMAN ON HIS ILL-FATED TRIP TO
 GUYANA, ON OCTOBER 1978, THE DEPARTMENT NEVER SUFFICIENTLY
 WARNED THE PARTY ABOUT THE DANGER OF VIOLENCE THAT AWAITED
 JONES' FOLLOWS. SHE ASSISTS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT
 MEMBERS ON THE SCENE IN GUYANA WERE MADE TOO "BLASE"
 ABOUT REP. RYAN'S INVESTIGATION, AND THAT THEY WERE MISSED

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SECRETARY JEROME M.
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ABOUT ALL THE NEWSMEN THAT THE CONGRESSMAN BROUGHT ALONG.
ONE REPORTER OUT OF JONESTOWN FURTHER SAYS THERE'S EVIDENCE
FROM JONES'S PERSONAL PAPERS THAT SOME PEOPLE IN THE
AMERICAN EMBASSY ACTUALLY MAINTAINED A CLOSE AND HELPFUL
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CULT. ONE OFFICIAL, IT SAYS, KEPT
JONES INFORMED ABOUT LEGAL ATTACKS ON THE PEOPLES' TEMPLE
AND TRIED TO DISCOURAGE ATTEMPTS BY AT LEAST ONE DEFECTOR
TO TAKE HER CASE TO THE PRESS.
THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS NOW FACED WITH THE JOB OF DEFENDING

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ITSELF AND ITS GUYANA STAFF FROM PRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL
ATTACKS. THEY'VE POINTED OUT, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE
AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICIAL NOW BEING CRITICIZED FOR BEING
SOFT ON JONESTOWN ACTUALLY GOT HIMSELF INTO SOME TROUBLE
FOR INSISTING SO STRONGLY THAT THE GUYANESE POLICE INVESTIGATE
THE PLACE. BUT STATE IS LIKELY TO HAVE A ROUGH
TIME OF IT.

WE'VE SAID ENOUGH ON THIS PAGE ABOUT THE SHORTCOMINGS OF
THE STATE DEPARTMENT. IT'S TRUE THAT ITS PERSONNEL IN
THE FIELD MAY DEVELOP A TASTE FOR GETTING ALONG IN WHAT-
EVER PLACE THEY'VE LANDED IN, AND SO TEND TO PAINT THEIR
ENVIRONMENT IN FRIENDLY COLORS THAT ANYONE MAKING FOREIGN
POLICY SHOULD TREAT WITH A BIT OF SKEPTICISM. BUT THIS
TIME THE CRITICS ARE ACCUSING THE DEPARTMENT OF NEGLIGENCE
FOR NOT HAVING SEEN SOMETHING THAT IN FACT NONE OF US COULD
HAVE IMAGINED.

IF STATE HAD BEHAVED DIFFERENTLY, YOU CAN BE SURE THERE
WOULD HAVE BEEN HOWLS ABOUT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S HARASS-
MENT OF THE RELIGIOUSLY NEGLIGENT. UNLESS SOME RADICALLY
DIFFERENT EVIDENCE EMERGES NOW ABOUT STATE DEPARTMENT
OPERATION TOWARDS THE JONES CULT, WE WISH THE CRITICS WOULD
RESTRAIN THEMSELVES A BIT AND KEEP FROM ADDING TO THE
UGLINESS OF THIS RECENT EPISODE. CHRISTOPHER

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