

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, April 3, 2011 10:37 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Paris ponders evacuation of French from Ivory Coast (Reuters)

From: Carson, Johnnie
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2011 08:37 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Kennedy, Patrick F
Subject: RE: Paris ponders evacuation of French from Ivory Coast (Reuters)

Cheryl:

Over the last two hours, I and my deputies have consulted on several occasions with our embassy in Abidjan and our ambassador there has been in close contact with the French ambassador and the head of the French military unit in Abidjan.

The information coming out of Paris is confusing – confusing to us and confusing to the French diplomats and military leadership in Abidjan. At this time, they report there is no evacuation of French citizens planned or underway. Paris has called for a “regroupement” of French citizens, but even the French on the ground do not know what Paris has in mind except perhaps French citizens gathering in clusters for greater security and possible future evacuation. But the French ambassador in Abidjan believes that the French citizens who are there should continue to shelter in place and not move about the city or travel to other locations. The situation is too unstable for French citizens to move without military escorts. The French ambassador is also not calling for an evacuation.

I remain confident in our current security and operating posture. We are secure in our building, and none of our personnel are moving around the city. The French continue to reassure us on the ground that they will assist us if we need help and evacuate us if that is required. Our ambassador has reviewed his contingency plans and may ask for some additional security officers, but he has confirmed to me that he thinks his security posture is good.

The French hope to have some clarification of the instructions from Paris tomorrow. And I intend to call my two counterparts in Paris very early tomorrow morning to determine precisely what the French are planning with respect to their citizens.

One last note, UNOCI with French military support are slated to attack Gbagbo’s tanks, armored personnel carriers and heavy guns which have been menacing Ouattara’s forces and protecting Gbagbo’s last remaining strongholds. If this operation is successful, it could be another tipping point in favor of Ouattara.

Johnnie

From: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2011 3:37 PM
To: Carson, Johnnie; Kennedy, Patrick F
Subject: FW: Paris ponders evacuation of French from Ivory Coast (Reuters)

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2011 1:27 PM
To: NEWS-Mahogany
Cc: SES-O_Shift-II; SES-O_OS; SES-O_CMS
Subject: Paris ponders evacuation of French from Ivory Coast (Reuters)

PARIS, April 3 (Reuters) - France is mulling a possible evacuation of its 12,000 citizens from Ivory Coast, French defence minister Gerard Longuet said on Sunday, as fighting between rival groups intensified in the African cocoa producer.

"This is a question which is being asked and which will be settled in the next few hours," Longuet said in an interview on French television LCI.

Battles continued at the weekend between forces loyal to incumbent Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo and those of his rival, president claimant Alassane Outtara.

Gbagbo is refusing to cede power after losing a U.N. certified election to Outtara.

"We will not expose French people to being hostages or indirect victims of confrontation between these two forces," Longuet said.

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