

ZZ ATHENZ

ZZ BRIDGETOWN

OO KINGSTON

OO PORT OF SPAIN

OO GEORGETOWN

GRS 443

CONFIDENTIAL

PM FCO 221500Z OCTOBER 83

TO FLASH ATHENS (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE)

TELEGRAM NUMBER 417 OF 22 OCTOBER 1983

AND FLASH TO WASHINGTON AND BRIDGETOWN

AND IMMEDIATE TO KINGSTON, PORT OF SPAIN NASSAU, BELMOPAN AND
GEORGETOWN MODUK FOR RC AND CSDO

GRENADA

1. THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREED ON FRIDAY THAT WE SHOULD NOT MOVE THE CARIBBEAN GUARDSHIP HMS ANTRIM PREMATURELY FROM CARTAGENA, WHERE SHE IS DUE TO REMAIN UNTIL 24 OCTOBER BUT SHOULD KEEP THE SITUATION UNDER REVIEW OVER THE WEEKEND. WHILE THERE HAVE SO FAR BEEN NO DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN GRENADA SINCE FRIDAY AFFECTING THE SAFETY OF BRITISH CITIZENS THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF WHICH THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS AWARE. WE HAVE THEREFORE SOUGHT THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S VIEWS BY TELEPHONE. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE AN INTERIM ASSURANCE FROM THE US THAT THEY WOULD LOOK AFTER OUR CITIZENS IF THEY WERE AT RISK THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FEELS THAT IT MIGHT BE UNWISE TO RELY TOTALLY ON US FACILITIES. THOSE AT PRESENT AVAILABLE WOULD NOT BE ADEQUATE TO EVACUATE THE ENTIRE BRITISH AND AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN ONE OPERATION, AND THE US CARRIER TASK FORCE NOW EN ROUTE TO GRENADA COULD PROVE A HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL VEHICLE OF EVACUATION FOR NON-AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WOULD THEREFORE FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF ANTRIM WERE NOW TO START MOVING TO A POSITION JUST OVER THE HORIZON FROM GRENADA WHERE SHE COULD BE AVAILABLE IN CASE THE NEED ARISES TO EVACUATE BRITISH CITIZENS BY SEA. WRIGHT AND URE SHARE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S VIEW AND HAVE CONSULTED WITH MR LUCE ACCORDINGLY. MR LUCE CONSIDERS THAT THE SAFETY OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY SHOULD BE OUR FIRST PRIORITY AND

X Foreign Secretary
has now agreed
that HMS Antrim
should sail
tomorrow.

THAT WE MIGHT BE OPEN TO CRITICISM IF WE HAD TAKEN NO INDEPENDENT ACTION TO SAFEGUARD OUR OWN PEOPLE. HE THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT IF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREES, WE SHOULD NOW REQUEST MOD TO ORDER ANTRIM TO LEAVE CARTAGENA AS SOON AS CONVENIENT AND MAKE ALL DELIBERATE SPEED TOWARDS GRENADA. MR LUCE THINKS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD ENDEAVOUR NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF ACTING IN PANIC OR OVER DRAMATICALLY, AND THAT WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR PUBLICLY WHAT WE ARE DOING, AND STRESS THAT ALTHOUGH THE BRITISH COMMUNITY IN GRENADA IS NOT UNDER ANY IMMEDIATE THREAT WE THINK IT WISE TO MAKE THIS PRECAUTIONARY MOVE IN ORDER TO ENABLE US TO EVACUATE BRITISH CITIZENS BY SEA IF NECESSARY IF THE AIRPORT REMAINS CLOSED.

2. IF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREES WITH MR LUCE'S RECOMMENDATION ANTRIM COULD LEAVE ABOUT FOUR HOURS AFTER AN ORDER WAS GIVEN AND PROCEEDING AT REASONABLE SPEED COULD BE OFF GRENADA IN 48 HOURS. THE MOD HAVE BEEN ALERTED TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE MIGHT BE ASKING FOR ANTRIM TO LEAVE CARTAGENA EARLY.

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