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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 344 OF 23 OCTOBER 1983

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON AND PORT OF SPAIN

MIPT: GRENADA: GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

FOLLOWING FROM MONTGOMERY

1. I TRAVELLED TO GRENADA IN A SMALL CHARTER AIRCRAFT WITH TWO COLLEAGUES FROM THE US EMBASSY. APART FROM ABOUT 25 FULLY ARMED WATCHFUL SOLDIERS, PEARLS AIRPORT (GRENADA) WAS DESERTED. MINUTES LATER WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO ST GEORGE'S IN TWO PRIVATE CARS DRIVEN BY STEEL-HELMETED, ARMED AND WORDLESS SOLDIERS. THE TWENTY-MILE DRIVE WAS AN UNNERVING (PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE APPALLING ROAD) AND EERIE EXPERIENCE. IT WAS LIKE DRIVING ACROSS A GHOST ISLAND. APART FROM THE OCCASIONAL CHILD PLAYING IN FRONT OF A HOUSE OBSERVANCE OF THE CURFEW WAS TOTAL. THE FEW ADULTS I SAW LOUNGING ABOUT LOOKED SULLENLY AT OUR CARS (NO WAVING AT THE SOLDIERS). THAT PICTURE WAS REPEATED IN ST GEORGE'S. GRENADIANS, ESPECIALLY THE WOMEN, DON'T TAKE EASILY TO BEING PUSHED AROUND. BUT PERHAPS WITH THE MEMORY OF THE INDISCRIMINATE SHOOTING BY THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (PRA) AT FORT RUPERT ON 19 OCTOBER STILL FRESH IN THEIR MINDS, NO ONE WAS TAKING ANY CHANCES.
2. ALTHOUGH THE CURFEW PREVENTED ME FROM TALKING TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS I WOULD HAVE WISHED I WAS NEVERTHELESS ABLE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH A NUMBER OF LONG-<sup>TIME</sup> RESIDENTS OF GRENADA AND WITH OTHERS (INCLUDING EYEWITNESSES) WHO HAD LIVED THROUGH THE EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS.
3. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW GRENADA CAN AVOID FURTHER INTERNAL INSTABILITY. TOURISM WHICH IS A MAJOR PROP OF THE PRECARIOUS ECONOMY HAS NOW BEEN EFFECTIVELY DESTROYED FOR SOME TIME TO COME. THE BITTERNESS, NOT TO MENTION THE DESIRE TO EXACT RETRIBUTION, OVER THE DEATHS AT FORT RUPERT ON 19 OCTOBER WILL NOT GO AWAY. THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL WAS IN NO DOUBT ABOUT THIS. NEITHER AGRICULTURE, THE OTHER MAIN PROP OF THE ECONOMY, WAS AILING BEFORE THE LATEST CRISIS DEVELOPED, AND COMMERCE AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR WERE PUTTING VIRTUALLY NO CAPITAL AT RISK. CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAVE JUST IMPOSED TRADE SANCTIONS, AND GRENADA HAS NOW BEEN EFFECTIVELY CRIPPLED, FINANCIALLY, BY BEING DEPRIVED OF THE FACILITIES OF THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED EASTERN CARIBBEAN CENTRAL BANK.
4. THE RELAXATION OF THE CURFEW WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THEIR ANGER IS SIMMERING. I AND OTHERS, INCLUDING THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE CAPABILITY OF THE PRA TO RUN THE COUNTRY UNTIL THE BROADLY-BASED CABINET THEY ENVISAGE HAS

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BEEN APPOINTED, STILL MORE ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO PRODUCE THAT CABINET IN TWO WEEKS TIME. THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS THEREFORE AT BEST BLEAK. I INCLINE TO A MORE PESSIMISTIC VIEW. I THINK THERE IS A SERIOUS RISK OF EITHER:

- (A) FACTIONAL BICKERING RESULTING IN THE RMC FALLING APART - WHICH IS A RECIPE FOR ANARCHY, OR
- (B) BISHOP'S SUPPORTERS JOINING FORCES WITH THE SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION WHO WISH TO RETURN TO A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT, AND THEN HAVING A SHOWDOWN WITH THE PRA, EG A GENERAL STRIKE.

5. I FELT GUILTY ABOUT RETURNING TO BARBADOS, LEAVING KELLY AND HIS WIFE. BOTH HAVE BEEN A CREDIT TO THE SERVICE IN THESE PAST TEN WORRYING DAYS. BUT I FELT EVEN MORE SORRY FOR THE PEOPLE OF GRENADA, WITH THEIR FATE IN THE HANDS OF A CLUTCH OF INEXPERIENCED POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS DRESSED UP AS SOLDIERS.

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