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cc Melis

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Situation

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DEAR MARGARET,

I APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTFUL MESSAGE ON GRENADA. I HAVE WEIGHED VERY CAREFULLY THE ISSUES YOU HAVE RAISED AND HAVE REACHED THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS.

I CONTINUE TO BE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF OUR CITIZENS. THE VIOLENT EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE CAUSED A LARGE NUMBER OF THEM TO SEEK ANY POSSIBLE MEANS OF EVACUATION. GIVEN THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNING MILITARY COUNCIL, AND ITS PROVEN BRUTALITY, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THE SITUATION WILL HOLD MUCH LONGER. I WELL APPRECIATE THE DANGERS INHERENT IN A MILITARY OPERATION TO ASSURE THE SAFETY OF THESE CITIZENS, BUT, ON BALANCE, I SEE THIS AS THE LESSER OF TWO RISKS. IN THIS REGARD YOU MAY BE SURE THAT WE WILL COMPLY FULLY WITH YOUR REQUEST THAT WE SAFEGUARD ALL BRITISH CITIZENS. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION HAS GONE INTO OUR OPERATIONAL PLANNING TO PROTECT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

ON OCTOBER 23 I RECEIVED A FORMAL REQUEST IN WRITING FROM THE OECS ASKING FOR OUR SUPPORT FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION IN GRENADA. JAMAICA AND BARBADOS HAVE GIVEN THEIR STRONG SUPPORT. QUITE FRANKLY, THIS REQUEST HAS WEIGHED HEAVILY IN MY CONSIDERATION ON WHETHER TO COMMIT US FORCES. WITH SO CLEAR AN EXPRESSION OF THE WILL OF THE NATIONS OF THE REGION I WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN EITHER TO THEM OR TO OTHERS WHO DEPEND UPON US WHY WE HAD NOT ACTED.

FINALLY, I HAVE ALSO WEIGHED U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS IN MY DECISION. AS YOU KNOW WE HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY CONCERNED BY GRENADA'S RECENT DRIFT INTO THE SOVIET BLOC. THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE DONE NOTHING TO EASE OUR CONCERNS. TO THE CONTRARY, IT IS CLEAR THAT GRENADA HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN OVER BY A GROUP OF LEFTIST THUGS WHO WOULD LIKELY ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION TO AN EVEN GREATER DEGREE THAN DID THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. THE ARRIVAL MONDAY IN GRENADA OF A HIGH LEVEL CUBAN DELEGATION HIGHLIGHTS THIS CONCERN. THE ALTERNATIVE TO DECISIVE ACTION ON OUR PART MAY WELL BE TO ALLOW THE IMPOSITION BY THE CUBANS OF A REGIME WHOSE ACTIONS WOULD BE EVEN MORE INIMICAL TO OUR INTERESTS. IN OUR VIEW, RELYING UPON ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SANCTIONS WOULD PROVIDE TIME FOR CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION TO CONSOLIDATE THE POSITION OF THE NEW REGIME.

AGAIN, I APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS= I SHARE MANY OF YOUR CONCERNS, BUT BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE OUTWEIGHED BY THE FACTORS OUTLINED ABOVE. I WOULD HOPE THAT AS WE PROCEED, IN COOPERATION WITH THE OECS COUNTRIES, WE WOULD HAVE THE ACTIVE COOPERATION OF HER MAJESTYS GOVERNMENT AND, IN PARTICULAR, THAT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL WILL EXERCISE HIS CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS TO FORM AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD RESTORE DEMOCRACY TO GRENADA AND FACILITATE THE RAPID DEPARTURE OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES.

WARM REGARDS,  
RON

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