

SUBJECT

cc Mr. Ales

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Ows

SECRET



14 JD

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 October 1983

GRENADA

The purpose of this letter is to record certain action taken yesterday evening.

As you know, a message from President Reagan reached No. 10 at about 1915. The President stated that he was giving serious consideration to an OECS request for military action and asked for the Prime Minister's thoughts and advice. I briefly consulted the Prime Minister and conveyed to you her initial reactions. Later in the evening, you provided a draft reply to the President's message. A slightly amended version of this was awaiting the Prime Minister's return to No. 10 from an outside engagement when, shortly after 2300, a second message arrived from the President. This stated that he had decided to respond positively to the request for military action. At 2335 the Prime Minister held a meeting here which was attended by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Antony Acland, Mr. Giffard and Mr. Edwards. A reply was then drafted to the President's two messages and was despatched at about 0030.

A copy of the President's two messages and the Prime Minister's reply is enclosed with this letter.

At 0048 the Prime Minister spoke to President Reagan on the secure telephone. She told the President that she did not wish to speak at length by this means but she wished to draw his attention to the fact that she had replied to his messages and further wished to urge him to consider her reply very carefully indeed. The President undertook to do so but said, "We are already at zero".

At 0745 this morning a further message from President Reagan arrived. A copy is enclosed. He states that he has weighed very carefully the issues raised by the Prime Minister but believes them to be outweighed by other factors, which are outlined in the message.

To return to the Prime Minister's meeting of last night, after the despatch of the Prime Minister's message there was a discussion of a number of points requiring urgent action.

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It was decided that HM Embassy in Washington should be instructed to request the United States to take all necessary steps to protect the lives of British citizens on Grenada.

At about 0200 the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Chief of the Naval Staff joined the meeting which considered what instructions should be sent to HMS ANTRIM. It was agreed that in the circumstances that were likely to develop ANTRIM would probably not be able to play any useful role immediately with regard to the evacuation of British citizens. It was desirable that it should not become caught up with the US task force. On the other hand it might have some role in helping with the evacuation of British citizens at a later stage. It was decided that the Ministry of Defence should instruct ANTRIM to distance itself from the likely area of task force activity.

The question of the British Loan Service Personnel working in Barbados was raised. It was decided that if the advice of the British High Commission was sought they should reply to the effect that our Loan Service Personnel should not take part in aggressive action against Grenada.

The meeting also gave preliminary consideration to possible developments on the following day at the United Nations and to the question of public presentation. No conclusions were reached.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office). These papers should be very carefully protected. No further circulation should be given to them except where this is operationally essential.

Yours are

John Coler.

Brian Fall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.