

COVERING SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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24 October 1983

Dear Sir, Grenada

Overleaf
25/10

I attach a draft reply to President Reagan's message to the Prime Minister. I am sending a copy in parallel to Sir Geoffrey Howe. You said that you had already discussed in general terms with Mr Heseltine.

Yours ever,

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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11 (Revised)

DRAFT: ~~minute/letter/teletype/letter/despatch/box~~

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

PRESIDENT REAGAN

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Dear Hon,

CAVEAT.....

Thank you for your message of 24 October about the situation in Grenada. I too have been deeply disturbed about the recent events there and I very much agree with the objective of restoring security and democracy in Grenada. I also agree that we should consult closely on how best to achieve this.

I welcome the fact that you have sent an emissary to Barbados. It is of course essential that we should have the support of the democratic governments in the area. But it is difficult in present circumstances to establish their precise views. The Prime Minister of Barbados has made his position clear to us, as he has to you. But Barbados is not a member of the OECS; and our information is that at the most recent collective discussion of this question at the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in Port of Spain, there was agreement on the need to secure the safety and welfare of the Grenadian people, but no unanimity on how this should be achieved.

Enclosures—flag(s).....


I have a particular concern about the Governor-General in Grenada. As the Queen's representative on the island, he is in a ^{very} ~~particularly~~ delicate position. He told a British official who visited Grenada on 23 October that if he made any move which directly challenged the authority of the RMC, he would probably be killed. In a discussion today of possible responses to the present situation in Grenada, he stressed the positive effect that economic and political measures could have on Austin.

You mentioned the possibility of forming a new provisional government, shortly after a collective security force landed in Grenada, as a prelude to the free and fair elections which we would both like to see take place as soon as possible. This is a point which I should like our people to explore together in more detail. As things stand, we have not been able to identify any credible alternative leadership who could be established in the aftermath of a military operation.

The safety of US and British citizens on Grenada is another point which would require very careful consideration before any decision were taken to launch a military operation. The reports we have received from Grenada so far suggest that the lives of British and US citizens are not at risk; and we could not therefore justify intervention on these grounds. On the other hand, they could be put ^{very much at} ~~at serious~~ risk if an

attempt was made to take the island by military force.

In short, I have serious doubts about mounting a military operation. It could endanger the lives of those we wish to protect. And it is hard to see how such an operation against the regime in Grenada, however repellent it may be, could be justified to the world. I should like to ^{consider} ~~discuss~~ this further with you. As a first step, I should like one of the Ministers in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Richard Luce, to have urgent confidential talks with your people. He is already in Washington, and the arrangements could be made very quickly.



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In short, I have serious doubts about mounting a military operation. It could endanger the lives of those we wish to protect. And it is hard to see how such an operation against the regime in Grenada, however repellent that regime may be, could be justified to the world. The course of events in the Lebanon has shown very clearly how difficult it is, once you become involved in a complex situation, to achieve your aims and to extract your troops.

I am sure that we need to weigh very carefully whether, given all these problems, a policy of bringing to bear the maximum economic, political and diplomatic pressure would not be wiser than military action.

I do hope that our two governments can consider this further and in much more detail before any decisions are taken. As a first step, I should like one of our Foreign Office Ministers, Richard Luce, to have urgent confidential talks with your people. He is already in Washington and the arrangements could be made very quickly.

Do let us keep in touch. I have the feeling that we might regret any precipitated decision.

Will let you

you see

Regent.