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S E C R E T

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN.

DEAR RON,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TWO MESSAGES ABOUT GRENADA.

I WAS ABOUT TO REPLY TO YOUR EARLIER MESSAGE INVITING MY THOUGHTS WHEN YOUR SECOND ONE ARRIVED.

I MUST TELL YOU AT ONCE THAT THE DECISION WHICH YOU DESCRIBE CAUSES US THE GRAVEST CONCERN.

I MUST ASK YOU TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS INTO ACCOUNT.

(A) THE ONLY JUSTIFICATION FOR INTERVENTION WHICH IS LIKELY TO SEEM CREDIBLE IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD IS THE NEED TO PROTECT THE SAFETY OF US AND BRITISH CITIZENS. THE REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM GRENADA SO FAR SUGGEST THAT THE LIVES OF THESE CITIZENS ARE NOT AT RISK. THEY COULD BE PUT VERY MUCH AT RISK IF AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO TAKE THE ISLAND BY MILITARY FORCE.

(B) THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS RECEIVED NO FORMAL REQUEST FROM THE OECS.

(C) JAMAICA AND BARBADOS ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE OECS.

(D) OUR INFORMATION IS THAT CARICOM, WHICH INCLUDES THE MEMBERS OF THE OECS, WAS DIVIDED IN ITS VIEWS WHEN IT MET YESTERDAY, THAT A MAJORITY WERE AGAINST A RESORT TO FORCE AND THAT THE DECISION TAKEN WAS TO ADOPT A SERIES OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MEASURES INSTEAD.

(E) I HAVE A PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL IN GRENADA. AS THE QUEEN'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ISLAND HE IS IN A VERY 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 MILITARY COUNCIL, 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.

(F) WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP WHO COULD BE ESTABLISHED IN THE AFTERMATH OF A MILITARY OPERATION (BISHOP HIMSELF WAS, OF COURSE, A MARXIST AND WAS IN POWER UNCONSTITUTIONALLY).

(G) THIS ACTION WILL BE SEEN AS INTERVENTION BY A WESTERN DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A SMALL INDEPENDENT NATION, HOWEVER UNATTRACTIVE ITS REGIME. I ASK YOU TO CONSIDER THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR WIDER EAST/WEST RELATIONS AND OF THE FACT THAT WE WILL BE HAVING IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO PRESENT TO OUR PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE THE SITING OF CRUISE MISSILES IN THIS COUNTRY. I MUST ASK YOU TO THINK MOST CAREFULLY ABOUT THESE POINTS. I CANNOT CONCEAL THAT I AM DEEPLY DISTURBED BY YOUR LATEST COMMUNICATION. YOU ASKED FOR MY ADVICE. I HAVE SET IT OUT AND HOPE THAT EVEN AT THIS LATE STAGE YOU WILL TAKE IT INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE EVENTS ARE IRREVOCABLE.

YOURS EVER,

MARGARET THATCHER.