



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 October 1983

GRENADA

President Reagan rang the Prime Minister at 1730 hours today. He began by saying that if he was in London he would throw his hat in the door first. He very much regretted the embarrassment that had been caused and wanted the Prime Minister to know how it had happened. He had been woken at three o'clock in the morning, when on a so-called golfing vacation, with an urgent plea from the OECS. A group had convened in Washington to study the matter. The Americans had been greatly concerned because they had a problem of a leak. It was important that they should move ahead of Cuba which was already making tentative moves and sending some command personnel into Grenada. The Administration had been so cautious that it had not given firm assurances of intervention to the Caribbean States. Again they were worried about the leak and the fact that lives were at stake. By the time he had received the Prime Minister's message setting out her concerns the zero hour had passed and forces were on their way. He wanted the Prime Minister to know that there was absolutely no feeling of a lack of confidence in the British Government. But this was the first decision he had taken during his Administration which had been properly kept secret. The military had only a matter of hours.

Now the Governor General and his wife were safe and their security had been one of America's primary goals. The military action had gone very well. The two airfields had been taken with comparative ease, as had the medical school which had some 800 American students. There was still some resistance. He thought that the 800 or so Cuban construction personnel must have been military reserves. A group of Cubans had arrived in Grenada before the American forces and they had turned out to be military commanders. They were apparently now leading the continued resistance at three points. The Americans had 250 Cuban prisoners.

/The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister said that she hoped that the operation would soon be over and that democracy could be restored. President Reagan said that the British role would be important. The aim would be to secure democracy under the Constitution which we had left behind. The Prime Minister observed that that Constitution had been suspended in 1979.

President Reagan said that the Americans believed that Bishop had been murdered because he was trying to get on better terms with the Americans. He had visited the State Department.

The Prime Minister asked whether there was any information about Coard. The President replied in the negative. It was possible that Coard had gone the same way as Bishop. But he was very optimistic about the military situation. Casualties had been very limited.

The OECS States had been wonderful. The Prime Minister of Dominica had taken Washington by storm. The Prime Minister of Barbados was going to visit Washington shortly and would be appearing on television. The OECS countries tended to think of themselves as one group. The Americans wanted to get them out ahead in restoring democratic government.

The Prime Minister commented that there would still be much to do in Grenada and it could be very tricky. President Reagan said that the military phase would end very shortly. He did want the Prime Minister to understand the worry about leaks which had been at the root of American behaviour.

The Prime Minister thanked the President for his telephone call. The conversation ended at about 1745 hours.

I should be grateful if you would ensure that the contents of this letter are very carefully protected.

Yours ever

John G. Cole

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.