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SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 /092 W
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R 201814Z OCT 80
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4654
INFO USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
USLO CARIBBEAN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRIDGETOWN 6238

E.O. 12065: RDS-4, 10/20/00 (KNIGHT, DONALD R.) OR-P
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, GJ
SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST'S VIEWS ON GRENADA

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. PRESIDENT OF GRENADA'S SEAMEN AND WATERFRONT WORKERS UNION, ERIC PIERRE, MET WITH REGIONAL LABATT SEPTEMBER 17 TO GIVE HIS IMPRESSIONS OF CURRENT ATTITUDES IN GRENADA AND OF RECENTLY CONCLUDED CCL CONFERENCE. PIERRE NOTED HE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN KEEPING HIS UNION FROM FALLING UNDER THE CONTROL OF PRG SUPPORTERS, THAT KNOWN NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT (NJM) SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN DEFEATED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO TAKE OVER ELECTED POSITIONS IN HIS UNION, AND THAT AN ATTEMPT BY THE NJM TO ESTABLISH A RIVAL UNION ON THE WATERFRONT HAS BEEN A COMPLETE FAILURE. HIS UNION IS THE LAST DEMOCRATIC UNION IN GRENADA, NOW THAT THE TECHNICAL AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION HAS ELECTED JIM WARDALLY AS ITS NEW PRESIDENT. THE CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION, THOUGH NOT COMPLETELY UNDER THE CONTROL OF PRG SUPPORTERS, HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A WEAK AND INEFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION, AND
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PIERRE CONSIDERS IT TO BE OF LITTLE POTENTIAL VALUE AS AN ALLY WITHIN THE NOW PRG-DOMINATED TRADE UNION COUNCIL. PIERRE SAID HE IS AWARE THAT HE AND HIS UNION ARE BEING CLOSELY WATCHED BY THE PRG, AND HE HAS TAKEN A LOW PROFILE TO AVOID UNNECESSARILY ANTAGONIZING HIS OPPOSITION. HE WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO SPEAK AGAINST PRG ABUSES AT UNION MEETINGS, AND IS DEPENDING ON HIS TIES WITH OTHER SEAMEN AND WATERFRONT UNIONS IN THE REGION TO SUPPORT HIM IF HE IS DETAINED. SUCH A MOVE BY THE PRG, HE ADDED, WOULD CAUSE HIS UNION TO SHUT DOWN THE PORT, AND WOULD GENERATE A COMPLETE BLOCKAGE BY

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Adolph Eisner, Senior Reviewer

OTHER REGIONAL UNIONS OF ALL SHIPPING TO GRENADA. HE BELIEVES THE ONE REASON THE PRG HAS NOT MOVED OPENLY AGAINST HIM IS ITS CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS FROM THE CCL AND THE REGIONS' WATERFRONT WORKERS. HE WAS PLEASED THAT THE CCL INVITED HIM TO ATTEND THE CCL CONFERENCE, AS THIS INDICATED TO THE PRG THE DEPTH OF REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR HIM AND HIS UNION.

3. PIERRE DESCRIBED THE CURRENT MOOD OF THE GRENADIAN PEOPLE AS INCREASINGLY ANTI-PRG, ESPECIALLY IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS. THERE IS A FEAR OF OPENLY SPEAKING OUT AGAINST THE PRG IN PUBLIC, A FEAR HEIGHTENED BY THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE FATE AND NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD BY THE PRG. SOME UNNAMED OPPONENTS TO THE PRG HAVE REPORTEDLY TOLD PIERRE THAT THEY EXPECT THE PRG TO FALL BY MID-1981, DUE TO GROWING UNREST OVER ECONOMIC MATTERS AND THE PRG'S CONTINUING ANTI-PRG RHETORIC. MORALE IN THE MILITARY IS SAID TO BE LOW, DUE TO AN APPARENT TWENTY PERCENT WAGE CUT CAUSED BY THE FAILURE OF PROMISED FOREIGN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ARRIVE. SOME ELEMENTS IN THE MILITARY, PIERRE SAID, ARE TALKING ABOUT THE NEED FOR A COUP, AND ARE REPORTEDLY SEARCHING FOR A CIVILIAN LEADER TO HEAD SUCH A COUP. THEY HAVE HEARD OF THE CHAOS CAUSED IN SURINAME BY A LEADERLESS MILITARY COUP, AND WANT TO AVOID A SIMILAR SITUATION FROM
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DEVELOPING IN GRENADA. PIERRE NOTED THAT ALL OF THIS IS BASED ON RUMORS COMMONLY HEARD IN GRENADA, AND MAY BE BASELESS, BUT IS STILL AN INDICATION OF THE GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PRG.

4. POLITICAL FRIENDS OF PIERRE, HE STATED, HAVE MADE THE PRG AN OFFER WHICH WILL ALLOW THE PRG TO RUN THE COUNTRY FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS FOLLOWING A GENERAL ELECTION. UNDER THIS PLAN THE PRG WOULD BE GUARANTEED A MAJORITY OF SEATS IN A GENERAL ELECTION, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE OPPOSITION WOULD NOT BE DENIED THE RIGHT TO OPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT IN THE NORMAL POLITICAL SYSTEM. THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, HOWEVER, WOULD BE FREE FROM ANY GUARANTEES TO THE PRG, AND THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE FREELY FOR WHICHEVER PARTY THEY MIGHT CHOOSE. PIERRE WAS VAGUE ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THIS OFFER, NOTING THAT THE PRG HAS MADE NO REPLY TO IT, THUS INDICATING TO HIM ITS FEAR OF ANY TYPE OF ELECTIONS.

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5. THE AIRPORT BEING CONSTRUCTED BY THE CUBANS IS RUNNING INTO TROUBLE, AND IS BEHIND SCHEDULE DUE TO PROBLEMS IN FILLING THE SALT POND WHERE A GOOD PART OF THE RUNWAY NEEDS TO BE LOCATED. THE POND APPEARS TO BE BOTTOMLESS, AND THE CUANS LACK THE EXPERTISE NEEDED TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM. PIERRE SAID HE EXPECTS THE AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION TO BE A LONG AND DIFFICULT PROCEDURE, ONE LIKELY TO CAUSE FUTURE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE PRG AND THEIR CUBAN FRIENDS.

6. VINCENT NOEL, HEAD OF THE GRENADA DELEGATION TO THE CCL CONFERENCE, WAS CRITICISED BY PIERRE AS BEING EXTREMELY NAIVE ABOUT THE REALITIES OF CARIBBEAN UNIONISM, AND OF THE SUBTLETIES INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH CARIBBEAN UNION LEADERS. NOEL CAME TO THE CCL CONFERENCE, EQUIPPED WITH WELL PRINTED RESOLUTION AND PAMPHLETS (SOME OF WHICH BORE THE NOTATION THAT THEY WERE PRINTED IN HAVANA), AND EXPECTED TO OVERWHELM ANY OPPOSITION TO THE GRENADA REVOLUTION, AND TO BE ELECTED TO THE CCL GOVERNING BODY. HIS ABRASIVE MANNER, AND PIERRE'S BEHIND THE SCENE LOBBYING AGAINST THE OFFICIAL GRENADA DELEGATION, CAUSED THE CCL DELEGATES TO REJECT MOST OF GRENADA'S RESOLUTIONS, AND TO ADAPT THE OTHER TO FIT THE MODERATE TONE OF THE CONFERENCE. ACCORDING TO
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PIERRE, NOEL WENT HOME A VERY DISILLUSIONED AND DISCOURAGED MAN. PIERRE DOUBTS IF NOEL WILL RETURN TO THE NEXT CCL CONFERENCE THREE YEARS FROM NOW, BECAUSE HE DOUBTS IF THE PRG WILL STILL BE IC POWER.

7. ACCORDING TO PIERRE, THE CCL'S PRESIDENT, VERNON GLEAN, AND SECRETARY/TREASURER, J. BURNS BONADIE, ARE EXPECTED TO VISIT GRENADA IN EARLY NOVEMBER. BONADIE HAS HAD AN OUTSTANDING INVITATION FROM THE PRG TO VISIT THE COUNTRY, BUT HAS REFUSED TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A VISIT BY HIMSELF.

THE FORMER CCL PRESIDENT, FRANK WALCOTT, REFUSED TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PRG, AND THIS KEPT BONADIE FROM ACCEPTING THE INVITATION. PIERRE RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH BOTH BONADIE AND GLEAN, AND THEY HAVE AGREED TO TRY TO VISIT GRENADA IN NOVEMBER TO GET A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE PRESENT SITUATION.

8. COMMENT: PIERRE WAS A LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURE DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF FORMER PRIME MINISTRE GAIRY, AND CONTINUES TO USE HIS POWERFUL UNION POSITION AS A BASE OF OPPOSITION TO THE PRG. HE REPORTEDLY HAS CONTACTS WITH THOSE OPPOSED TO THE PRG, AND HAS BEEN REPORTEDLY ASSOCIATED WITH ATTEMPTS TO FORM AN OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTY IN GRENADA. HIS REMARKS PROBABLY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THESE OPPONENTS TO THE PRG, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY HOW ACCURATE HIS REMARKS MIGHT BE ON THE GENERAL FEELING OF DISCONTENT BY THE POPULATION TOWARDS THE PRG.
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