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E.O. 12065: RDS-4 3/24/02 (FLOWER, LUDLOW) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, EAID, EINV, GJ, US, OREP
SUBJ: (S) CONGRESSMEN INVITE PRG TO TESTIFY ON CBI MARCH 29-30

REF: (A) BRIDGETOWN 1323, (B) BRIDGETOWN 1317, (C) FBIS
 KEY WEST FL 182338Z MAR 82, (D) BRIDGETOWN 1048,
 (E) BRIDGETOWN 1256

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT).
2. SUMMARY: TWO U.S. CONGRESSMEN WHO VISITED GRENADA TO ATTEND MARCH 13 COUP ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION (REF A) REPORTEDLY HAVE INVITED THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT TO SEND A DELEGATION TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS ON THE CARIBBEAN BASIN INITIATIVE AND GRENADA'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN IT. THE DELEGATION WILL INCLUDE ONE OR TWO MEMBERS OF GRENADA'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE DISTORTION OF THEIR TESTIMONY BY PRG AND PRO-GRENADA CONGRESSMEN. TESTIMONY REPORTEDLY SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 29-30. END SUMMARY.
3. CONGRESSMEN GEORGE CROCKETT AND JOHN CONYERS OF MICHIGAN, ALONG WITH JUDICIARY STAFFER MICHAEL WARD AND STAFFERS CHARLOTTE SCOTT AND BARBARA LEE OF CONGRESSMAN RON DELLUMS' OFFICE, WERE IN GRENADA MARCH 12-15 FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUP. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM GRENADA, THEY WERE TREATED AS DIGNITARIES, OCCUPIED PLACES OF HONOR ON THE PODIUM, AND HAD MEETINGS WITH PM BISHOP AND OTHER PRG OFFICIALS.
4. GRENADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT DAVID MINORS AND VP RICHARD MENEZES INFORMED EMBOFF VISITING GRENADA MARCH 22 THAT THE CONGRESSMEN INVITED THE PRG TO SEND A DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS ON THE CBI AT HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 29-30. ON MARCH 22, PRG DEPUTY FINANCE MINISTER LYDEN RAMDHANNY (THE PRG'S CONTACT MAN FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR) REQUESTED THAT THE EXECUTIVE OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DESIGNATE REPRESENTATIVES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PRG DELEGATION. MINORS INFORMED EMBOFF MARCH 23 THAT, AFTER A SECOND MEETING WITH RAMDHANNY THAT DAY, THE CHAMBER HAD AGREED TO SEND ONE OR POSSIBLY TWO REPRESENTATIVES. THESE PROBABLY WILL BE MINORS AND MENEZES.
5. MINORS DID NOT KNOW WHO THE PRG REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE. FONMIN UNISON WHITEMAN AND PERMSEC ASHLEY TAYLOR WILL BE ATTENDING A CARICOM FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN BELIZE AT THE END OF THE WEEK, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY COULD CONTINUE TO WASHINGTON FROM THERE. HOWEVER, WHEN EMBOFF TRIED TO DRAW TAYLOR OUT MARCH 23 ON THE PRG ATTEMPTING TO

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TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS AT SOME POINT ON THE CBI, TAYLOR WAS TOTALLY UNRESPONSIVE.

6. AT DINNER MARCH 22, MINORS AND MENEZES EXPRESSED TO EMBOFF THEIR OWN AND CHAMBER'S CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THEIR TESTIMONY. THEY HAD BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WOULD BE SPEAKING TO THE ENTIRE CONGRESS. EMBOFF TOLD THEM IT UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD BE ONE OR ANOTHER CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CONSIDERING CBI. THEY SAID THERE WAS AN EVEN DIVISION IN THE 12-MAN EXECUTIVE OVER WHETHER OR NOT TO GO. HALF DID NOT WANT TO GO IF ANY EXCUSE COULD BE FOUND BECAUSE THE TRIP WAS TOO POLITICALLY-CHARGED AND THEY WERE AFRAID THEY WOULD BE FORCED TO SAY POSITIVE AND UNTRUE THINGS ABOUT PRG PRIVATE SECTOR POLICIES. THE OTHER HALF WERE AFRAID THAT THE PRG WOULD RETALIATE IF THE CHAMBER REFUSED TO COOPERATE BY SENDING A DELEGATION. MINORS AND MENEZES TOLD EMBOFF THAT, ON MARCH 23, THEY WOULD TELL RAMDHANNY THAT THE CHAMBER WOULD CONSIDER SENDING A DELEGATION ONLY IF ITS REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE FREE TO EXPRESS HONESTLY CHAMBER VIEWS ON ANY ISSUE ABOUT WHICH THEY WERE ASKED. THEY FORECAST THAT, FACED WITH POTENTIALLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE DELEGATION MEMBERS, THE PRG MIGHT WITHDRAW THE REQUEST FOR CHAMBER PARTICIPATION.

7. HOWEVER, MINORS INFORMED EMBOFF BY A MESSAGE MARCH 23 THAT THE CHAMBER WILL PARTICIPATE. EMBASSY DOES NOT KNOW WHAT WAS PERSUADING FACTOR OR IF PRG HAS PLACED CONSTRAINTS ON FREE AND OPEN CHAMBER TESTIMONY IN WASHINGTON. EMBOFF HAD SUGGESTED TO MINORS AND MENEZES THAT THEY INSIST THAT CHAMBER REPRESENTATIVES BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN WASHINGTON FOR EXTRA PERIOD, DURING WHICH TIME THEY COULD HAVE PRIVATE TALKS WITH CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS TO GET THEIR TRUE VIEWPOINT ACROSS IN CASE SUCH PROVED IMPOSSIBLE IN PUBLIC HEARINGS. THEY MAY ATTEMPT TO DO THIS.

8. COMMENT: THE PRG HAS MADE ITS VIEWS ON THE CBI QUITE CLEAR IN A SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (REFS B AND C) AND IN ITS OWN PRESS (REF D). AT THE SAME TIME, WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT THE PRG WOULD CONCENTRATE ITS CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY ON ITS DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN A CBI WITHOUT POLITICAL STRINGS ATTACHED. THE PRESENCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR SPOKESMEN WOULD BE DESIGNED TO LEND CREDENCE TO PRG CLAIMS OF GOOD PRG-PRIVATE SECTOR RELATIONS. PRIVATE SECTOR REPS MIGHT BE DISINCLINED TO BE CANDID ABOUT THEIR VIEWS (SUMMARIZED IN REF E) FOR FEAR OF RETALIATION ON THEIR RETURN. CORRIDOR TALKS WITH CONGRESSIONAL STAFF, HOWEVER, MIGHT AFFORD A FORUM FOR FREER EXPRESSION OF VIEWS. IN SUM, PUBLIC APPEARANCE BY GRENADIAN DELEGATION BEFORE A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE COULD BE VERY HARMFUL TO PROPER EXECUTION OF CARIBBEAN BASIN INITIATIVE. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO MAKE SURE THAT CONGRESSMEN SKEPTICAL OF "PROGRESSIVE REGIMES" LIKE GRENADA'S ARE MADE AWARE OF REPORTED PRG VISIT AND ARE BRIEFED ON PRG STANCE TOWARD CBI, ON PRG PRIVATE SECTOR POLICIES AND ON US-GRENADA RELATIONS GENERALLY AND THAT THEY BE URGED TO ATTEND HEARINGS. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH ALSO TO ENSURE THAT PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES ARE GIVEN FULL OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SYMPATHETIC STAFFERS DURING THEIR WASHINGTON VISIT. MINORS AND MENEZES ARE VERY CONCERNED THAT THEY WILL BE PUT BEFORE A STACKED COMMITTEE AND WILL FIND THEMSELVES MANIPULATED INTO GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT ALL IS ROSY WITH GRENADA'S PRIVATE SECTOR. IT IS IN USG INTEREST THAT THIS NOT BE ALLOWED TO OCCUR AND THAT PRO-GRENADA PUBLICITY GARNERED BY WHITEMAN DURING HIS NOVEMBER 1981 U.S. VISIT NOT BE REPEATED. BISH
END OF MESSAGE

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