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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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REPORT CLASS ~~SECRET~~--WMINTEL--NOFORN

DIST: 20 DECEMBER 1983
COUNTRY: VANUATU
SUBJ : BACKGROUND ON VANUATU'S 2 NOVEMBER 1983
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
DOI : NOVEMBER 1983
SOURCE : [REDACTED]

1. BY MOST MEASUREMENTS, VANUATU'S 2 NOVEMBER 1983 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS RAN FAIRLY WELL. THIS IS DESPITE COMPARATIVELY LARGE FUNDING OF THE OPPOSITION'S EFFORT BY OUTSIDE INFLUENCE, BOTH AMERICAN AND FRENCH, MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR LAWSUITS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT BY THE OPPOSITION, AND DELAYS IN FORMULATING THE ELECTION RESULTS.

2. ALTHOUGH THE VANUA'AKU PATI (VP) ELECTION PLATFORM WAS A 52-PAGE DOCUMENT AVAILABLE AT ONLY A FEW BOOKSTORES, THE PRIMARY THEME ESPOUSED BY THE VP THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN WAS THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, INCLUDING THE UNION OF MODERATE PARTIES (UMP), NAGRIAMEL, NAMAHI AUTE, INDEPENDENT, THE FRENCH MELANESIAN PARTY (FMP) AND THE VANUATU INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE PARTY (VIAP), MAINTAINED TIES TO THE U.S. BASED PHOENIX FOUNDATION. EVEN TO THE POORLY EDUCATED VILLAGER OR TRIBESMAN, THE PHOENIX FOUNDATION HAS COME TO MEAN, "THE BIG BAD WHITE MAN." THE SECONDARY ISSUE FOR THE VP DURING THE CAMPAIGN WAS ITS RESPECT FOR THE TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND THE ASSOCIATED SECURITY SUCH OWNERSHIP AFFORDED THE AVERAGE NI-VANUATU FAMILY. VANUATU'S PRIME MINISTER, WALTER H. ((LINI)), RELEASED DOCUMENTS, WHICH HE HAD SECRETLY STOLEN FROM THE OPPOSITION, DEMONSTRATING THE OPPOSITION'S INTENT TO PERMIT "FOREIGNERS" (I.E. FOREIGN INVESTORS) THE RIGHT TO TAKE LAND AWAY FROM THE VANUATU PEOPLE. FIGHTING WHAT WAS A LOSING CAUSE, THE OPPOSITION REPEATED

ITS MAIN THEME THAT LINI AND HIS GOVERNMENT WERE GROWING INCREASINGLY CLOSE TO THE COMMUNISTS, SPECIFICALLY CUBA, AND THAT THIS TREND WAS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. A PRIMARY FAULT OF THE OPPOSITION DURING ITS CAMPAIGN WAS THE USE OF SPEECHES WRITTEN BY EUROPEAN OUTSIDERS WHO INCORPORATED PHRASEOLOGY FAR ABOVE THE COMPREHENSION LEVEL OF THE AVERAGE NI-VANUATU. SECONDLY, THE OPPOSITION FAILED TO FOCUS ON ISSUES OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO THE AVERAGE NI-VANUATU, SUCH AS HIS HOME, ABILITY TO FEED HIMSELF AND HIS GENERAL SECURITY. WHEN WILLIE ((JIMMY)), THE UMP COORDINATOR FOR THESE ELECTIONS AND MP FROM VILA, BROUGHT A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR LAWSUIT AGAINST LINI AND THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMING THAT THEY HAD NO PROOF OF OPPOSITION TIES TO THE PHOENIX FOUNDATION, LINI BEGAN RELEASING DETAILS VIA RADIO AND CAMPAIGN SPEECHES OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS' TRAVELS ABROAD AND SUBSEQUENT RECEIPT OF FUNDING FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES. JIMMY'S LAWSUIT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DROPPED IN LOW-KEY FASHION.

3. LINI BEGAN TO RECEIVE INFORMATION EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN THAT THE OPPOSITION, PRIMARILY THE UMP, WAS RECEIVING FUNDS FROM FRENCH AND AMERICAN SOURCES. BY THE TIME THE BALLOTS WERE CAST, THE OPPOSITION HAD RECEIVED A TOTAL OF OVER US\$200,000 IN CASH AND AIRLINE TICKETS. THIS SHARPLY CONTRASTS WITH ONLY US\$50,000, RAISED SOLELY THROUGH CONTRIBUTIONS, WHICH THE VP HAD AVAILABLE TO SPEND. HOWEVER, THE LINI GOVERNMENT OBTAINED EVIDENCE THAT AT LEAST HALF OF THE OPPOSITION'S OUTSIDE FUNDING WAS "SQUANDERED" ON PERSONAL EXPENSES FOR ANYTHING FROM DENTAL REPAIR TO TELEVISION SETS AND WOMEN.

4. WHILE THE VP MAINTAINED WELL-BASED CONFIDENCE THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN THAT IT WOULD WIN BY A WIDE MARGIN, THE OPPOSITION BELIEVED WRONGLY UP UNTIL ELECTION DAY THAT IT COULD WIN OVER VP BY A MARGIN OF 20 SEATS TO 19. THIS VIEW WAS BASED PRIMARILY UPON OPPOSITION POLLING IN THE PORT VILA AND EFATE ISLAND AREAS BUT FAILED TO INCLUDE ACCURATE ESTIMATES OF LINI'S GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORT ELSEWHERE. DESPITE THESE FAILURES AND ABUSE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS, WILLIE JIMMY AND THE OPPOSITION ARE CONSIDERED A SUCCESS BY MOST SUPPORTERS OF THEIR CAUSE. NOW THAT THE VP HAS LOST THE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY

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IN PARLIAMENT (BY LOSING TWO SEATS), IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION EASILY.

5. ONE OPPOSITION MEMBER OF CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE WHO IS UNHAPPY WITH THE ELECTION RESULTS, HOWEVER, IS PIERRE ((BOURGEOIS)), A FRENCH BUSINESSMAN AND HEAD OF VANUATU'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. BOURGEOIS IS THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES POLITICAL FORCE OF WILLIE JIMMY AND CONTROLLER OF HIS BUSINESS INTERESTS. TO FURTHER CEMENT THEIR RELATIONSHIP, BOURGEOIS RECENTLY MADE JIMMY HIS DEPUTY AT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. BOURGEOIS'S GOAL IS TO ONE DAY CONTROL THE VANUATU GOVERNMENT FROM BEHIND THE SCENES. IN ALL HIS OWN BUSINESS INTERESTS AND OTHERS ON WHICH HE CAN ASSERT CONTROL, BOURGEOIS EMPLOYS ONLY ANGLOPHILE CATHOLICS AND FORCES EACH TO VOTE AS BOURGEOIS DEMANDS. AFTER THE OPPOSITION'S RECENT ELECTION EFFORTS FAILED, BOURGEOIS BEGAN TO EVALUATE OTHER AVENUES FOR EXERTING HIS PERSONAL INFLUENCE ON THE NEW GOVERNMENT. HE BELIEVED THAT THERE MIGHT BE POTENTIAL OPPOSITION TO LINI AS PRIME MINISTER AND IF A SUFFICIENTLY POPULAR CANDIDATE WERE NOMINATED FOR THE POSITION, LINI COULD BE OUSTED. BOURGEOIS FELT THAT BARAK ((SOPE)) WOULD HAVE THE GREATEST APPEAL TO VP AND OPPOSITION PARLIAMENT MEMBERS ALIKE, AND BELIEVED THAT HE ((BOURGEOIS)) AND HIS VIETNAMESE BUSINESS COLLEAGUES, ((DINH)) VAN THO AND ((DINH)) VAN LUAN, WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTROL SOPE, THEIR PARTNER IN PREVIOUS BUSINESS VENTURES. BOURGEOIS APPROACHED SOPE PRIVATELY AND DISCUSSED A PLAN TO HAVE AN OPPOSITION MP NOMINATE SOPE AS A CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER ON 21 NOVEMBER 1983, THE FIRST DAY OF SITTING FOR THE NEW PARLIAMENT. SOPE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BOURGEOIS'S PROPOSAL BUT DECIDED THAT IF NOMINATED, HE WOULD DECLINE THE NOMINATION. DESPITE SOPE'S DECISION TO DECLINE BOURGEOIS'S OFFER, IT IS BELIEVED BY OPPOSITION MEMBERS THAT SOPE WILL NOT TELL LINI ANYTHING ABOUT THE SCHEME.

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