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INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
HA-06 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01 IO-14 EUR-12 COME-00  
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R 041414Z NOV 80  
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4011  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

RELEASE IN FULL

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E.O. 12065: GDS 11/3/86 (ROBERTS, GEORGE B.) OR-M  
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, GY  
SUBJ: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH PRESIENT BURNHAM

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Richard Zorn, Senior  
Reviewer

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN AN OCTOBER30 COURTESY CALL ARRANGED AT GUYANESE PRESIDENT BURNHAM'S REQUEST, I WAS ABLE ONCE AGAIN TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERN OVER THE TREND IN TH GUYANESE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. BURNHAM DEFENDED HIMSELF ELOQUENTLY, POINTING OUT THAT THE GOG DID NOT COMMIT MANY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS FOUND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. THE CONVERSATION ALSO TOUCHED ON GUYANA'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION, WHICH BURNHAM CLAIMED GAVE HIM NO MORE POWER THAN HE HAD HAD BEFORE. THE CONVESATION WAS RELAZED AND NON-CONTENTIOUS.

2. (C) ACTION REQUESTED: THAT EMBASSY GEORGETOWN BE PROVIDED WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE U.S. ALTERNATE GOVERNOR IN THE OCTOBER 7 WORLD BANK MEETING ON THE \$8 MILLION POWER DEVELOPMENT LOAN TO GUYANA.  
END SUMMARY.  
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3. (C) I CALLED ON GUYANA PRESIDENT BURNHAM OCTOBER 30 AT HIS REQUEST. THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL HAD INFORMED ME THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED TO RECEIVE RESIDENT CHIEFS OF MISSION AS SERVERAL OF THEM HAD EXPRESSED THE DESIRE TO PAY COURTESY CALLS ON HIM. (NEITHER I NOR MY BRITISH AND CANADIAN COLLEAGUES HAD REQUESTED SUCH A MEETING.)

4. (LOU) BURNHAM ASKED ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING U.S.

ELECTIONS. I SAID THAT THE CONTEST WAS TOO CLOSE TO CALL. WE DISCUSSED THE JAMAICAN ELECTIONS, WHICH WERE STILL UNDERWAY AT THE TIME OF OUR CONVERSATION. WE MENTIONED THE VARIOUS POLLS WHICH SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT THE JLP WOULD WIN.

5. (C) I TOLD BURNHAM THAT THE U.S. HOPED THAT THE FORTHCOMING GUYANESE ELECTIONS WOULD BE A FULLY ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE FEELINGS OF THE GUYANESE PEOPLE. I MENTIONED THE RECENT STATEMENTS BY MR. WARNE IN BRIDGETOWN AS EXAMPLES OF OUR POSITION. BURNHAM DID NOT COMMENT AT THIS POINT.

6. (C) AFTER SEVERAL MINUTES OF DISCUSSION ON THE GUYANIAN PROPOSAL TO OPERATE AMERICAN-FLAG AIRLINE SERVICE ON THE NEW YORK-GEORGETOWN ROUTE (SEPTTEL), BURNHAM COMMENTED THAT THE U.S. ALTERNATE GOVERNOR OF THE IBRD HAD SPOKEN OUT AGAINST GUYANA DURING THE RECENT MEETING WHICH HAD VOTED ON AN \$8 MILLION WORLD BANK LOAN TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUYANA'S ELECTRIC POWER. I SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY I HAD HAD NO DIRECT REPORT OF WHAT OUR ALTERNATE GOVERNOR MIGHT HAVE SAID. HOWEVER, I WAS AWARE OF SOME OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAD GONE

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INTO THE FORMULATION OF OUR POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THIS LOAN. SOME ELEMENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND ELSEWHERE IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD WANTED US TO ABSTAIN ON THE LOAN SINCE THEY WERE CONCERNED OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS CLIMATE IN GUYANA. I SAID THAT I GATHERED THAT A DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO SUPPORT THE LOAN BUT TO MAKE SOME STATEMENT EXPRESSING OUR CONCERN.

7. (C) (NOTE: AS A RESULT OF SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BRITISH AND CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONERS, I BELIEVE I MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CORRECT IN INDICATING TO BURNHAM THAT ANY RESERVATIONS WE MAY HAVE EXPRESSED IN THE OCTOBER 7 IBRD MEETING WERE BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS ALREADY AWARE FROM GEORGETOWN 5021, I TOOK THIS SAME POSSIBLE ERRONEOUS LINE WITH EMERGENCY MINISTER JACK OCTOBER 14. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR THE CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING, I ALSO INDICATED TO JACK THAT WE HAD NOT YET TAKEN ANY DEFINITE POSITION WITH RESPECT TO UPPER MAZARUNI. IT MIGHT THUS BE USEFUL IF EMBASSY GEORGETOWN COULD BE PROVIDED WITH WHATEVER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AS TO THE PRESENTATION ON GUYANA MADE BY OUR IBRD ALTERNATE GOVERNOR ON OCTOBER 7.)

8. (C) BURNHAM LAUNCHED INTO A DEFENSE OF GUYANA'S HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. HE ASKED WHO THE ELEMENTS WERE IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WHO WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE

SITUATION IN GUYANA. I EXPLAINED THE ORIGIN AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BUREAU OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS. I SAID THAT THIS BUREAU, ALONG WITH OTHER OFFICES IN THE DEPARTMENT, HAD TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION VARIOUS REPORTS ABOUT THE DEATH OF DR. WALTER RODNEY AND ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS IN GUYANA. I MENTIONED THE CHARGES MADE ABOUT THE 1978 REFERENDUM AND THE REMOVAL FROM GUYANA OF MATERIAL WITNESSES IN THE RODNEY CASE. I MENTIONED THE RECENT INCIDENT IN WHICH

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A GROUP OF FOREIGN REPORTERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED WHILE TAKING PICTURES OF A POLICE STATION AT LEONORA IN WEST BANK DEMERARA (SEPTEL).

9. (C) BURNHAM SAID THAT HE THOUGHT HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO GUYANA WERE ILL FOUNDED. THE COUNTRY HAD FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND NO POLITICAL PRISONERS. THERE WAS NO TORTURE. PEOPLE COULD GET UP AND MAKE INSULTING REFERENCES TO HIM AT ANY TIME. THE OPPOSITION PPP AND WPA OPERATED FREELY WITHIN THE COUNTRY. WALTER RODNEY HAD BEEN UP TO NO GOOD. HE HAD WANTED TO OBTAIN EXPLOSIVES, AND HE HAD BLOWN HIMSELF UP WITH HIS OWN

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BOMB.

10. (C) BURNHAM SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD TOO MANY BEAMS IN ITS OWN EYE TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN GUYANA. HE SAID THAT AMERICAN BLACKS WERE NOT TREATED PROPERLY. HE ASKED ME ABOUT DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS. HE SAID THAT GUYANA'S ONLY PROBLEM WAS THAT IT WAS SMALL AND THAT IT HAD NEVER BEEN FORGIVEN FOR NATIONALIZING THE BAUXITE INDUSTRY. HE SAID THAT GUYANA ATTACKED THE DOMESTIC POLICIES OF NO OTHER COUNTRY EXCEPT SOUTH AFRICA. IT DID NOT ATTACK BRITISH PRACTICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND OR THE AMERICAN RACIAL SITUATION.

11. (C) I AGREED THAT WE HAD PROBLEMS WITH RACE RELATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES BUT THAT WE HAD COME A LONG WAY. DESPITE OUR LINGERING DIFFICULTIES, HOWEVER, MANY GUYANESE BLACKS SEEMED TO WANT TO GO AND LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES. BURNHAM AGREED THAT THIS WAS TRUE, BUT HE SAID THAT THE ISSUE WAS RELATIVE. HE  
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HAD, FOR EXAMPLE, VISITED WATTS SOME YEARS AGO. HE HAD NOTED THAT THE DISTRICT COMPARED QUITE FAVORABLE WITH MUCH OF THE REST OF THE WORLD BUT UNFAVORABLE WITH NEARBY DISTRICTS IN LOS ANGELES. CONDITIONS FOR BLACK PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES COMPARED UNFAVORABLE WITH THE CONDITIONS THEY SAW AROUND THEM, BUT THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT THEY COMPARED EXTREMELY FAVORABLE WITH THE CONDITIONS FOUND IN GUYANA.

12. (C) BURNHAM SAID THAT HE DID NOT SEE WHY THE UNITED STATES WOULD OBJECT TO GUYANESE POLICIES. DESPITE OCCASIONAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S., GUYANA WAS DETERMINED TO BE INDEPENDENT AND NOT BECOME A SOVIET BASE. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED MARXIST PHILOSOPHY BUT HE CONSISTENTLY ANNOYED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR BY MAINTAINING THAT LENIN WAS NOT A PHILOSOPHER BUT SIMPLY A SOVIET POLITICIAN. HE WOULD STICK TO THIS POSITION AND NOT GIVE THE USSR A Foothold IN SOUTH AMERICA. THE OPPOSITION PPP WOULD INVITE IN THE SOVIETS. WE BOTH AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PPP SEEMED TO HAVE LOST MUCH OF ITS STRENGTH. I MENTIONED THAT IT EVEN SEEMED TO HAVE LOST SOME OF ITS SOVIET BACKING; THE USSR DELEGATE AT A UNESCO MEETING TWO MONTHS AGO HAD NOT SUPPORTED MRS. JANET JAGAN'S COMPLAINT ABOUT PRESS FREEDOM IN GUYANA (PARIS 27707). "PERHAPS THEY (THE SOVIETS) HAVE GIVEN UP ON JAGAN," BURNHAM COMMENTED.

13. (LOU) BURNHAM SAID THAT HE HAD NOTED THAT WE WERE

SUPPORTING COSTA RICA FOR A SEAT ON THE U.S. SECURITY COUNCIL. I SAID THAT THIS WAS TRUE SINCE COSTA RICA WAS THE CANDIDATE OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE GROUP.

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14. (C) I ASKED BURNHAM ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF PRODUCTION IN GUYANA. I SAID THAT I HAD NOTICED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HABITUALLY BLAMED GUYANA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ON SUCH OUTSIDERS AS MULTINATIONA COMPANIES, FOREIGN CAPITALISTS, AND THE EXISTING WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER. I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME THAT GUYANA'S FAILURE TO REACH TARGETED PRODUCTION LEVELS IN THE SUGAR, RICE, AND BAUXITE INDUSTRIES HAD BERY LITTLE TO DO WITH OUTSIDERS.

15. (C) BURNHAM LAUNCHED INTO A LONG DISCUSSION OF THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS BESETTING GUYANA'S MAIN INDUSTRIES. HE SAID THAT HE SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME URGING GUYANESE WORKERS TO PRODUCE MORE. THEY WERE HAMPERED BY DIFFICULT PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND BAD HABITS INHERITED FROM THE PAST. HE WAS DOING EVERYTHING HE COULD TO CORRECT THE SITUATION. WE DISCUSSED FOR SEVERAL MINUTES THE DIFFERENT PROBLEMS FACED BY DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE BAUXITE INDUSTRY.

16. (C) I SAID THAT THERE WAS ONE LAST ITEM WHICH I WANTED TO MENTION TO BURNHAM: THE NEW CONSTITUTION. I SAID THAT THE NEW CHARTER SEEMED TO GIVE THE EXECUTIVE AN UNBALANCED AMOUNT OF POWER OVER THE LEGISLATURE. BURNHAM SAID THAT THIS HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE. PARLIAMENT HAD ALWAYS BEEN "A RUBBER STAMP." HE HAD NO MORE REAL POWER NOW THAN HE HAD HAD UNDER THE OLD CONSTITUTION. NOTHING HAD REALLY CHANGED EXCEPT THAT HE HAD MORE CEREMONIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

17. (C) COMMENT: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, I DID NOT REALLY HAVE ANYTHING THAT I WANTED TO BRING UP WITH BURNHAM AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT. THE OTHER SUBJECTS WE MENTIONED, SUCH AS THE ECONOMY AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION, I HAD BEEN PLANNING TO DISCUSS WITH HIM AFTER THE ELECTIONS. I THEREFORE THOUGH IT BETTER  
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TO TRY TO KEEP THE CONVERSATION ON A NON-CONTENTIONUS PLANE AND SAVE ANY ARM-TWISTING ON, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ECONOMY, UNTIL LATER. BURNHAM WENT ALONG WITH THIS, AND PARTLY AS RESULT OF THE RELAZED ATMOSPHERE OUR MEETIG

RAN THIRTY MINUTES OVER THE ALLOTTED THREE QUARTERS OF AN HOUR. DRINKS WERE BROUGHT IN AT MIDPOINT.

18. (C) BURNHAM WAS ELOQUENT BUT DEFENSIVE WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS. HIS REFERENCE TO COOK COUNTRY INDICATES THAT HE IS AWARE THAT HIS ADHERENCE TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES HAS BEEN LESS THAN PERFECT. ALTHOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT THINK THAT OUR CRITICISMS ARE JUSTIFIED, HE SHOULD NO LONGER HAVE ANY DOUBT AS TO WHETHER WE ARE CONCERNED OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GUYANA.  
ROBERTS

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