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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2858
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USINT HAVANA
USOUTHCOM QUARRY HTS

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NOFORN

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/30/86 (ROBERTS, GEORGE B.) OR-M
TAGS: PINT, PINS, GY
SUBJECT: TWO WEEKS AFTER RODNEY DEATH: HOW THINGS STAND

REF: A) GEORGETOWN 2902 (NOTAL), B) GEORGETOWN 2552 (NOTAL)

1. (U) SUMMARY: TWO WEEKS AFTER THE VIOLENT DEATH OF ANTI-
GOG ACTIVIST AND LEADER OF THE WORKING PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE
(WPA) DR. WALTER RODNEY, THE GOG AND ITS CRITICS REMAIN AS
FAR APART AS EVER IN THEIR RESPECTIVE VERSIONS OF THE EVENTS
SURROUNDING RODNEY'S DEATH ON JUNE 13. THE OFFICIAL VERSION
INSISTS THAT RODNEY BLEW HIMSELF UP. THE CRITICS CLAIM
RODNEY WAS MURDERED BY THE REGIME OF PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM,
WHILE SOME FURTHER CLAIM TO SEE RODNEY'S DEATH AS PART OF A
GENERAL "IMPERIALIST" PLOT IN THE CARIBBEAN AIMED AT REMOVING
THE REGION'S "PROGRESSIVE" LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

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2. (U) TWO WEEKS AFTER THE DEATH OF ANTI-GOG WORKING
PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE ACTIVIST AND LEADER, DR. WALTER RODNEY,
THE REGIME OF PRIME MINISTER LINDEN F. BURNHAM AND ITS
CRITICS, DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN, REMAIN AS FAR APART AS
EVER IN THEIR RESPECTIVE VERSIONS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING RODNEY'S JUNE 13 DEATH. THEY AGREE ONLY
THAT RODNEY DIED IN A BOMB BLAST WHICH TORE APART HIS
BROTHER'S CAR.

3. (U) THE GOG HAS INSISTED FROM THE BEGINNING THAT
RODNEY ACCIDENTALLY BLEW HIMSELF UP AS HE APPROACHED THE GEORGETOWN JAIL WITH A BOMB. THE AUTHORITIES RIDICULE THE STATEMENT GIVEN BY DONALD RODNEY, WALTER'S BROTHER AND COMPANION ON JUNE 13, WHICH ASSERTED THAT ON THAT DATE HE AND HIS BROTHER RECEIVED WHAT THEY BELIEVED TO BE A WALKIE-TALKIE FROM A FORMER GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE (GDF) SERGEANT, GREGORY SMITH. THE GOG, WHICH HAS FILED CHARGES AGAINST DONALD RODNEY FOR POSSESSION OF AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE (REF A), REPLIED THAT A SEARCH OF GDF PERSONNEL RECORDS REVEALED NO SGT. GREGORY SMITH AND THAT HE PROBABLY NEVER EXISTED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS FURTHER CLAIMED THAT DONALD'S THREE-DAY DELAY IN RELATING HIS ACCOUNT TO THE POLICE MADE VERY DIFFICULT THE TASK OF LOCATING SMITH EVEN IF HE DID EXIST.


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HIMSELF UP WITH A "WALKIE-TALKIE."

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6. (U) THE OPPOSITION WEEKLY CATHOLIC STANDARD (JUNE 29) REPORTED THAT A WOMAN HAD SWORN OUT A STATEMENT CLAIMING PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF SGT. SMITH'S EXISTENCE. THE STANDARD ALSO REPORTED THAT ACCORDING TO ITS SOURCES, SMITH HAD NOT LEFT GUYANA. THE SAME ISSUE CARRIED EXCERPTS FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE BRITISH "GUARDIAN" NEWSPAPER BY FORMER UK ATTORNEY-GENERAL SAM SILKIN DESCRIBING RODNEY AS INNOCENT OF THE ARSON CHARGES AGAINST HIM (REF B) AND AS A "DEEPLY INTELLIGENT AND COMPASSIONATE MAN" WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN VIOLENCE EXCEPT WHEN ALL OTHER FORMS OF OPPOSITION HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED. (COMMENT: SILKIN ATTENDED THE TRIAL FOR ARSON OF RODNEY AND TWO OTHER WPA LEADERS, JUNE 3-6, AS AN OBSERVER FOR THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP.)

7. (U) THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE PRO-MOSCOW PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP), THE MIRROR (JUNE 29), ALLEGED SECRET

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THAT RODNEY'S DEATH WAS A PART OF A REGIONAL PLOT BY THE
FORCES OF "REACTION AND IMPERIALISM" TO DO AWAY WITH "PROGRESSIVE" LEADERS. THE MIRROR CLAIMED TO SEE RODNEY'S DEATH AS RELATED TO THE SUPPOSED MILITARY PLOT AGAINST MANLEY IN JAMAICA AND THE ATTEMPTS TO KILL GRENADA'S MAURICE BISHOP.

8. (C) IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, THE GOG MADE MUCH OF A JUNE 21 STATEMENT BY GRENADE'S SECRETARY OF HOME AFFAIRS VINCENT NOEL, IN GEORGETOWN LAST WEEK FOR RODNEY'S FUNERAL, THAT CONTRARY TO A STORY CARRIED IN THE CATHOLIC STANDARD, MAURICE BISHOP HAD NOT REFERRED TO RODNEY'S DEATH AS AN "ASSASSINATION." THE NEW NATION (JUNE 29) ACCUSED THE STANDARD OF AGAIN PUBLISHING "LIES." NOEL AND OTHER VISITING VIPS, SUCH AS JAMAICA'S RALPH BROWN (SEPTEL) AND TRINIDAD'S RAFIQ SHAH, LEFT GUYANA PRIOR TO THE JUNE 23 FUNERAL. MANY OF THEM DID, HOWEVER, ATTEND A MEMORIAL SERVICE HELD IN A GEORGETOWN CATHEDRAL ON JUNE 21. (COMMENT: GUYANESE AUTHORITIES, WHO HAD REQUESTED AN INVESTIGATION BY FOREIGN EXPERTS, DID NOT RELEASE THE BODY TO THE FAMILY UNTIL JUNE 22.) THE ONLY FOREIGN DIPLOMAT WHO ATTENDED THE SERVICES FOR RODNEY WAS THE CUBAN EMBASSY'S MINISTER COUNSELLOR PEDRO SILVIO GONZALEZ PEREZ, WHO ALSO SIGNED THE CONDOLENCE BOOK AT WPA HEADQUARTERS. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR WAS NOT IN GEORGETOWN AT THE TIME.)

9. (S/NF) A WELL-PLACED SOURCE ORALLY PROVIDED EMBASSY GEORGETOWN ON JUNE 28 WITH SOME PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE FINDINGS BY THE BRITISH FORENSIC TEAM WHICH EXAMINED THE REMAINS OF WALTER RODNEY AND THE CAR IN WHICH HE DIED. RODNEY'S HANDS WERE REPORTED TO BE UNINJURED BY THE BLAST INDICATING THAT HE WAS NOT HOLDING THE EX-SECRET

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PLOSIVE DEVICE WHICH KILLED HIM. THE INJURIES HE SUSTAINED INDICATED THE BOMB HAD BEEN RESTING IN HIS LAP. FRAGMENTS OF THE DEVICE REMOVED FROM THE BODY AND FROM THE CAR INCLUDED PIECES OF WOOD. THESE AND OTHER BITS HAVE LED THE FORENSIC TEAM TO SUSPECT THAT THE DEVICE WAS SOPHISTICATED BUT OF A TYPE GENERALLY AVAILABLE TO TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD. (COMMENT: AS WE DO NOT WISH TO RISK COMPROMISING OUR SOURCE, PLEASE TREAT THIS INFORMATION AS SECRET/NOFORN). THE TEAM'S FULL REPORT WILL BE COMPLETE IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS. ROBERTS

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