

RELEASE IN FULL

SECRET

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Richard Zorn,
Senior Reviewer

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2858
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 GEORGETOWN 2989

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.

4. (7) THE WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) PARTY, THE NEW NATION (JUNE 29), REPRINTED A THREE-PART SERIES CARRIED EARLIER IN THE GOG-OWNED DAILY NEWSPAPER, GUYANA CHRONICLE, GIVING THE OFFICIAL VERSION THAT RODNEY HAD KILLED HIMSELF WITH A BOMB HE HAD INTENDED TO USE AGAINST THE WALL OF THE GEORGETOWN JAIL. THE SAME ISSUE ALSO PUBLISHED TWO SATIRICAL CARTOONS OF A FOOLISH-LOOKING RODNEY BLOWING
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HIMSELF UP WITH A "WALKIE-TALKIE."

5. (U) A HAND-OUT MIMEOGRAPHED AND DISTRIBUTED THIS WEEK, APPARENTLY BY THE WPA, ACCUSED THE GOG OF LYING ABOUT SMITH: HE NOT ONLY EXISTS, THE DOCUMENT CLAIMED, BUT HE WAS AN "AGENT OF THE PNC". THE HAND-OUT GAVE WHAT PURPORTED TO BE DETAILS OF SMITH'S LIFE AND MILITARY CAREER. SMITH SUPPOSEDLY HAD THE "SECRET ASSIGNMENT" OF INFILTRATING THE WPA, POSING AS A DIS-AFFECTED BRITISH-TRAINED MILITARY ELECTRONICS EXPERT. SMITH WON THE CONFIDENCE OF RODNEY, PROMISED TO BUILD HIM A WALKIE-TALKIE AND THEN, ACCORDING TO THIS ACCOUNT, MURDERED HIM WITH A "SOPHISTICATED DEVICE" BROUGHT FROM THE US FOR THAT PURPOSE BY GDF CHIEF-OF-STAFF BRIGADIER NORMAN MCLEAN. (COMMENT: MCLEAN RECENTLY VISITED THE US TO LOOK AT PATROL BOATS FOR THE GDS'S MARITIME COMMAND.) THIS DOCUMENT ALSO IMPLIED THAT MINISTER OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND LABOR HAMILTON GREEN WAS INVOLVED IN THE "MURDER PLOT" AS HE, TOO, WAS "OUT OF THE COUNTRY AT THAT TIME." (COMMENT: GREEN HEADED GUYANA'S DELEGATION TO THE ILO'S 66TH CONFERENCE IN GENEVA, RETURNED BRIEFLY TO GUYANA, THEN LEFT FOR A PAHO MEETING IN WASHINGTON D.C.) AFTER RODNEY'S DEATH, THE GDF ALLEGEDLY FLEW SMITH FIRST TO THE REMOTE MINING TOWN OF KWAKWANI AND THEN TO SURINAME. THE HAND-OUT CLAIMED BURNHAM HAD RODNEY MURDERED BECAUSE TIME WAS RUNNING OUT "TO STAGE ANOTHER RIGGED ELECTION WITH THE WPA IN THE WAY."

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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
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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 GRENADA'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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