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   L-03 NSA-E-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
   HA-06 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01 IO-14 EUR-12COME-00
   /113 W
   082327 090001Z /87
R 041414Z NOV 80
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4011
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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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 PRESIDENT BURNHAM

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN AN OCTOBER90 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 CONVER-
   SATION 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 CONVERSATION
   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 UNDE决定 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 IF 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 GUYANESE PROPOSAL TO OPERATE AMERICAN-FLAG AIRLINE SERVICE ON THE NEW YORK-GEORGETOWN ROUTE (SEPTEL), 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 NO DIRECT REPORT OF WHAT OUR ALTERNATE GOVERNOR MIGHT HAVE SAID. HOWEVER, I WAS AWARE OF SOME OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAD GONE CONFIDENTIAL.

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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 MEN-
TIONED 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 CON-
CERNS 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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/113 W
082482 090000Z /67

R 041414Z NOV 80
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4012
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMASSY PARAMARIBO
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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 AS 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 CONFIDENTIAL

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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 UNFAVORABLY WITH NEARBY DISTRICTS IN LOS ANGELES. CONDITIONS FOR BLACK PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES COMPARED UNFAVORABLY WITH THE CONDITIONS THEY SAW AROUND THEM, BUT THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT THEY COMPARED EXTREMELY FAVORABLY 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 MULTINATIONAL 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 HAMMERED 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 THOUGHT IT BETTER CONFIDENTIAL

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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 MEETING
RAN THIRTY MINUTES OVER THE AlLOTED 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 ADHESION 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.

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