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BY CW NARA DATE 3/11/88THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Telephone Conversation with
Prime Minister Hawke of Australia

DATE AND TIME: October 26, 1983
9:31 - 9:48 p.m.

The President: "You know when those several islands in the Caribbean were given their independence in '74, Grenada in '79, a guy that was pro-Cuba, Castro, and the Soviet, had a military coup and overthrew the government that had been elected and that was operating under the constitution that the British had left them with. And then the Cubans got in there, and they had several hundred of their men in there building this big airport, which was very obviously for military use, and it turned out-- something we suspected was true--that those several hundred Cubans workers must have been of the military reserve, because the last couple of days they have been fighting in a well-organized military unit against us. But, anyway, the countries formed a kind of a conference or association of those small island countries, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Santa Lucia, Dominica, and Antigua, and Grenada in which they had a mutual assistance treaty. And they think of themselves all as--really not as different countries but they're all the same people, and they use the term 'kith and kin' to describe each other. This guy, Bishop, had really set up a communist, authoritarian or totalitarian regime there. And then he started making a couple noises about getting to know us better, and he actually came up here to Washington and met with some of our people at the Department of State. He got back and a little group of the military, led by a fellow named Coard, arrested him and put him under house arrest. And then a few days later a great mob of people--he wasn't really that unpopular--a mob of people came to his house and got him, and they started down the street and they were going to take him back to the Capitol. And this other little group, that had taken over, got him out of the crowd and some of his cabinet members and then shot into the crowd killing even women and children. And they said they were in charge. But now Coard has disappeared and there is a fellow named Austin, and we don't know whether Coard is alive or whether there was a little power struggle between the two. But there has been no form of government, just a 15-man military council, and a 24-hour curfew in which the people, since a week ago today, have been in their homes, only allowed out a limited time in the middle of the day for necessary purchases and so forth. Well, this association, called the Organization of

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Eastern Caribbean States, they got together and they got together with Jamaica and the Barbados. And the next thing we knew over this weekend--I was awakened in the middle of the night--they had sent an urgent plea that they were going to contribute whatever military they had. They didn't have enough to do the job and they wanted our help to go in there and straighten this out and reinstitute a democratic government there. Well, we talked it over in the middle of the night, and we were all agreed here. I could not see how we could turn down these countries right here that we're trying to help in the Caribbean, and have any credibility left any place in the world. I think anyone, whether it's in Africa or the Middle East or where, would say, 'Well, what the hell, if they turned down a request like that, how can we depend on the United States?' So I said, 'All signals go.' And I must say our military, with just a matter of hours to organize, did a hell of a job. And as of 5:30 yesterday morning we made landings of the south and took that airport, landings of the north and took that one. The island is only about 18 miles long and 8 miles wide with a hundred thousand people. There is a medical school there, and there were about 800 American students in that medical school."

Prime Minister Hawke: "The chap who is in charge of it is an Australian."

The President: "Yes, well we've made that a primary target to secure immediately for the safety of those Americans, and did. And we took both airports. One of them they had put old machinery and barrels of things on it to keep any planes from landing, and we landed paratroopers, and they cleared the runway; and then the planes came in with the equipment and stuff. We've got a force of almost 2,000 down there and just a couple of hot spots yet and we'll have it all cleared up."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Ron, what's your expectation as to how long it will be before you have it cleared up in a military sense?"

The President: "You know something? I wouldn't be surprised if it was done tomorrow. The Cubans were really more effective in fighting than the Grenadans--the Grenadan militia. And, as a matter of fact, at one time 22 of that militia surrendered to our guys and said, 'Look, we don't want to fight, we never did want to fight you. We're on your side.' And so with the bulk of those taken prisoner now, and that colonel that they had flown in and who came in as a civilian just a few days ago--our intelligence revealed that--we captured him. So, we really--as a matter of fact this morning there was some thought it might be done by today, but I haven't had a report now for several hours. Until that time there were just a couple of hot spots around the place called Richmond Hill Prison and another one called Fort Frederick. We've taken the radio station. We're able to broadcast to the people because, fortunately, their language is the same as ours. So, I wanted you to know, and I called Margaret, as I say, to

apologize for embarrassing her by--she had some reservations, but I didn't get her message until we actually had the planes on their way with the troops, and I couldn't. We've had a problem here, not at her end. We've had a problem here of a leak. We haven't been able to find it--and we were so concerned that because a leak here could cause a lot of deaths. And, by golly, for the first time since I've been here we've managed to keep a secret, and nobody knew anything was going on until they landed yesterday morning."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Yes, I see. Ron, what line is Castro taking?"

The President: "Well, oh he and the Soviets--we notified both of them once it was under way and just a short time before they were to land. We notified them, and the Russians, who have an embassy there with about 30 people in it, we notified them that we would protect their people, we would secure them so that there wouldn't be any trouble. And, of course, then the Cubans started fighting. Well, we have the 30 Russians. Now we have the others as prisoners. But Castro has been screaming this is a brutal invasion by the United States, typical of our imperialism and so forth. And he's been urging the Cubans on Grenada to fight to the death, so the poor bastards did. They wrapped the Cuban flag around them and they just had to be killed. They wouldn't stop until they were. But he's taking that tack, and we're going to deliver his people to him."

Prime Minister Hawke: "There's not any suggestion that he is going to try and escalate it from his point of view in any way?"

The President: "No, I think he knows better than to try and land in the face of what's there, and we've got some fleet and some aircraft carriers around. Incidentally, on the timing--the small island states--they added about 300 of their military--which is about the total of what they've got--and already though they have landed some of their police, their constabulary, all ready to prepare for the security in setting up the new government. And we have in a secure place the Queen's Governor General and his wife; and he is all gung ho to take over and, under the constitution, form the right kind of a government, and give the people back an elected government."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Ron, have you got any idea of how long that process will take?"

The President: "That we don't know. We're going to leave much of that to those other Caribbean countries and to the Governor General. Naturally, we'll make sure that the place is secure, but we think that that can start as soon as we end the fighting and clean up these couple of hot spots. A matter of days."

Prime Minister Hawke: "One of the questions that's obviously been asked is, once you do that--once you get the governor

general moving to establish the proper democratic form of government--what do you see as the necessity for keeping some force there? Are you looking in terms of being able to withdraw altogether, or what?"

The President: "I think we could. I think we could. Maybe some of those other countries leave their militia there, but we think what we could do, since the only danger would be from Cuba--well, we've got plenty of fleet that has been maneuvering down in the Caribbean there in loose carrier groups, and we think that we just keep that up and we keep surveillance on Cuba, and if there's any--we can really almost hear what they are saying to each other--and if there's any action on their part, we can just move the fleet."

Prime Minister Hawke: "I see--yeah. Well, could I just say a few things. I think you will have noticed that probably the statement that we made was the most supportive you probably got from just about any government around the world."

The President: "Well, bless you. I haven't seen it, but thank you. I imagine they'll have it for me in the morning."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Well, we didn't go out of our way to be critical. I talked to my foreign minister yesterday morning just before I had to fly off north to Queensland, and I authorized a statement which was very, very mild. It indicated a sort of understanding of the problem that you had, and I would think that George would be able to give you that actual statement."

The President: "Oh, good."

Prime Minister Hawke: "I think, Ron, you'd appreciate, particularly given the way in which the British have reacted with a degree of criticism, that we are under a lot of pressure here to be more forceful, than we were in our original statement. What I want you to understand is this--that as far as I'm concerned I will try and see that any statement that we make is as little critical as possible and contains within it as much indication of our understanding of the reason why you felt impelled to do what you did. And importantly, what has been useful from talking with you is, if I'm able to say, as a result of talking with you, that I feel confident that within a very short time it is the intention of the President to withdraw the United States' military forces and to leave the question of the emergence of the new government in the hands of the Eastern Caribbean States--if I can say that, I think that will be helpful in the way I can handle it here."

The President: "Well that's good, because that's absolutely true. I think--I'd be very much surprised if the pressures coming from England--I'd be very much surprised if it doesn't let up, because by the time I finished talking to Margaret today, I assured her that--I said, yes, we would have loved to have taken you into the planning, except for this problem at this end, and

with Cuba as so much closer to Grenada than we are--if Cuba moved first, then we would have really had to think twice of whether we wanted to go in and go into a war with Cuba. So we have them under surveillance. Her protest, or just her proposal that she wished we would think seriously about whether there are some other methods and so forth. Well, it didn't get here, as I say, until our forces were already under way."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Sure."

The President: "I explained that to her today, and I think that-- I know she's getting hell in the floor of Parliament. The Opposition is kicking."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Our Parliament is not sitting this week, but we resume next week and some of the more radical elements around our neck of the woods will be carrying on a bit; but I assure you, Ron, that I'll try and contain anything we say. And I can assure you that whatever we say will involve an indication of our understanding of the very legitimate concerns you had; and I'll give emphasis to the fact that you're trying to get the processes underway for the establishment of a democratic form of government and that the United States forces will withdraw very quickly, and it will be left to the states in the area to handle it, and you'll just keep a monitoring situation externally. If I can say that, I think we can get as supportive a position as we possibly can for you."

The President: "Well that's fair enough. I sure appreciate it."

Prime Minister Hawke: "I assure you I'll do everyting I can to have a position which is not unnecessarily embarrassing. I do ask you to understand that we'll be under a fair bit of pressure too, but anything we say which may contain, or appear to contain, some element of criticism will be couched, however, in the general sense of understanding the necessity for what you had to do and our understanding that you will be withdrawing very quickly."

The President: "Yes, okay. That's great."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Alright, Ronald, I do appreciate your thoughtfulness in getting in touch with me, and I'll be back in touch with you later and let you know just how we've been able to handle it."

The President: "Okay. About those radicals of yours, I've got some of them in my own Congress."

Prime Minister Hawke: "I know you have." (laughter)

The President: "Okay."

Prime Minister Hawke: "I know it's been a difficult time for you, and all the best to you and to George."

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The President: "Alright, thanks very much. I'll say good night. It's night here, so I'll say good night here."

Prime Minister Hawke: "Alright, bye."

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