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 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELNO 61
 OF D41823Z MARCH 94
 AND TO ROUTINE ANGUILLA, BELMOPAN, BRIDGETOWN, GEORGETOWN
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YOUR TELNO 19 TO ANGUILLA
 JAMAICA: VISIT BY HM THE QUEEN AND THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH
 1-3 MARCH 1994

SUMMARY

1. A WELL ORGANISED AND SUCCESSFUL VISIT THAT GAVE GREAT PLEASURE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED WITH IT.

DETAIL

2. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH VISITED JAMAICA FROM 1-3 MARCH AS PART OF A WIDER TOUR OF THE CARIBBEAN. PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VISIT WAS LOW IN ADVANCE AND PREPARATIONS, WHICH WERE LEFT TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND A SMALL BAND OF HELPERS, WERE ONLY JUST COMPLETED IN TIME. NEVERTHELESS, THE ROYAL VISITORS RECEIVED AN INCREASINGLY WARM WELCOME AS THE VISIT PROCEEDED, PARTICULARLY IN MONTEGO BAY ON THE LAST DAY, AND THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR THEM COULD HARDLY BE FAULTED (THOUGH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S VISIT TO A BANANA ESTATE HAD TO BE CALLED OFF WHEN THE HELICOPTER TO BE USED FOR IT WAS NOT UP TO ROYAL STANDARDS). THEY MET CROWDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN ALMOST EVERYWHERE THEY WENT, BUT OFFICE AND FACTORY WORKERS AND CURIOUS ONLOOKERS, MAINLY WOMEN, ALSO TURNED OUT TO MEET THEM IN QUITE LARGE NUMBERS. SIR ROBERT FELLOWES, WHO WAS PART OF THE LAST VISIT IN 1983, THOUGHT THAT THE CROWDS WERE LARGER THAN ON THAT OCCASION.

3. THE VISIT GAVE GREAT PLEASURE TO MOST JAMAICANS. PEOPLE ADMIRERD THE FACT THAT HM THE QUEEN HAD GONE AHEAD WITH IT DESPITE THE RECENT INJURY TO HER WRIST. I KNOW THAT THE ROYAL PARTY THEMSELVES ENJOYED THE VISIT. IT ATTRACTED QUITE GOOD PUBLICITY IN THE TWO DAILY NEWSPAPERS, THOUGH IT HAD TO COMPETE FOR ATTENTION WITH REPORTS OF A PARTICULARLY SERIOUS ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT EVEN BY JAMAICAN STANDARDS, AS A RESULT OF WHICH FIVE SCHOOL CHILDREN WERE KILLED AND OTHERS INJURED. LIVE TV COVERAGE WAS GOOD.

4. THE VISIT WAS VIRTUALLY INCIDENT-FREE. THE POSSIBLE PROTESTS

DISCUSSED IN OUR TELNO 45 DID NOT REALLY MATERIALISE. SMALL GROUPS OF RASTAFARIANS SHOUTED PROTESTS AT ONE OR TWO POINTS BUT MADE NO REAL IMPACT. SIMILARLY, A TINY, INVISIBLE GROUP OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY, APPARENTLY SHOUTING 'DOWN WITH THE QUEEN', WENT UNNOTICED. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A STUDENT PRANK. ONE LONE PROTESTER IN MONTEGO BAY WAS QUIETLY MOVED ASIDE BY THE POLICE. THE HIGHLY POPULAR VISIT TO DEPRIVED AREAS OF DOWNTOWN KINGSTON PASSED OFF UNEVENTFULLY FROM THE SECURITY STANDPOINT. JAMAICANS WHO HAD BEEN INCLINED TO CRITICISE THE COST OF THE VISIT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE USE OF HMY BRITANNIA FOR ACCOMMODATION AND AN HS146 OF THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY TO MONTEGO BAY CONSTITUTED LARGE SAVINGS FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

5. THE VISIT SERVED ITS PURPOSE IN FURTHERING THE LINKS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND JAMAICA, EVEN IF NOWADAYS THESE FALL SHORT OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP (MY DESPATCH OF 1 FEBRUARY). I DO NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT IT WILL LEAD TO ANY SOFTENING OF JAMAICAN ATTITUDES ON A RANGE OF DISCORDANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES THAT HAVE CROPPED UP IN RECENT MONTHS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE BBC CORRESPONDENT, A BLACK JAMAICAN BY ORIGIN, AND ONE OF A NUMBER OF BRITISH JOURNALISTS COVERING THE VISIT, TOLD ME THAT IT WAS ONLY WITH THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY THAT HE HAD PERSUADED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO GIVE HIM AN INTERVIEW, SO ANNOYED IS THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE BBC FOR ITS RECENT REPORTING ON JAMAICA, PARTICULARLY THE BBC 2 PROGRAMME 'ASSIGNMENT: YARDIES' (MY LETTER OF 7 FEBRUARY TO BAKER).

6. I WILL CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF THE THE IMPACT OF THE VISIT ON THE PROSPECTS FOR JAMAICA BECOMING A REPUBLIC IN A FULLER REPORT TO FOLLOW.

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