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26 Nov 78 (01332)

ACTION L-03

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 FBIE-00 JUNE-02
 H-21 CIAE-00 INR-QP WNSAE-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
 INRE-00 /048 W

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 9/29/02 BY 1046 DCA/ADM

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252240Z NOV 78

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACE IMMEDIATE 0208

Leo S Ryan

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b7c

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E.O. 11652: GDS

DE-511

REC-102

89-4286-411

TAGS: CASC OREP GY AFSP

23 NOV 27 1978

SUBJECT: ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL LEGAL COUNSEL TO ASSIST USG IN
DISCHARGING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN CONNECTION WITH DISASTER

AT JONESTOWN AND ESTATES OF THE DECEASED AMERICAN CITIZENS.

Declass per State let 2/16/05
UC65179DMH/ST/bpg

58 DEC 1 1978 REF: STATE 296352 B) STATE 296909

1. IN VIEW OF AUTHORITY CONTAINED REFERENCE A AND B,
EMBASSY HAS GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO BEST POSSIBLE LEGAL TALENT,
WHICH MIGHT BE ENGAGED TO ASSIST IN OUR EFFORT TO IDENTIFY
(1) THE MAGNITUDE OF THE GUYANESE-BASED ASSETS OF THE PEOPLES
TEMPLE, AND (2) THE APPLICATION OF LOCAL LAW TO THE LIQUIDATION
OF THE PERSONAL ESTATES LEFT BY JONES AND THE INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS OF PEOPLES TEMPLE WHO DIED NOVEMBER 18 AT JONESTOWN.

2. BEFORE CONSIDERING THE ENGAGEMENT OF ANY LOCAL COUNSEL
EMBASSY WAS OBLIGED TO DISCARD THE NAMES OF MANY COMPETENT
LAWYERS WHO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE POLITICALLY IN THE RECENT PAST
BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY ANY LEGAL COUNSEL WHOM WE ENGAGE MUST
HAVE IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO THE VARIOUS OFFICES OF THE GOVT OF
GUYANA IF HE IS TO DO THE JOB PROMPTLY AND COMPLETELY. IT
WAS ALSO NECESSARY THAT ANY COUNSEL WITH WHOM WE BROACHED
THE SUBJECT NOT HAVE A CURRENT LEGAL CONNECTION WITH THE

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PEOPLES TEMPLE. WITH THESE CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND THE
 AMBASSADOR MET AT NOON NOVEMBER 25 WITH [REDACTED]
 ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN ATTORNEYS IN GEORGETOWN AND A
 MAN WHO HAS SPECIALIZED IN THE PAST IN CIVIL LAW, AND
 WHO HAS REPRESENTED SUCH AMERICAN FIRMS AS REYNOLDS
 AND TEXACO IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE GOVERNMENT
 OF GUYANA. [REDACTED] FIRM, WHICH INCLUDES HIS ELDER
 BROTHER, SIR LIONEL, IS ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST
 PRESTIGIOUS LAW FIRMS IN GEORGETOWN.

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3. DURING THE CONVERSATION WITH [REDACTED], IT WAS MADE
 CLEAR THAT DUE TO THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM WHICH
 HAD BEEN CREATED BY THE MULTIPLE MURDERS/SUICIDES AT
 JONESTOWN, IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT AT THE OUTSET TO
 ESTABLISH CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL POINTS:

A) THE LEGAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOG AND JIM
 JONES AND THE PEOPLES TEMPLE,

B) WHETHER OR NOT JONESTOWN EXISTED WITHIN GUYANA
 AS A CORPORATE ENTITY OR AS SOME OTHER FORM OF LEGAL
 PERSONALITY.

C) WHAT THE TOTAL ASSETS IN GUYANA MIGHT BE BOTH
 IN TERMS OF REAL PROPERTY AND BANK ACCOUNTS.

4. THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED TO [REDACTED] THAT AS OF NOW WE HAD AUTHORITY 1) TO MAKE THIS PRELIMINARY SOUNDING WITH HIM TO FIND OUT FROM HIM IF HE, [REDACTED] WERE LEGALLY INHIBITED FROM TAKING SUCH A CASE BECAUSE OF SOME PREVIOUS OR CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLES TEMPLE, AND 2) TO DETERMINE IF HE HAD AN INTEREST IN THE CASE. IN ANSWER TO THE LATTER QUESTION, [REDACTED] SAID HE WOULD BE FREE AND AVAILABLE TO SERVE AS LEGAL ADVISER TO THE USG IN GUYANA IN RESOLVING

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THE LEGAL PROBLEMS OF THE JONESTOWN DISASTER.

5. [] SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A PAST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS FIRM AND THE PEOPLES TEMPLE INVOLVING THE STOEN CUSTODY CASE. IN THAT PROCESS, HIS BROTHER, SIR LIONEL, ACTED IN DEFENSE OF JONES, BUT HE HIMSELF HAD NOT HAD ANY DIRECT INVOLVEMENT. HE ADDED THAT HIS BROTHER A RENOWNED CRIMINAL TRIAL LAWYER WHO APPEARS IN THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS AS THE SUCCESSFUL DEFENDER OF OVER 200 MURDER CASES, HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY AT LEAST ONE OF THE AMERICANS WHO HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH MURDER SINCE THIS EPISODE AT JONESTOWN BEGAN.

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EMBASSY HAS HEARD INFORMALLY TODAY THAT AMCIT LARRY ~~W~~LAYTON, WHO HAS BEEN ^{Huyam}ARRESTED ~~AND~~ CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SHOTTING AT PORT KAITUMA ^{US} AIRSTRIP WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN AND OTHERS OF HIS PRTY, HAS BEEN SEEKING TO ENGAGE SIR LIONEL AS DEFENSE COUNSEL. SUSPECTING THAT AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST FOR A METTING MIGHT BE RELATED TO THE JONESTOWN EPISODE

[] TOLD HIS BROTHER TO DELAY ACCEPTANCE OF THE CASE AS DEFENSE COUNSEL PENDING HIS TALK WITH THE AMBASSADOR).

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ON THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED TO [REDACTED] THAT, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, HIS TASK WOULD BE A RELATIVELY NARROW ONE DEALING LARGELY WITH DETERMINING THE CORPORATE RELATIONSHIP OF JIM JONES AND THE PEOPLES TEMPLE WITH THE GOC AND IDENTIFYING THE LOCAL ASSETS OF JIM JONES, ET AL. HE WAS TOLD THAT IT WAS QUITE LIKELY THAT THE OFFICE OF LEGAL ADVISOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WOULD BE SENDING A MEMBER OF ITS STAFF TO GEORGETOWN TO TAKE OVERALL CHARGE OF SUCH AN INVESTIGATION AND THE PRECISE DETAILS OF HIS ENGAGEMENT WOULD THEN BE WORKED OUT SHOULD BOTH PARTIES BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE ARRANGEMENTS.

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7. COMMENT: [REDACTED] IS PROBABLY AS QUALIFIED AS LEGAL ADVISER AS CAN BE OBTAINED IN GEORGETOWN AT THIS MOMENT. THE POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF HIS BROTHER AS DEFENSE ATTORNEY FOR AN AMERICAN CITIZEN ACCUSED OF MURDER IN CONNECTION WITH THE SHOOTING OF CONGRESSMAN RYAN, HOWEVER, IS A POTENTIAL PROBLEM. IF THAT IS NOT AN OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT WE MAKE A DECISION VERY QUICKLY TO ENGAGE [REDACTED] AND MOVE PROMPTLY TO DRAFT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE WITHIN WHICH WE EXPECT HIM TO WORK.

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