

Classification: ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Message #: 1982VICTOR01819 (Film #: D820558-0455)
Systematic Review Decision: RELEASED, APPROVED

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RELEASE AUTHORITY: P.HARE, SENIOR REVIEWER U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE RELEASE DECISION: RELEASE IN FULL DATE: NOVEMBER 26, 2019
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 ACTION AF-10

INFO	OCT-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-07	INR-10	EUR-12	SS-10
	CIAE-00	DODE-00	H-01	IO-15	NSC-01	NSAE-00	SY-06
	HA-08	L-03	TRSE-00	PM-09	PA-01	MCT-02	ANAE-00
	ACDA-12	SYE-00	USIE-00	SP-02	SPRS-01	/111 W	
					-----274254	281228Z	/53

P 281115Z OCT 82
 FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5573
 AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
 INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY PARIS
 AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E. O. 12356: DECL: 10/28/92
 TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, ASEC
 SUBJ: BOMB EXPLOSION APPEARS COVER STORY

REF:(A) VICTORIA 1769 AND 1755 (B) VICTORIA 1772 AND 1775

1. ~~(c)~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THE GOS STORY OF A BOMB EXPLOSION (REFS A) APPEARS INCREASINGLY TO BE A COVER STORY FOR THE GOS ARMY KILLING OF TWO YOUNG MEN PROBABLY INVOLVED IN THE LONDON/ SOUTH AFRICA COUP PLOT (REFS B). CIRCUMSTANCES MAY BE CLOSE TO MURDER. THIS DESERVES INVESTIGATION AND PUBLICITY. RECOMMEND THAT NAIROBI LEAK STORY POSSIBILITIES TO WESTERN PRESS. DEPENDING ON RESULTS, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH AT SOME TIME TO INFORM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. END SUMMARY.

3. SEYCHELLOIS ARE ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION SCORNFUL OF THE GOS STORY THAT A BOMB EXPLOSION KILLED FORMER STUDENT ACTIVIST SIMON DESNOUSSE AND SOUTH AFRICAN MICHAEL ASHER.
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THE DENOUSSE FAMILY IS WIDELY KNOWN TO BE SAYING THAT SIMON WAS PICKED BY THE ARMY AT THEIR HOUSE AT ABOUT SIX P.M. ON THE EVENING OF EXPLOSION AND THAT HIS BODY, WHEN RETURNED TO THEM, WAS NOT SO MUCH TORN APART BY A BLAST AS MUTILIATED. IT IS SIMILARLY WIDELY ACCEPTED THAT MICHAEL ASHER WAS STAYING WITH A PROMINENT SEYCHELLOIS BUSINESS FAMILY, BASIL SAVY, AND THAT MICHAEL WAS ALSO PICKED UP EARLY THAT SAME EVENING (OCT 19-20) BY THE ARMY. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE ARMY TOURTURED THE TWO, THAT THEY DIED, AND THAT AS A COVER UP THEIR BODIES WERE PARTIALLY BURNED IN A FAKED EXPLOSION.

4. THIS POPULAR IMPRESSION COULD PERHAPS BE LARGELY INVENTED

OUT OF NATIVE SKEPTICISM AND OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT RENE'S INCREASINGLY AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT. WHILE THERE FACTORS ARE PROBABLY PART OF THE SITUATION, IT SEEMS INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT THE SUBSTANCE IS LARGELY TRUE. THE PHOTOGRAPHS RELEASED BY THE GOS, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOW THE BODIES IN GENERALLY

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WHOLE SHAPE LYING ACROSS THE CHASIS OF A SMALL, LARGELY DESTROYED VEHICLE, WITH THE LEGS AND SOME TORSO HANGING OFF THE EDGE.

5. A GOOD FRIEND OF THE BASIL SAVY FAMILY, RELIABLY KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY, AND OF HIGH LOCAL STANDING, HAS PERSONALLY PROVIDED US FURTHER DETAILS. THE SOURCE REPORTS THAT BASIL SAVY WAS DRIVING MICHAEL ASHER TO DINNER AT SOURCE'S HOME; THAT HE WAS STOPPED BY AN ARMY VEHICLE NEAR THE SOURCE'S HOME; THAT SAVY WAS TAKEN AWAY WITH ASHER FOR INTERROGATION; THAT RENE WAS PRESENT; THAT SAVY WAS RELEASED (PERHAPS BECAUSE HE HAD A YOUNG SON IN THE CAR WITH HIM); AND THAT ASHER WAS DETAINED.

6. AN EMBASSY OFFICER HAS TALKED AT LENGTH WITH ELLINAS, THE BRITISH FARMER LIVING NEAR THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION. HE

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REPEATS THE CIRCUMSTANCES REPORTED VICTORIA 1769. HE HAS LIVED IN THE SEYCHELLES 15 YEARS. HIS HOME IS ABOUT 100 METERS FROM THE SITE. HE WENT TO BED ABOUT 10 O'CLOCK; THERE WAS UNUSUAL TRAFFIC ON HIS NORMALLY DESERTED SIDE ROAD; HE WOKE SUDDENLY AT AN EXPLOSION ABOUT 0020 HOURS; RUNNING TO THE SCENE, HE SAW AN ARMY TRUCK AND PERHAPS TWO CARS PARKED NEARBY; A GROUP OF ARMED SOLDIERS WAS WATCHING A BURNING VEHICLE WITH TWO BODIES; IT WAS A VERY BIG FIRE FOR A SMALL CAR; AND THE SOLDIERS SENT HIM HOME.

7. EXPLAINING THAT HE HAD BEEN A FIREMAN FOR 17 YEARS BEFORE COMING TO THE SEYCHELLES, ELLINAS BELIEVES THE EXPLOSION WAS CAUSED BY GASOLINE AND NOT BY A BOMB. THE ORIGINAL EXPLOSION WAS A ROLLING ONE, NOT A SHARP BURST. THE EXTENT OF FLAME WAS MUCH GREATER THAN A SMALL CAR'S GAS TANK WOULD CAUSE. HE ALSO STATES THAT HE ARRIVED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EXPLOSION. THE SOLDIERS COULD NOT ALSO HAVE ARRIVED AFTER IT; THEY WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN THERE. HE ALSO NOTES THAT, CONTRARY TO USUAL PROCEDURES AFTER SUCH AN EVENT, NO POLICE OR OTHER AUTHORITY HAS ASKED HIM OR ANY OTHER PERSON IN THE AREA ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT IT. THEY ALREADY KNOW.

8. THESE TWO FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS SUGGEST THAT THE GAS BOMB EXPLOSION STORY IS A COVER UP. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT SIMON DESNOUSSE AND MICHAEL ASHER WERE INVOLVED IN THE LONDON COUP PLOT, AND THE GOS WERE AWARE OF IT, AND THAT THE TWO WERE ACCIDENTALLY OR OTHERWISE KILLED FOLLOWING ARMY ARREST. THEIR DEATHS MAY BE THE FIRST POLITICAL MURDERS OF THE RENE REGIME. THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESERVE INVESTIGATION AND PUBLICITY. THERE WILL BE NO SUCH ACTION HERE. I HAVE MENTIONED THE PUBLIC SPECULATION INFORMALLY TO DAVID THOMAS, RENE'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED IT BUT OFFERED NO REBUTTAL.

9. AS SEYCHELLOIS GENERALLY AND ELLINAS IN PARTICULAR ARE WILLING TO DISCUSS THE MATTER, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT EMBASSY NAIROBI LEAK THE POSSIBILITIES OF A STORY TO LOCAL WESTERN PRESS

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TION DEPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTS, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE
DEPARTMENT APPROPRIATELY INFORM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. ROBERTS

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