

GRENADA RECONSIDERED

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In the first American military intervention since the Vietnam War, U.S. and Caribbean troops invaded Grenada in October 1983, overthrowing a Marxist military junta and restoring democratic government. The invasion provoked considerable controversy in the United States, but often forgotten or overlooked by both supporters and opponents of the action was that the decision to invade was not made unilaterally. Rather, as D. Brent Hardt argues, Grenada's neighbors in the eastern Caribbean played a major role in initiating the intervention. According to Mr. Hardt, the Reagan administration probably would not have intervened in the absence of Caribbean support. This multilateral character of the intervention, he concludes, made it a political success in Grenada, the Caribbean, and the United States.

I. GRENADA AT CENTER STAGE

In March 1983, President Reagan accused Grenada of bearing “the Soviet and Cuban trademark,” and warned that the eastern Caribbean island would “attempt to spread the virus among its neighbors.”¹ At the time, the media and public took little notice of Reagan’s claim about the minuscule country; their attention was focused instead on deepening U.S. involvement in Central America. Critics of the Reagan administration’s foreign policy regarded the president’s assertions about Grenada as gross exaggerations and as confirmation that he was obsessed with the idea of a Soviet-Cuban threat to the Western Hemisphere. Supporters of administration policy were alarmed by evidence of Marxist influence in Grenada, but saw it as a small problem compared to the communist insurgency in El Salvador and the consolidation of a pro-Soviet Nicaraguan government. As an independent issue, Grenada aroused little concern. It was a sideshow to the more immediate and compelling issue of U.S. policy in Central America.

On October 25, 1983, U.S. Marines and Army Rangers invaded Grenada, briefly moving the island to the center-stage of American foreign policy. Not since the 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic had the United States sent combat troops into a Caribbean nation. Perhaps more significantly, it was the first time since the Vietnam War that the United States used direct offensive military force to achieve foreign policy goals.

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1. *New York Times*, 13 March 1983, p. A30.

The Grenada invasion marked a shift in the evolving pattern of U.S. foreign policy and sparked a heated national debate. Liberals claimed that Reagan had squandered America's moral high ground vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, while conservatives claimed that Reagan had restored credibility to America's willingness and ability to protect its allies. American popular opinion came to view the invasion with increasing favor. A Gallup poll conducted shortly after the invasion revealed that 71 percent approved of the invasion, while 22 percent disapproved.² With the widespread popular support, key members of Congress such as Tip O'Neill and Michael Barnes reversed their earlier positions and supported the invasion.³

Critics of the invasion made the mistake of arguing from the general to the specific; from broad principles of non-intervention and the non-use of force to the specific event of U.S. intervention and use of force in Grenada. They argued that since these principles were violated, the intervention was an egregious mistake. They were concerned with the impact that the violation of these broad principles would have on the situation in Central America, and on opinion in Latin America and in Europe where anti-American peace demonstrations were on the rise. Few critics were directly concerned with Grenada and the Caribbean and even fewer knew anything about the country and its region.

This essay seeks to achieve a threefold understanding of the invasion, placing it in its domestic, regional, and American foreign policy contexts. While the Grenadian invasion is an episode of recent American foreign policy that reflects the particular perspective of the Reagan administration, it is first and foremost a product of the unique circumstances and the troubled history of the island of Grenada.

II. THE RISE AND RADICALIZATION OF THE NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT

In February 1974, Premier Eric Gairy led Grenada to independence. The southernmost of the Windward Islands, with a population of 92,000, Grenada had been a British colony since 1783. It was originally settled as a sugar colony, but a series of natural disasters prompted the introduction of nutmeg and cocoa — crops suited to small farm cultivation. Consequently, a small farmer class developed that still constitutes the majority of Grenada's population.⁴ Gairy was the first indigenous political leader to appeal directly to

2. *Washington Post*, 9 November 1983, p. A3. In addition, President Reagan made broad political gains from the action. His foreign affairs approval rating jumped from 42 to 55 percent from late September to early November, support for his policy toward Nicaragua increased from 20 to 30 percent, and he overtook his primary Democratic challengers, Walter Mondale and John Glenn, for the first time.

3. See *New York Times*, "O'Neill Now Calls Grenada Invasion 'Justified' Action," 9 November 1983, p. A1, and Michael D. Barnes, "The Invasion Was Right," *Washington Post*, 9 November 1983, p. A19.

4. Approximately 30 percent of the population lives in the capital city of St. Georges; the remaining 70 percent are scattered throughout the island, mostly on small farms. Ethnically, the population is primarily of African descent. Fifty percent of the population is under 25 years of age.

Grenada's estate workers and peasants. From 1950, when he organized 27,000 rural workers into the Grenada Manual and Mental Laborers Union (GMMLU) and succeeded in doubling their wages, until 1979, when he was ousted from power in a coup, Gairy dominated Grenadian politics.⁵

In the country's first pre-independence election under universal suffrage in 1951, Gairy's Grenada People's Party (which later became the Grenada United Labour Party) won a large majority of the popular vote and six of seven seats on the legislative council. Three years later, Gairy's party again won control of the council. Still the council had limited powers until 1956 when the ministerial system was introduced. Gairy became minister of Trade and Production and immediately gained a reputation for corruption. In 1957, Gairy's party won a popular majority, but only two seats, one of which was lost when Gairy was disenfranchised for leading a steel band through an opponent's political rally. Gairy rebounded in 1961 by turning the elections into a referendum on his disenfranchisement. He became Chief Minister of Grenada within the West Indies Federation, but his rule was short-lived. His blatant corruption prompted the British administrator to remove his government from office and suspend the constitution. The scandal did little to diminish Gairy's popularity, which was based not on a specific political program or ideology but on personal appeal and hero-worship. He parried the corruption charges by asserting that his political opponents did not want a black leader to share the same prerogatives that white leaders had enjoyed. In 1967, when Grenada and the other Windward Islands were granted full internal self-government as an Associated State, Gairy was elected Premier and gained complete control over Grenada.

Unfettered by colonial administrators, Gairy used his new power to gratify his social ambition, line his pockets, and increase his domination of Grenadian politics. Under his corrupt leadership, basic social services such as health care, education, welfare, roads and infrastructure deteriorated and Grenada became increasingly polarized into pro- and anti-Gairy factions. To intimidate his opponents, Gairy in 1968 created the brutal and widely-feared Mongoose Gang, a personal police force akin to Duvalier's *Ton Ton Macoutes* in Haiti.

Gairy's ruthless form of politics was an aberration in the English-speaking Caribbean where parliamentary practices were widely respected and had survived transitions to independence in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962, Barbados in 1966, Guyana in 1967, and the Bahamas in 1973. As Grenada approached independence, however, opposition to Gairy and his increasingly oppressive rule mounted. Nevertheless, Gairy's hard-core rural constituency with its entrenched patronage network provided him with another electoral triumph against a range of opponents in 1972. Gairy proceeded

5. For an authoritative account of Gairy's political career, see A. W. Singham, *The Hero and the Crowd in a Colonial Polity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

to negotiate the terms of Grenada's independence with Britain — by now eager to rid itself of its dependencies.

Moderate leaders such as present Prime Minister Herbert Blaize and more radical leaders of the incipient New Jewel Movement (NJM) opposed Gairy's independence arrangements because of the lack of popular participation in the constitutional process. In 1973, Gairy's Mongoose Gang attacked some of the more radical opponents whom he suspected of plotting a coup attempt, beating one man so badly that he had to be sent to Barbados for treatment of a broken jaw and facial injuries that threatened his vision. This was Maurice Bishop who six years later toppled the government while Gairy perplexed the United Nations General Assembly with a speech about flying saucers.

Maurice Bishop represented a new generation of more radical leaders in the West Indies. Born in 1944 of middle-class parents, Bishop attended good elementary schools, won a scholarship to the best secondary school in Grenada, Presentation College, and studied law at Gray's Inn in London where he earned a reputation as a brilliant public speaker and became a leading member of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination.⁶ He came of age in the independence era when socialist experiments in Africa exerted their most powerful appeal. It also was the era of the Cuban Revolution, the Algerian War, the Black Power Movement, and most significantly, of growing anti-Americanism as a result of the Vietnam War. By the time he returned to Grenada from London in 1970, Bishop had become an ardent leftist eager for radical change throughout the Caribbean.⁷

In 1972, Bishop formed the Movement for the Assemblies of People (MAP). MAP's political program, which advocated the replacement of parliamentary democracy with a system of village assemblies, reflected Bishop's admiration of Julius Nyerere's Tanzanian style of socialism with its decentralized people's councils. MAP viewed democracy — especially Gairy's Grenadian variant — as a farce because voters had no practical control of government. But Bishop's political theorizing did little to weaken Gairy's populist hold on the Grenadian people, and in the 1972 elections all of the MAP candidates were defeated. The defeat exposed the shortcomings of Bishop's MAP movement. In a socially conservative and predominantly rural country, the MAP was radical and urban-oriented and therefore lacked popular support. To be able to mount a viable challenge to Gairy, the MAP had to break out of its urban confines and

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

7. Upon his return, Bishop joined a group of leftist West Indian intellectuals at Rat Island off the coast of St. Lucia to explore the prospects and plan a regional strategy for radical change, and in 1972, he helped organize a secret conference in Martinique of "progressive individuals and organizations" that aimed to establish a new Caribbean society. Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada: Revolution, Invasion, and Aftermath* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1984), p. 45; Gregory Sandford and Richard Vigilante, *Grenada: The Untold Story* (New York: Madison Books, 1984), p. 30.

develop a following in the countryside, where, fortuitously for Bishop and the MAP, a small rural anti-Gairy movement was afoot.

Frustration with Gairy's corrupt rule and his continued electoral dominance spurred a group of self-educated farmers to form a political organization in the aftermath of the 1972 election dedicated to achieving social and political change. The Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation, or JEWEL, struck a resounding chord in the countryside where its driving force was anti-Gairy sentiment. While JEWEL leaders quoted Marx, they were simply farmers who understood the needs of the rural people and sought improvement through civic-minded social activities. The JEWEL's concerns were broader than the MAP's more explicitly political program, encompassing issues from cooperative farming efforts to a public library and sporting events. Support crystallized around the JEWEL because it combined people's desire for change with an understanding of the limits of change in a socially conservative society. JEWEL became a viable political organization because, unlike Bishop's MAP, "the leaders were addressing their friends and neighbors, not the anonymous 'masses' who were to be the raw material for implementing a political theory."⁸

The success of the JEWEL movement in winning popular support encouraged the MAP leaders to seek a merger of the two organizations. Unison Whiteman, a MAP leader with close ties to JEWEL, provided the crucial link. Immersing himself in JEWEL, he soon became its president and in 1973 proposed a union of the two movements. On March 11, 1973, the New JEWEL Movement (NJM) was founded with the proclaimed goal of "developing a concrete programme to improve housing, education, public health, food and recreation for the people."⁹ The MAP members of the NJM however, made an addition to the manifesto, declaring their "single aim" to be "the organization of a mass movement to seize political power."¹⁰ Having failed to gain power through elections, Bishop was prepared to attempt a coup.¹¹ In theory, the NJM remained committed to democracy. However, they believed that Gairy would have to be deposed by force because of his patronage network and his brutal repression of political opponents. The manifesto called for "a provisional government made up of all major groups, without regard to favour — GULP (Gairy's party), GNP, JEWEL."¹² Time and events would erode this commitment to multi-party participation in a post-Gairy government.

8. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 32.

9. *The New Jewel Movement Manifesto*, quoted in O'Shaughnessy, p. 47.

10. "A Review of the Organisational Structure of the NJM. Paper to be presented to the 1st International Conference of Grenadians to be held in Grenada from 23rd-26th August 1974," (Manuscript in Bishop's hand), Unnumbered Government Document quoted in Sandford and Vigilante, p. 33.

11. Bishop's notes referred to an effort to "take EMG (Eric Michael Gairy) in house," and to "take definitive action" with police who defied a directive to stay home. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 36.

12. *Manifesto of the New JEWEL Movement for Power to the People and for Achieving Real Independence for Grenada*,

In the midst of mass unrest occasioned by Gairy's effort to arrange independence without a popular referendum on a new constitution, the NJM planned its coup. But Gairy's Mongoose Gang was a step ahead of Bishop and brutally beat and then jailed Bishop, Whiteman, Hudson Austin and three others on November 18, 1972. The attack galvanized popular opposition to Gairy and a non-partisan "Committee of 22" demanded that he disband his secret police and put an end to arbitrary police violence. Faced with a united and growing opposition, Gairy formed a commission of inquiry to look into the police abuses. The commission issued a harsh indictment of Gairy's rule, but Gairy rode out this storm and further protest and repression — during which Bishop's father was shot and killed — preceding the January 1974 establishment of independence. Gairy later defied the commission's report by promoting the police superintendent most responsible for the brutality of the Mongoose Gang.¹³

The NJM's inability to break Gairy's vice-like hold on the Grenadian people led to a major reevaluation within the party in April 1974. Bishop and his colleagues concluded that the NJM had failed to take power because "a deep class approach was not taken, no attempt was made to build a Leninist Party, (and) there was an over-reliance on spontaneity and the possibilities of crowd politics." To prevent future mistakes, the NJM leaders agreed that "corrective actions" were necessary. According to Bishop, "that is when we decided in theory and in principle that we should build a Leninist Party."¹⁴

With this decision to build a vanguard party, the NJM became an elite ideological cadre. No longer did the NJM seek unique Grenadian responses to internal and external problems as they had in their 1973 manifesto. Instead, they sought their solutions in strict adherence to Marxist-Leninist practices. However, in Grenada, as Bishop admitted, "the vast majority of the prerequisites for the building of Socialism either do not exist at all or are at a very low level of development at this time."¹⁵ This gap between Grenadian reality and socialist theory was largely ignored by the NJM leaders, who began to believe that as the vanguard party they were the sole repository of truth in Grenadian society. As Bishop stated in his 1982 "Line of March" speech to party members, "we were way ahead and we still are way ahead ideologically of the masses of our people. . . ."¹⁶ Even as the NJM leaders prepared to

Carriacou, Petit Martinique, and the Grenadian Grenadines, undated. Quoted in Sandford and Vigilante, p. 35.

13. O'Shaughnessy, p. 51.

14. "Line of March for the Party Presented by Comrade Maurice Bishop, Chairman, Central Committee, to General Meeting of the Party on Monday, September 13, 1982," *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection* (Washington, D.C.: Released by the Department of State and Department of Defense, September 1984), Document 1, pp. 38-39.

15. "Line of March," *Grenada Documents*, Document 1, p. 7.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

wrest power from Gairy in 1979, they were already losing touch with the aspirations of the people in whose name they would claim to rule.

From 1973, when the New JEWEL Movement was formed, to 1979, when it toppled Gairy, the movement had drifted far from its original goals. This transformation was not lost on the original old JEWEL leaders. Teddy Victor, one of the two principal founders, opposed the shift in the party's focus from the peasantry, who formed the majority of the population, toward the small urban "working class," and he viewed with suspicion and disapproval the growing influence of Cuban and Soviet models on the thinking of the NJM leadership.¹⁷ But he had lost his influence within a party now dominated by urban middle-class intellectuals who regarded the peasantry with disdain. To Bishop, the peasantry, which he called the petite bourgeoisie, was simply "a vacillating class" easily deluded by bourgeois propaganda which made it "more difficult to build socialism."¹⁸ Such attitudes antagonized the principal old JEWEL leaders Teddy Victor and Sebastian Thomas, both of whom left the party by 1976. Little wonder that Victor once told Bishop that his first coup was not the one that deposed Gairy, but the internal one that captured support of the old JEWEL for his Marxism-Leninist revolution.¹⁹ Both coups succeeded through a common deception: NJM leaders appeared to be populist and opposed to authoritarian rule when in reality they were inspired by "vanguard" Marxism-Leninism and ruled with a dictatorial thoroughness that rivaled and in some respects exceeded the worst excesses of Gairyism. The disjunction created by the NJM's public populism and private Marxism provides the key to understanding the rise and fall of the NJM, the regional suspicions it aroused, and the international debate that surfaced in the aftermath of the 1983 invasion.

III. DUPLICITY AND DELUSION: THE NEW JEWEL IN POWER

At dawn on March 13, 1979, forty members of the New JEWEL Movement took control of Grenada's small army barracks, seized the radio station, and detained members of the police loyal to Gairy. Without a shot being fired, Grenada had a new government. The new leaders immediately broadcast a radio report describing the coup and their plans for Grenada: "all democratic freedoms including freedom of elections, religious and political opinion will be fully restored to the people."²⁰ Grenadians rejoiced at the overthrow of

17. O'Shaughnessy, p. 51.

18. "Line of March," *Grenada Documents*, Document 1, p. 7.

19. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 33.

20. "A Bright New Dawn," in Marcus and Tabler, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenadian Revolution 1979-83*, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1983) p. 25.

Gairy and were relieved that the transition had occurred without violence. But popular relief was premature. Despite promises of democratic freedoms, the NJM leaders initiated a pattern of deception that came to characterize their rule.

The NJM never had any intention of restoring democratic freedoms. Electoral failure in 1972 and again in 1976 (Bishop and two other NJM politicians won seats in Parliament as part of an electoral alliance but Gairy still controlled the body) hardened the NJM's ideological antipathy toward popular elections and weakened Bishop's faith in the ability of the Grenadian people to understand and exercise democratic rights. In 1983, in response to a question about his promise to hold a popular referendum on a new constitution, he told the *New York Times*, "Among the masses, frankly, if you got one ounce of interest in the constitution, I would be shocked."²¹ Bernard Coard had equal contempt for representative electoral democracy, frequently referring to it as "five second democracy."²² Both NJM leaders were so conditioned by their middle-class disdain for the average working Grenadian that they came to view democracy as a chimera, unachievable in the Grenadian context of "backwardness, illiteracy, superstition, (and) rumor-mongering."²³ By denigrating the Grenadian working man, Bishop and Coard exposed the shallowness of their claim that the NJM was the "rule of the entire working people." As Caribbean scholar Anthony Maingot points out,

If we are to accept Bishop's and Coard's description of the Grenadian people, we would have...to conclude that in such a population no socialist revolution is possible. What is possible, of course, is authoritarian state capitalism, not by the people but for the people.²⁴

During its four and one-half years in power, the NJM came to embody the character of authoritarian state capitalism, but under the internal guise of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The NJM's earlier participation in parliamentary elections was a key factor facilitating its acceptance within Grenada and the Caribbean. In Grenada, the *Torchlight* newspaper supported Gairy's ouster with the understanding that elections to legitimize the new government would soon follow. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) grudgingly voted to recognize the new government after NJM member George Louison made a clear commitment to early elec-

21. "Grenadians Anxious Over New Influence Soviet and Cuba," *New York Times*, 7 August 1983, p. A1.

22. *Miami Herald*, 16 October 1979.

23. Maurice Bishop, quoted by Alistair Hughes and John Redman, *Caribbean Life and Times* 1 (December 1979):39. As found in Anthony P. Maingot, "Cuba and the Commonwealth Caribbean: Playing the Cuban Card," in Barry B. Levine, ed., *The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 28.

24. Anthony P. Maingot, "Requiem for a Utopia," *Miami Herald*, 30 October 1983, p. 28.

tions. The *Nation* newspaper of Barbados noted that Bishop had “an abundance of goodwill going for him,” but cautioned that he should “cooperate with his many well-wishers at home and abroad to give acceptable legal status to his administration.”²⁵ Despite these internal and external pressures to hold elections, the NJM leaders, now known as the Peoples’s Revolutionary Government (PRG), refused to hold elections. Their recalcitrance quickly dissipated the limited reservoir of goodwill they had gained by ousting Gairy.

In resisting the domestic and foreign calls for elections, the PRG was motivated by its fear of Gairy and its commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology. The NJM had never beaten Gairy in an election and they were not certain they could. Although many Grenadians had grown tired of Gairy’s corruption, he still possessed a claim on the allegiance of the poor rural workers that the NJM leaders could never assert. Gairy was part of their society, a poor, uneducated man who had achieved prominence by challenging the colonial authorities in the 1950s and giving political voice to the demands of the rural Grenadian population. Bishop and his colleagues, as members of the middle class, were alien to this political culture and most likely could not have defeated Gairy. For the NJM, a radical urban minority in a poor rural country, elections were never regarded as a viable means of acquiring legitimacy.

As expressed in Bishop’s 1982 “Line of March” speech, the PRG could not, as a “vanguard party,” subject itself to the whims of a “vacillating” petit bourgeois populace that did not understand the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Bishop and his colleagues had already experienced the dilemmas of relying on crowd politics in losing the 1973 and 1976 elections; they would not rely on the Grenadian people again until they accepted Marxism-Leninism and were “willing to make the sacrifices necessary to become a Party member.”²⁶ Elections and the grassroots village assemblies of the early NJM manifesto were no longer compatible with the goals of a party that had decided to take “a deep class approach” and build a Marxist-Leninist party.

Although the NJM leaders had abandoned democratic principles for reasons of expedience and ideology, they could not simply discard democracy as a political symbol in a country and region in which commitment to democracy had become a political norm. NJM leaders therefore defined the Grenada revolution as a “national-democratic, anti-imperialist Revolution” which was democratic “because it aims to give or restore rights and freedoms to the majority of the people.”²⁷ By promising democracy in their political rhetoric, the NJM deflected regional and international criticism while securing internal support that they would not have gained with an openly Marxist-Leninist

25. *Nation* (Barbados), quoted in D. Sinclair DaBreo, *The Grenada Revolution* (Castries, St. Lucia: Management Advertising and Publicity Services, 1979), pp. 345-46.

26. “Line of March,” *Grenada Documents*, Document 1, p. 18; p. 45.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

program. Such a strategy, however, could only work for a limited time. Ultimately the gap between any avowal of democratic principles and the authoritarian reality of Grenada would become painfully obvious.

Consider the rights the PRG claimed to have restored in the wake of Gairy's rule. In the "Line of March," Bishop cites three laws passed by Gairy that took away rights of the Grenadian people: a 1978 Essential Services Act which denied eleven categories of workers the right to strike; a 1974 Public Order Act which prohibited political parties from using loudspeakers without police permission; and a 1975 Newspaper Act which made it impossible to publish a newspaper critical of Gairy.²⁸ However, in the same speech, Bishop flatly contradicts his claims to have restored these rights. First, he observed that five of the eight major unions were then "under direct leadership and control" of Party members. "What we have is hegemony; we have full control," he said. Second, the PRG maintained tight controls on all political activity. Attempts by the moderate Grenada National Party (GNP) to hold public meetings were broken up by NJM party members who seized the microphones and threatened GNP leaders. Coard ultimately informed the GNP leadership that further political activities would lead to detention.²⁹ As Bishop boasted, "We don't call for no votes. You get detained when I sign an order . . . Once I sign it — like it or don't like it -its [sic] up the hill for them."³⁰ Finally, in the realm of press freedoms, the gulf between the PRG's claim of restoring democratic rights and its actual policy of suppressing those rights emerged most clearly: "When they want to put out (a) newspaper and we don't want that," Bishop said, "we close it down."³¹

As party documents prove, the goal of the NJM regime was to "build socialism" along Marxist-Leninist lines.³² And because the working class did not have "the ideological development or experience to build socialism on its own," Bishop argued that "the Party has to be there to ensure that the necessary steps and measures are taken."³³ The Party, in short, could do whatever it deemed necessary to prepare the working class to assume its designated "historic mission." Gairy's dictatorship, which had been legitimized by parliamentary means forms, had been replaced by a new dictatorship seeking to legitimize itself by Marxist formulas.

The crucial conceptual point that had to be accepted for the Party to be able to dictate to the masses was that the NJM's rule "was rule of the entire working people."³⁴ Once this fiction was accepted, tighter controls over society

28. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

30. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 57.

31. "Line of March," *Grenada Documents*, Document 1, p. 25.

32. *Ibid.*

33. See for example, "Line of March," pp. 6-7. Bishop affirms that despite Grenada's low level of development, it is still possible to build socialism. The only question for him was "how."

34. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

were easily justifiable. Thus, infiltrating trade unions with Party operatives became simply a means of “emancipating” the unions from corrupt bourgeois leadership and allowing the movement to serve the country better. Workers under “progressive” union leadership, Bishop claimed, “do not see trade unionism solely in a narrow economic sense.”³⁵

Nevertheless, Grenadian workers still demanded better wages, and in February 1981 public service workers, teachers, and others staged a one-day strike. In reaction, the PRG suspended many workers and resolved to bring the unions under even tighter party control. In line with the Marxist theory that there could be no conflict of interest between workers and the state in a “worker’s state,” the PRG said the strikes could only be the result of “a definite plot by reactionary, opportunist, and counter-revolutionary elements” with “definite evidence . . . of CIA involvement.”³⁶

The PRG employed similar logic in justifying its repression of political opposition groups. “When they try to hold public meetings and we don’t want that, the masses shut down the meeting,” Bishop explained in the “Line of March” speech.³⁷

Likewise, in a “workers’ state,” any opinion other than that of the government was counterrevolutionary. Under Gairy the government had controlled all the media except for *Torchlight* — an independent newspaper that consistently opposed Gairy’s excesses in spite of frequent harassment. While the *Torchlight* allied itself with the moderate GNP, it had supported the NJM when it seized power. In the months thereafter, the paper began to express some disenchantment with the PRG’s ideological postures and repressive policies, but it was not hostile toward the new government.³⁸ Nevertheless, seven months after taking power, the PRG ordered the *Torchlight* closed “in the interest of peace, order and national security.” In February 1980, the Catholic Church attempted to publish a weekly newsletter called *Catholic Focus*, but the PRG shut it down immediately after distribution of the first issue.

To prevent further efforts to create an independent media, the PRG promulgated a series of “People’s Laws” on June 19, 1981, prohibiting the publication of any paper or pamphlet that contained news except for those already in existence (which meant that only government-owned publications would be permitted).³⁹ Shortly after the new laws were announced, a group

35. Marcus and Tabler, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, p. 233.

36. “Resolution of the Political Bureau,” dated 4 March 1981. Quoted in Sandford and Vigilante, p. 82.

37. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 57; “Line of March,” p. 25.

38. Selwyn Ryan, “The Grenada Questions: A Revolutionary Balance Sheet,” *Caribbean Review* 8 (Summer 1984): 44. The Caribbean Press Council found no evidence of a clear and consistent bias in the *Torchlight*.

39. Donald Trotman and Keith Friday, *Human Rights in Grenada: A Survey of Political and Civil Rights in Grenada during the Period of 1970-1983* (Jamaica: Bustamante Institute of Public and International Affairs, 1984), p. 12. The law read in part, “no newspaper or other paper, pamphlet or publication containing any public news, intelligence or report of any occurrence or any remarks or observations thereon or upon

of 26 Grenadians challenged them by publishing a newspaper called *Grenadian Voice* — a politically innocuous paper that conformed with as many of the “People’s Laws” as possible. Before it could print its second issue, it too was closed down and three of its publishers were imprisoned until freed by American and Caribbean forces in October 1983.⁴⁰ The PRG again justified these actions by claiming that the Grenada revolution was a “popular people’s revolution,” therefore “the ideas of the masses must predominate.”⁴¹ In the PRG’s view, the press had a “national responsibility” that only the vanguard party could define.

The PRG’s policies reflected not only their preoccupation with Marxist-Leninist ideology but also their preference for Cuban and Soviet models. In the economic realm, the NJM’s goal was control over all financial institutions, foreign trade, public utilities, and tourism. This central planning was supposed to emanate from a government which Bishop himself admitted lacked the managers, capital, and international contacts necessary to perform all of these tasks.⁴² To bridge the gap between Marxist theory and Grenadian reality, the NJM drew on the Soviet example of Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP). Where Lenin pursued a temporary tactical alliance with the bourgeoisie, the NJM allied itself with the Grenadian middle class.

The NJM’s emulation of Soviet models is best illustrated by its approach to agriculture. In a country suited for small-farm agriculture by virtue of its hilly terrain, adequate arable land, and lack of strong class antagonisms, the NJM proposed to collectivize agriculture. The motivation behind this drive for collectivization again grew out of ideology: according to Marxist-Leninist theory, only a proletariat could lead a truly socialist revolution; but Grenada had no proletariat, only small land-owning farmers. Instead of accepting this fact and then seeking to construct a more appropriate development model, the NJM initiated a pattern of land seizures that imitated the Soviet collectivization pattern of the 1920s with peasants who owned between seven and fifty acres of land being labeled “kulaks” and made targets for land seizure.⁴³ The NJM turned traditional land reform on its head: they planned to take land away from small farmers and turn them into landless laborers. As Sandford and Vigilante observed, the NJM waged “a class war on behalf of a class that did not exist in order to build a worker’s state in a country in which, at least in the Marxist sense, there were few workers.”⁴⁴

any political matter . . . shall be produced, printed, published or distributed in Grenada during the period in which this law shall have effect.”

40. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

41. Marcus and Tabler, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, pp. 163-4.

42. “Line of March,” *Grenada Documents*, Document 1, p. 20.

43. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 30.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

The gap between Grenadian reality and Marxist theory was not lost on the NJM leadership. Bishop described the dilemma and the NJM's response in his "Line of March" speech:

We have the same problem as the young Soviet State faced but a million times more difficult . . . we have a much smaller and less ideologically developed working class. On top of that we have this massive petty [sic] bourgeoisie; you have this low level of development of class consciousness; you have this total backwardness and primitiveness in the economy. In other words comrades, we have a tightrope we have to monitor very carefully as we walk it — *every single day* . . .⁴⁵

Just as the Soviets had turned to monitoring and repressing dissent, so the NJM began to monitor Grenadian citizens. "People's Laws" #8 and #17 of 1979 gave the PRG the authority to arrest people who threatened the "public order" and place them in "preventive detention." During the PRG's four and a half years in power, over 1,000 people were arbitrarily arrested and held in detention indefinitely without trial under this law.⁴⁶

A Ministry of the Interior document outlines the scope of the PRG's internal surveillance operations: Diplomats, key middle-class elements, and suspected "counters" or counter-revolutionaries were closely watched, as were visitors to the island who stayed more than four weeks or left before their scheduled departure time. The church in particular came under close scrutiny. All sermons were monitored, anybody who visited the church hierarchy was suspected of being a counter-revolutionary, and many clergymen had their telephones tapped.⁴⁷ Cuba played a role in the internal surveillance by having its Americas Department prepare an analysis of the "religious situation" in Grenada. It recommended that Grenada place someone in charge of religious questions who could make "contacts with collaborators from Christian organizations," a job for which they offered a three-week training course.⁴⁸

The NJM utilized these methods of repression because it was losing its populist hold on the people. The paranoia of revolutionary leadership with limited legitimacy had set in. Bishop had touched on the reasons for the erosion of the NJM's legitimacy when he spoke of the gap between their Marxist goals and the nature of Grenadian society. By ignoring the needs, the circumstances, and traditions of Grenadians in its effort to transplant an alien

45. "Line of March," *Grenada Documents*, Document 1, p. 33.

46. Trotman and Friday, *Human Rights*, p. 16.

47. "Plan of G.I. Operations," *Grenada Documents*, Document 9, p. 2.

48. "Report of the Delegation Sent to Grenada by the America Department," *Grenada Documents*, Document 2, p. 8.

ideology and economic structure, the NJM doomed its revolutionary experiment. As the impossibility of transplanting Marxism-Leninism became apparent, the NJM leadership began to disintegrate and ultimately destroyed itself in a convulsive purge that exposed its true orientation.

The ultimate irony of the NJM years was that the Party's supposedly liberated middle-class leaders were themselves so dominated by a colonial mentality that they never really believed they could chart a new path to development relevant to Grenada. Instead, consumed by their worries about Grenada's backwardness, they consistently deferred to the example and advice of the Soviet Union and Cuba, and in the process alienated the people they had once hoped to help.

IV. GRENADA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INFLUENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Whenever a revolutionary Third World state turns to the Soviet Union for support and falls within its orbit, the United States inevitably embarks on a soul searching debate over who "lost" the country in question to communism and whether one administration or another "forced" the revolutionary government into the outstretched arms of the Soviet Union and Cuba. Such debates assume that a small country's foreign policy is shaped predominantly by external forces — that they merely react to carrots and sticks served to them by the United States and the Soviet Union. More often, however, a small state's foreign policy is shaped by its internal needs and domestic policy as governments seek to reinforce their domestic direction with a complementary foreign policy.

The leaders of the NJM understood the interrelationship between domestic and foreign policy. A foreign relations report of Grenada's Central Committee begins with the assertion that "foreign policy is the extension internationally of domestic policy. It is the projection on the international scene of the national policy line pursued on the homefront."⁴⁹ Since Grenada's national policy was Marxist-Leninist, its foreign policy was bound to reflect this orientation.

Ideologically, the NJM leaders viewed their efforts in Grenada not as an independent effort of a small state to chart its own course, but as part of a "world-wide process with its original roots in the Great October (Soviet) Revolution."⁵⁰ They placed considerable emphasis on their place in the socialist community and their role in combating imperialism. W. Richard Jacobs, Grenada's ambassador to the USSR, boasted in a report to Bishop that the Soviet Union "assigns a special place" in its foreign policy to countries like Grenada and that the Soviets "operate on the basis that the NJM is a 'com-

49. *Grenada Documents*, Document 106, p. 1.

50. "Grenada's Relations with the USSR," *Grenada Documents*, Document 26, p. 6.

munist party.”⁵¹ The NJM wanted their revolution to be seen as part of a larger international process of socialist triumph over imperialism. To gain this mantle of revolutionary legitimacy, they eagerly followed the Soviet line.

Pragmatic concerns also motivated the NJM leaders to seek closer ties with the Soviet bloc. Grenada’s top economic priority was to secure as much foreign assistance as possible, and in surveying the international scene in the late 1970s, the NJM detected a “changing balance of forces” in the world between the United States and the USSR. “U.S. imperialism,” they claimed, “is on the decline” and “no longer holds sway over mankind.” At the same time, the socialist community is “strong and growing still.”⁵² To back these assertions, Grenada’s Foreign Policy Report cited examples of Third World countries in need of aid being rejected by the United States and finding it elsewhere. The PRG’s perception that the United States was in decline led them to believe that they could expect more aid from the Soviet bloc than from the United States.

The actual foreign policy that emerged from the NJM’s ideological and pragmatic concerns was determined by three elements: cooperation and international support for the Soviet Union and Cuba; hostility toward the United States; and leadership and support for radical political groups throughout the Caribbean.

Those who argue that U.S. hostility toward the NJM forced Bishop and his cohorts into the Soviet-Cuban fold face a welter of evidence to the contrary. Three years before the NJM seized power, its leaders called the United States its “No. 1 enemy” and asserted that the U.S. government “will not let us take up power without a fight.”⁵³ That same year, the NJM began to expand its ties with Cuba by creating a Grenada-Cuba Association. By 1978, the Party was sending delegations to Cuba, and prior to the coup in 1979, NJM soldiers received training in Guyana and Cuba.⁵⁴

There was a powerful internal logic to Grenada’s commitment to the Soviet bloc and Cuba. Because their ties to Grenadians were tenuous and the means they used to gain power were of dubious legitimacy, the NJM leaders faced difficulties simply in retaining power. Here, the “Cuban Card” proved crucial.⁵⁵ By providing both immediate substantive assistance with health care, infrastructural development, internal security, and military training, and the long-term symbolic legitimacy of being part of a worldwide revolution, the Cubans gave the anxiety-ridden NJM leaders the breathing space needed to

51. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

52. “Foreign Relations Report,” *Grenada Documents*, Document 106, pp. 17-18.

53. Handwritten notes of NJM Bureau meetings, 16 December and 22 July 1976, quoted in Sandford and Vigilante, p. 54.

54. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 54.

55. Anthony Maingot describes how the “Cuban Card” is used throughout the Caribbean by considerably different governments. See Maingot, “Cuba in the Commonwealth Caribbean,” pp. 19-41.

consolidate their rule. In the name of "revolution," the NJM leaders could justify repression.

Given the NJM's multifaceted dependence on Cuba and the Soviet Union, it is not surprising that the documents discovered by the invading forces in October 1983 show Grenada making little pretense about charting an independent foreign policy. NJM leaders spoke unabashedly about their desire to "continue our international support for the Soviet line."⁵⁶

Cuba and the Soviet Union reacted quite differently to Grenada's Marxist-Leninist zeal, reflecting an intricate web of interests that bound the three countries together. A central tenet of Cuban foreign policy since the 1959 revolution has been to support communist, anti-American revolutions in the Western Hemisphere and beyond. As Robert Pastor has observed, "unique among the world's leaders, Fidel Castro has repeatedly attached as much importance to extending his revolution abroad as trying to make it work in Cuba."⁵⁷ Foreign success in promoting revolution reinforces Cuban national pride in their own revolution. In the late 1970s, Cuba could claim revolutionary successes in Angola and Ethiopia, but Cuban influence had been fading closer to home. In Jamaica, the focus of Cuba's Caribbean activity during the mid-1970s, leftist Prime Minister Michael Manley faced mounting internal criticism against his close ties to Castro, criticism that hastened his electoral defeat. By the late 1970s, Cuban influence in the Caribbean had reached an all-time low.

The unexpected success of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in late 1978 rekindled Cuban hopes for the revolutionary potential of the region. When Maurice Bishop called on Castro just a week before the March 13 Grenadian coup, Castro seized the opportunity to reverse his regional fortunes by offering the NJM tacit support for its planned coup and open support should it succeed. He realized that as the sponsor of revolution in the United States' "backyard" he would be able to further two major Cuban foreign policy objectives: first, by standing up to the United States he could enhance Cuba's prestige and influence among Third World nations; and second, he could improve his bargaining power vis-a-vis the Soviet Union by demonstrating his power in an area of traditional U.S. dominance. Castro had been stung by the criticism that Cuba was so dependent on the USSR that he was forced to send Cuban troops abroad to die for Soviet causes. A Cuban imprint in the Caribbean allowed Castro to temper this image of dependence.

The Soviet Union shares Cuba's interests in an ideologically radical, anti-American Caribbean basin, but its interests are more general and its potential

56. "Grenada's Relations with the USSR," *Grenada Documents*, Document 26, p. 10.

57. Robert A. Pastor, "Cuba and the Soviet Union: Does Cuba Act Alone?" in Barry B. Levine, ed., *The New Cuban Presence in the Caribbean* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 192.

risks much greater than Cuba's.⁵⁸ Having achieved a military presence on the United States' flank through Cuba, the Soviet Union's primary aims in the region are ideological. As Caribbean Sovietologist W. Raymond Duncan asserts, "Soviet ideology presents Moscow's leaders with a built-in tendency to view events in Cuba and the Caribbean in terms of their impact on the power distribution between socialism and imperialism."⁵⁹ Socialist revolutions on the doorstep of the largest "imperial" power are seen as evidence of the growing international strength of socialism. Marshal Orgarkov, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, expressed the Soviet ideological interest in Grenada when he observed that "over two decades ago, there was only Cuba in Latin America, today there are Nicaragua, Grenada and a serious battle is going on in El Salvador," and although "United States imperialism would try to prevent progress, . . . there were no prospects for imperialism to turn back history."⁶⁰

Beyond the ideological realm, the Soviets have broader political interests in the broader Latin American region. The Soviets seek to identify themselves with Third World causes and to portray the United States as a reactionary enemy of the developing community. By supporting the underdog Grenada, the Soviets appeared to be a friend of the oppressed.

In their efforts to limit American power in the Caribbean basin, however, the Soviets tread carefully, for should they commit their prestige to a geographically distant country that they can neither control nor defend in an emergency, they run the risk of being placed on the political defensive by an internal reversal or an American military victory. In addition, the Soviets bear a greater responsibility for world peace than Cuba, and must therefore be careful not to provoke military reactions from the United States over its activities in the Western Hemisphere. In weighing these risks against their interests, the Soviets have decided to allow Cuba to pursue an active, semi-autonomous role in the Caribbean from which they can glean the benefits of Caribbean radicalism while avoiding the risks of provoking the United States and committing their prestige.

The impact on Grenada of the differing interests and pressures from Cuba and the Soviet Union was that the Soviets tended to regard Grenada as "Fidel's 'offspring'" rather than their own,⁶¹ and their commitment to Grenada was

58. The Cuban Missile Crisis, during which the Soviet Union backed down against Castro's wishes, demonstrated the differing perceptions of risk among the two allies.

59. W. Raymond Duncan, "Soviet and Cuban Interests in the Caribbean," in Richard Millett and W. Marvin Will, eds., *The Restless Caribbean: Changing Patterns of International Relations* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), p. 138.

60. "Meeting between Chiefs of General Staff of Soviet Armed Forces and People's Revolutionary Armed Forces of Grenada," *Grenada Documents*, Document 24, p. 2.

61. Pastor, p. 203.

therefore more circumspect. Although Cuba had a more specific interest in Grenada's fortunes, Grenada's leaders still viewed Cuba more as a means to their ultimate goal of massive Soviet aid. What accounts for Grenada's vassal-like position in this tripartite marriage of convenience was that, while Grenada's leaders sought to attract the attention of the Soviets, the Soviets only had a general interest in their fate. As Grenadian Ambassador Jacobs admitted, "they regard Grenada as a small distant country and they are only prepared to make commitments to the extent of their capacity to fulfill, and if necessary, defend their commitment." Jacobs recalled explaining the revolutionary potential of nearby St. Vincent to a Soviet official who interrupted him, saying, "this is all very interesting but St. Vincent is so far away."⁶²

The more limited nature of the Soviet Union's interest in Grenada was reflected in the type of aid it was willing to supply. This consisted of ideological instruction both in Grenada and at the Lenin School in Moscow, and supplying military hardware such as artillery, small arms, anti-aircraft weapons, ammunition and military vehicles worth 19.4 million rubles (\$25 million).⁶³ Cuba's more defined interest dictated a more active involvement in Grenada's internal and foreign affairs. Cubans taught courses in mass manipulation, trained journalists and political cartoonists, organized rallies, and painted billboards. Cuba sent teachers, doctors, and dentists to Grenada and provided 400 construction workers and \$40 million for the construction of a new airfield. In foreign affairs, Cuba agreed to exchange information of mutual interest, particularly information relating to Caribbean "liberation movements," and to provide Cuban military specialists to train Grenadian forces.⁶⁴ Cuban political and economic aid had a marked impact on Grenadian life, making it according to one diplomat, "the most lavishly aided island in the region."⁶⁵

Still, the NJM found the meager support they received directly from the Soviet Union a bitter pill to swallow. As a "second Cuba" they had expected comparable fraternal assistance. Their dreams of massive Soviet aid died hard. Bishop, Coard, and other NJM leaders fell into the trap of believing that if they did more for the Soviets, the Soviets would be more generous. Amba-

62. "Grenada's Relations with the USSR," *Grenada Documents*, Document 26, p. 2.

63. In three separate agreements, the Soviets pledged "to ensure . . . free of charge the delivery to the Government of Grenada of special and other equipment . . ." which was then detailed in an Annex. The first agreement on October 27, 1980, pledged 4.4 million rubles; the second of February 9, 1981 pledged five million rubles; and a third on July 27, 1982, pledged ten million rubles of hardware. During this time the ruble was worth about \$1.30. So although the Soviet commitment was limited, it also was expanding rapidly. See *Grenada Documents* 13-1, 15-1, 14-1.

64. "Cooperation and Exchange Plan between the Communist Party of Cuba and the New Jewel Movement of Grenada, for the 1983 Period," (marked 'secret') *Grenada Documents*, Document 17; and "Protocol of the Military Collaboration between the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada," Document 16.

65. *Washington Post*, 24 April 1983, p. A34.

sador Jacobs, writing from Moscow, provides a vivid example of the NJM's logic:

By itself, Grenada's distance from the USSR and its small size would mean that we figure in a very minute way in the USSR's global relationship. . . . For Grenada to assume a position of increasingly greater importance, we have to be seen as influencing at least regional events. We have to establish ourselves as the authority on events in at least the English -speaking Caribbean, and be the *sponsor* of revolutionary activity and progressive developments in this region at least.⁶⁶

Jacobs believed that Grenada should become the "principal point of access" for radical Caribbean groups to the USSR, and he singled out Suriname as a candidate for special attention. "If we can be an overwhelming influence on Suriname's international behavior," he said, "our importance in the Soviet scheme of things will be greatly enhanced."⁶⁷ This logic posed a threat to Grenada's neighbors and ultimately to the United States.

American critics of the intervention in Grenada denied that Grenada posed a risk to its neighbors. The *Boston Globe* cited the "absence of a clear security interest" and later called the episode "a meaningless bluff to (Hafez) Assad," because the invasion came on the heels of the bombing of the U.S. Marine base in Lebanon.⁶⁸ Charles Maynes of *Foreign Policy* saw the invasion as a product of Lebanon, Vietnam, and the consequent psychological need for a victory. Grenada's neighbors, however, did feel threatened. The threat they sensed was more political than military, arising more from what Grenada represented rather than from any deep-seated fear that Grenada would launch a direct military invasion with Cuban or Soviet help. And what Grenada represented was the violent overthrow of democratically elected governments.

The unique characteristic of eastern Caribbean countries is their fragility: with few resources and burgeoning populations, their political and social stability can be easily disturbed. In addition, because of their size and geographical insularity, the eastern Caribbean microstates have devoted few resources to security forces, leaving them virtually defenseless against any kind of armed opposition. The NJM's 1979 coup, carried out by fewer than 50 men under arms, demonstrated the small-island susceptibility to state hijacking. A single crate of weapons in the hands of a small group can provide the means to overthrow a popularly elected government. Former Prime Minister Tom Adams of Barbados had endured two state-hijacking attempts by small groups of mercenaries led by a Barbadian adventurer in the late 1970s, and

66. "Grenada's Relations with the USSR," *Grenada Documents*, Document 26, p. 6.

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Boston Globe*, 27 October 1983, p. 18, and 25 October 1984, p. 20.

Eugenia Charles of Dominica had been the target of three coup attempts involving radical members of the disbanded Dominica Defense Force in 1981.⁶⁹ Although both leaders were able to put down these coup attempts, it is easy to see how Grenada's expressed desire to become a regional center of revolutionary activity could be regarded as a threat to the governments of the elected eastern Caribbean nations. Simply by providing a radical Antiguan or Dominican group with weapons, Grenada could destabilize its neighbors.

Recognizing their weaknesses, the countries of the eastern Caribbean in 1981 formed the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) within the larger Caribbean Community group.⁷⁰ Intended to uphold regional stability, the OECS also sought to further economic integration, general cooperation in non-economic areas, and coordination of foreign policies. Unity of internal and external policies among the microstates of the eastern Caribbean is, as William G. Demas of the Caribbean Development Bank has observed, essential to their survival.

What is lacking in the smaller eastern Caribbean islands in terms of size and natural resource endowment could be more than fully compensated by joint and coordinated actions on the external front to realize their latent geopolitical power.⁷¹

Tom Adams of Barbados stressed the corresponding need for internal unity in 1981 when he asserted that Barbados could not tolerate a situation in which even one government in the Caribbean was not freely elected, for this made CARICOM "half slave, half free." To Adams, the principle of democratic elections was

so vital to any association in our area that a government which attacks the very idea of holding elections . . . is attacking the most fundamental of all the concepts which underlie the future of closer association in the Caribbean. Barbados will certainly find it impossible to accept that this situation can continue forever.⁷²

Grenada's opposition to the United States and its disregard for democratic principles destroyed the unity of purpose that the eastern Caribbean countries needed to ensure their political stability and economic progress. The eastern Caribbean was a body politic with a cancer in its midst.⁷³

69. *Caribbean Monthly Bulletin* 12 (December 1978): 1; and *Caribbean Monthly Bulletin* 15 (March-April 1981): 81, 68.

70. The members of the OECS include Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent.

71. William G. Demas, forward to *The Restless Caribbean*, by Millet and Will, pp. xiv, xv.

72. *Caribbean Monthly Bulletin* 15 (March-April 1981): 48.

73. Prime Minister Charles stressed the need for eastern Caribbean unity in the aftermath of the invasion: "We belong to each other; we are kith and kin . . . we are one region; Grenada is part and parcel of us." "Reagan and Dominica's Leader Meet the Press," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 October 1983.

Grenada's radicalization, its growing connections with Cuba and the Soviet Union, and its resistance to OECS pressures to hold free elections prompted Barbados and OECS members St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Lucia, and Antigua to create a Regional Defense System in 1981 which excluded Grenada. In this pact, the countries agreed to share intelligence and promote military cooperation under the aegis of a Barbados-based coordinating body.⁷⁴ Though the Grenadian threat remained more political than military, its military buildup lent force to the political message of its revolution and gave Grenada's leaders a false sense of confidence and legitimacy. When Bishop, perceived by Grenadians as a moderate socialist, was deposed in October 1983 by the militant socialist Coard in yet another violent overthrow, Grenada's eastern Caribbean neighbors decided that it was time to act.

V. THE UNITED STATES AND GRENADA: WHY INTERVENTION?

For about 10 years after the Vietnam War, the United States had been wary of using its vast military power to defend or advance American foreign policy interests. Prior to the intervention in Grenada, the United States had resorted to the direct use of military force only in two cases: the Mayaguez rescue effort of 1975 and the failed hostage rescue mission in Iran in 1980. Both of these were limited operations whose goal, the rescue of captive Americans, was purely defensive. When confronted with aggressive Soviet bloc actions in Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Afghanistan, the United States repeatedly refrained from direct military actions. Even Soviet and Cuban activity in Central America, a traditional area of U.S. influence, failed to provoke a direct U.S. military response. The decision to intervene in Grenada was thus a dramatic departure from the non-interventionism of recent American foreign policy. Had Grenada's Caribbean neighbors not been so firmly committed to take action and support the U.S. involvement, the United States may never have participated in the invasion of Grenada.

The United States did not invade solely because Grenada's neighbors requested American assistance. The United States had interests in the Caribbean that could be furthered by intervention in Grenada, namely isolating Cuba, striking a blow against Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere, and promoting regional stability and a return to democratic practices. It was the *coincidence* of U.S. and Caribbean interests that made the invasion possible and successful. Some observers who criticized the U.S. decision to intervene in Grenada have contended that the Reagan administration had been determined to invade Grenada from the day it took office and was merely waiting for a viable pretext to go in and "roll back" communism. They cite examples of U.S. hostility to Grenada and vituperative anti-communist rhetoric as proof

74. "Grenada Unsettles its Neighbors, but so does U.S. Reaction," *Washington Post*, 24 April 1983, p. A34.

of the administration's aggressive intentions. However, while the road of U.S.-Grenada relations was rocky, it did not inevitably lead to a military showdown.

When the NJM seized power on March 13, 1979, U.S. hostility was by no means inevitable. In his first address, Bishop, with an eye to his foreign audience, promised that "all democratic freedoms, including freedom of elections, religious and political opinion will be restored to the people." He added, "We look forward to continuing friendly relations with those countries with which we now have such relations."⁷⁵ U.S. Ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean Frank Ortiz, in his first assessment of the Bishop regime, sent a cable to Washington in 1979 which took note of the NJM's radical ideology, but expressed the hope that the responsibilities of power would moderate the government, and he urged the United States to accept Bishop's stated desire for friendly relations.

Some Caribbean governments had reacted nervously to the coup, the first in the English-speaking Caribbean since the independence era. St. Lucia Prime Minister John Compton actually asked Britain to intervene in Grenada. But Ortiz argued against taking any actions antagonistic to the new government lest the United States be accused of forcing the NJM into Cuba's arms.⁷⁶ On March 22, 1983, after referring to the NJM's pledge to hold prompt elections, the United States officially recognized the new government and expressed a desire "to continue the friendly and cooperative relations our two countries have enjoyed since Grenada's independence in 1974."

The following day, Ortiz and other embassy officers met with Bishop and Unison Whiteman to outline the U.S. economic assistance that would be available to the NJM government. Specifically, he discussed five U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) loans worth approximately \$1.4 million that would be available through the Caribbean Development Bank. In addition, he advised Bishop that he could make available grants from the Embassy's Special Development Activities (SDA) fund for small community-based projects. According to Ortiz, these \$5,000 maximum grants "had the virtue of demonstrating direct United States interest in and support for the Grenadian people."⁷⁷ However, Bishop, who had a more grandiose vision of Grenada's future, thought that \$5,000 grants were an insult and interpreted them as another sign that U.S. power was in decline.⁷⁸ As a result, Bishop was "noncommittal" about U.S. aid and never initiated specific talks to secure a U.S. commitment.

Ortiz, still hoping for a constructive relationship with the NJM, returned to Grenada on April 10, 1983 to meet with Bishop only to find the island

75. Marcus and Tabler, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, p. 25.

76. "U.S.-Grenada Relations since the 1979 Coup," a background paper prepared by Lawrence Rossin, Political Officer in the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados, for internal State Department use, late 1982. Quoted in Sandford and Vigilante, p. 51.

77. Frank Ortiz, "Grenada Before and After," Letter to the Editor, *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1984, p. 7.

78. See for example Bishop's speech of 13 April 1979, "In Nobody's Backyard," in Marcus and Tabler, p. 26.

gripped by an invasion scare fabricated by the NJM. In his meeting that day with Bishop, Ortiz assured him that Gairy was under surveillance in San Diego and not on a neighboring island with a band of mercenaries as the NJM publicly claimed. Ortiz also pointed out that invasion scares and incidents where soldiers fired at small planes over the tourist beach would frighten tourists away and thereby damage Grenada's economy.⁷⁹ After reiterating that Gairy would not be allowed to launch an invasion from U.S. soil, Ortiz read a statement from Washington which said: "Although my government recognizes your concerns over allegations of a possible counter-coup, it also believes that it would not be in Grenada's best interest to seek assistance from a country such as Cuba to forestall such an attack. We would view with displeasure any tendency on the part of Grenada to develop closer ties with Cuba."⁸⁰ In closing, Ortiz asked Bishop for an estimate of the arms he would require for Grenada's defense and asked whether Cuba had offered any assistance. Bishop denied any such Cuban offers, but maintained that he would seek help from any source to prevent Gairy's return.⁸¹

This exchange has been cited by some critics of U.S. policy as the act that drove Grenada into Cuba's arms,⁸² because three days later Bishop delivered a scathing attack on the U.S. "No country has the right to tell us what to do or how to run our country or who to be friendly with," Bishop said. "We are not in anybody's backyard, and we are definitely not for sale."⁸³ In the course of Bishop's speech, Ortiz's observation that invasion scares would be bad for tourism was depicted as a "veiled threat" to the industry, while the U.S. offer of traditional assistance was termed "paltry" and a failure to fulfill a promise of massive aid.

This image of a bullied Grenada standing up to its bigger opponent and turning to Cuba to maintain its independence was carefully crafted by Bishop to justify what could no longer be kept secret: his close ties to Castro. Bishop had lied to Ortiz on April 10, 1983, when he claimed that Cuba had made no offer of military aid. On April 7, eight Cuban personnel surreptitiously entered Grenada with the help of the Bishop regime. On April 9, the Guyanese ship *Jamito* unloaded a shipment of Cuban arms concealed in a cargo of rice. The Cuban ship *Matanzas* had departed from Cuba on April 6 with another shipment of arms which arrived in Grenada on the 14th.⁸⁴ Before the encounter that supposedly forced Grenada to turn to Cuba, Grenada's foreign policy course had already been pointed toward Cuba.

Bishop's 1979 "Backyard" speech with its sharp attacks on the United States set the tone for the future of U.S.-Grenada relations. Throughout the next four and a half years, Bishop's invective against the United States would

79. Ortiz, *Atlantic*, p. 8.

80. Marcus and Tabler, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, pp. 27-28.

81. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 53.

82. See for example Michael Massing's article about Grenada in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1984.

83. Marcus and Tabler, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, p. 31.

84. Ortiz, *Atlantic*, p. 12.

reach new heights as the NJM grew more repressive internally. For example, Bishop referred to Reagan as a fascist, and described the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) as "chicken feed" and an "insult" aimed only at achieving military interests.⁸⁵ Another frequent NJM activity was to create invasion scares by accusing the U.S. of plotting counterrevolutionary coups.

The United States reacted to the NJM's hostility along a number of fronts, all calculated to isolate Grenada and weaken its economy. In late 1979, the Carter administration began to distance itself from the PRG by refusing to maintain ambassadorial level diplomatic relations — a policy continued under the Reagan administration. Relations were conducted, according to a Reagan official, "at a level appropriate to the PRG's conduct."⁸⁶ In the economic sphere, the United States cut off aid to Grenada and purposely excluded the island from participation in the CBI. In multilateral agencies, the United States sought to block loans to Grenada, failing in the case of the IMF but succeeding with the World Bank. Militarily, the administration resorted to symbolic muscle-flexing. In 1981, the United States conducted an exercise at Vieques Island off Puerto Rico in which marine forces rescued Americans from a fictitious "enemy in the Caribbean" named Amber and the Amberdines. And in March 1983, 77 vessels from the United States and its Caribbean allies staged a naval exercise meant to be "a signal" to the Soviet Union.⁸⁷

On the political front, the United States periodically launched rhetorical counteroffensives, accusing Grenada of being a base for "Soviet-Cuban militarization." These attacks usually focused on Grenada's construction of a 9,000-foot-long airstrip with Cuban workers, funds, and technical assistance. The airstrip, it was claimed, could accommodate any aircraft in the Soviet-Cuban fleet, extend the combat radius of Cuba's MIG-23 fighter jets to Venezuela and Colombia, and act as a staging and refueling area for Cuban operations in Africa and South America.⁸⁸ Given Grenada's eagerness to prove its usefulness to the Soviet Union and Cuba, it is likely the NJM would have allowed their socialist mentors access to the airstrip. Indeed, in a 1980 *Newsweek* interview, Bishop refused to rule out Soviet or Cuban use, and the diary of Central Committee member Liam James found by the invading forces contained an entry which stated that the "Airport will be used for Cuban and Soviet Military."⁸⁹ However, even if the airport would have been open to the Soviet and Cuban military, there was considerable doubt over its real strategic

85. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Miscellaneous Publications, *United States Policy toward Grenada. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs*, 97th Congress, 2nd Session, June 15, 1983, p. 39.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

87. *Miami Herald*, 16 March 1983, p. 5.

88. Robert S. Leiken, *Soviet Strategy in Latin America* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University and Praeger Special Studies, 1982), p. 67.

89. "Liam James Notebook," *Grenada Documents*, Document 23, p. 1.

value. During a congressional fact-finding mission, Representative Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.) of the Armed Services Committee was assured by the Air Defense Command that Grenada's airport was "of no consequence to the United States" and "has not now or ever presented a threat to the security of the United States. In addition, the Atlantic Fleet commander described the airport as "a military non-sequitur."⁹⁰

The Reagan administration clearly overplayed its rhetorical efforts to conjure up a major military threat from Grenada. The real threat to Grenada's neighbors and the United States was not military but political.⁹¹ The notion of a military threat was used by the administration to bring *political* pressure on Grenada on more politically viable grounds than ideological antipathy. However, the extremity of the claims ultimately weakened what otherwise could have been a strong case against Grenada. This case was made on one occasion by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Stephen Bosworth:

We are not arguing or trying to maintain that the presence of the Soviets or the presence of the Cubans in Grenada in and of itself constitutes a threat to the neighboring countries. The extent to which Grenada constitutes a threat to the neighboring countries evolves from the links that Grenada itself maintains with radical elements within these countries . . . The point of their concern is the ideological influence and other influences which they find that the Government of Grenada is attempting to exercise directly within their countries.⁹²

Bosworth presented this argument only under intense questioning from the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Stated defensively, the case lacked the force that it should have had.

The threat to Grenada's neighbors was clear and direct: small ideologically-motivated groups with Grenadian support and encouragement could easily shatter the political order of these countries through the violent overthrow of democratically elected governments. The threat to the United States grew out of the threat to Grenada's neighbors. In an era in which the relative power of the United States has declined, in which the United States can no longer assert hegemonic claims over the Western Hemisphere, basic American interests in international affairs have become increasingly dependent on the nature of the political and social environment beyond U.S. borders. When the nations of the Caribbean, a region in which democratic values have flourished, re-

90. U.S. Congress, House, *op cit*, p. 18.

91. Stephen W. Bosworth, Principal Deputy Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, admitted as much when he said, "I don't think it would be true that the countries are concerned that somehow Cuba is going to stage an invasion on them from Grenada." U.S. Congress, House, p. 44.

92. *Ibid.*

quested U.S. assistance in eliminating a threat to their security, basic self-interest in promoting democratic institutions in the Caribbean dictated that the United States act.

The U.S. decision to intervene in Grenada was not the result of three years of careful plotting by Reagan administration anti-communist zealots. The events leading up to the invasion reveal that the invasion was foremost a *Caribbean* initiative which the United States joined with caution and deliberation.

On October 14, 1983, when Bishop was placed under house arrest by Coard and order in Grenada began to break down, Tom Adams of Barbados initiated regional consideration of a rescue mission to save Bishop and restore order. On October 19, after days of marches, arrests and detentions, the Barbados cabinet approved a collaborative rescue mission for Bishop, possibly with U.S. help. Before the mission could be launched, Bishop and six of his allies were murdered on Coard's orders. Prime Minister John Compton of St. Lucia telephoned Adams the next day and said that the eastern Caribbean nations had to take the initiative to restore law and order and ensure early elections or the new Grenadian leadership would promote instability throughout the region. He proposed a multilateral intervention in which "the entire Caribbean" would be invited to join and then "seek assistance" to effect their purpose.⁹³ Compton agreed to coordinate an emergency meeting of Caribbean heads of state through CARICOM, while Adams began planning the invasion in Barbados. That night, Adams appeared on the American television program *Nightline* and told host Ted Koppel that most West Indians were hoping that the United States would intervene militarily, a statement designed to put pressure on the Reagan administration to assist the OECS.⁹⁴ On October 21, the OECS convened in Barbados under the chairmanship of Eugenia Charles and voted unanimously (Grenada was not represented) to establish a peace-keeping force and seek the assistance of friendly countries. Barbados and Jamaica immediately agreed to participate, and Adams then formally approached the British High Commissioner and U.S. Ambassador Milan D. Bish about participation in the mission.

In Washington, support for the invasion gathered more slowly. Initial planning focused on the safety of the 1,000 American citizens on Grenada, and a special planning group was set up under Assistant Secretary Langhorne Motley on October 17 to make preparations for a possible evacuation of American citizens. Only after Bishop's murder was the group instructed to plan for a "non-permissive evacuation."⁹⁵ President Reagan then decided on

93. *New York Times*, 26 October 1983, p. A16.

94. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 3.

95. U.S. Ambassador Milan D. Bish cabled Washington: "There appears to be imminent danger to U.S. citizens." This assessment was made in light of a 24-hour shoot-on-sight curfew. Sandford and Vigilante, p. 4.

October 20 to divert a U.S. Navy carrier group en route to the Mediterranean to Grenada. Up to this point, the United States "had been planning unilaterally" for a limited rescue mission, according to then Assistant Secretary of State Langhorne Motley.⁹⁶ But after being approached by the Caribbean nations, the United States began to prepare for a "broader mission to restore order in Grenada with Caribbean cooperation."⁹⁷ Staff and planning talks were initiated between U.S. and Caribbean forces. The United States still did not reply definitively to the OECS request and Adams was growing restless. He cabled Washington on the October 22 indicating the OECS nations "felt they must do something about it on their own" if the United States would not participate. Seeking further assurance before he made a final commitment, the President sent Frank McNeil, a Latin American specialist in the State Department, to Barbados as the president's special emissary. After hours of questions and discussions in Bridgetown, McNeil returned to Washington on the 23rd largely convinced of the need for U.S. assistance.⁹⁸ Finally, on the 24th, the administration received word through Adams that Grenadian Governor-General Sir Paul Scoon, the only remaining legitimate authority on the island, had made a confidential appeal for help.

At 6:00 p.m. that day, the United States accepted the OECS invitation, committing itself to its first military action in the Caribbean since the Dominican intervention in 1965.

VI. AFTERMATH OF THE INTERVENTION

The U.S. and Caribbean forces that landed in Grenada on October 25 defeated the remnants of the People's Revolutionary Army and approximately 600 Cubans in four days. The invasion left 87 dead and 502 wounded. Of the dead, 18 were U.S. soldiers, 24 were Cubans, and 45 were Grenadian. The wounded included 116 Americans, 59 Cubans, and 337 Grenadians.⁹⁹ The invading forces maintained order until November 15 when Governor-General Sir Paul Scoon appointed a nine-member Advisory Council to administer the island until elections could be held. By mid-December, all U.S. combat forces had been withdrawn, leaving only a residual force of 300 non-combat soldiers to complement a 500-member Caribbean peacekeeping force.

A wave of pro-American euphoria swept Grenada in the aftermath of the invasion. A *New York Times*-CBS poll said that 91 percent of Grenadians welcomed the invasion and 85 percent felt personally threatened by the junta that seized power after Bishop's murder.¹⁰⁰ Disillusioned with native politics

96. *Miami Herald*, 25 January 1984, p. 12A.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *New York Times*, 28 October 1983, p. A16; Sandford and Vigilante, pp. 7-8.

99. *Miami Herald*, 25 January 1984, p. 12A.

100. *New York Times*, 6 November 1983, I, 21, 1.

after a series of betrayals by Gairy and the NJM, Grenadians were not eager to see the U.S. forces leave. A petition signed by 6,000 residents sought political association with the United States "for a reasonable period . . . until the people are satisfied that the Grenadian leadership is sufficiently capable to run the affairs of the Grenadian people."¹⁰¹ Despite popular apathy and fear, the Advisory Council recognized that its legitimacy was limited and that elections would need to be held at the earliest possible date. Some time was needed, however, to allow new political parties to form and develop organizational strength. Because political activity had been restricted for so long, too early an election might have resulted in Gairy's reelection since his patronage network could be easily revived.

To forestall a Gairy victory, Grenadian businessmen and religious leaders, other leaders in the Caribbean, and U.S. officials encouraged three smaller parties to form a coalition. After four months of negotiations between April and August 1984, an agreement was reached at a meeting hosted by St. Vincent Prime Minister James F. Mitchell and Tom Adams of Barbados to form the New National Party (NNP). The coalition consisted of one old party, former premier Herbert Blaize's Grenada National Party (GNP), and two newly established parties, Francis Alexis' Grenada Democratic Movement (GDM) and George I. Brizan's National Democratic Party (NDP). All three parties were centrist, with the GDM slightly to the right of center and the NDP slightly to the left. The primary obstacle to unity was the allocation of seats among the parties. It was quickly agreed, however, that Blaize, the oldest and most experienced of the three leaders would lead the new party.

The elections were held in December 1984 and the NNP triumphed with 58.6 percent of the vote and 14 of the 15 House seats. Gairy's GULP won 36 percent of the vote, despite the fact that Gairy did not run. The Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM), a leftist party formed by two former NJM ministers, won only 4.9 percent of the vote and no seats, reflecting the degree to which the left has been discredited in Grenada.

Immediately after the election, the NNP government moved rapidly on the constitutional front, appointing a Constitutional Reform Commission to draft a new constitution with stronger safeguards against future efforts to overthrow the parliamentary system.

In the economic realm, the NNP initially benefitted from a wave of optimism after four years of stagnation. After the invasion, the U.S. committed \$74 million over three years, \$20 million of which went to complete the Point Salines airport. The Commerce Department arranged for the sale of 1.1 million pounds of nutmeg that had been destined for the Soviet Union and obtained a higher price for Grenada.¹⁰² Grenada became eligible to receive

101. *New York Times*, 22 December 1983, p. 6.

102. See *New York Times*, 22 December 1983, p. A6.

duty-free access to the U.S. market under the provisions of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). Investment missions sponsored by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) brought senior executives of dozens of American firms to the island to explore investment opportunities.

Despite the popular optimism and the multifaceted U.S. assistance, the Grenadian economy remained sluggish. Unemployment hovered at over 30 percent, prices for Grenada's primary agricultural products, nutmeg and cocoa, were depressed, and the tourist sector made only modest gains. Only one U.S. investor, a toy-maker, actually established an operation in Grenada, and it was closed down within a year because of infrastructural difficulties. U.S. charge d'affaires Loren E. Lawrence admitted one year after the invasion that "the infrastructure job was just bigger than anyone envisioned."¹⁰³

Because of the economic stagnation, Blaize's leadership has come under attack. Some members of his cabinet chafe at his lack of consultation and his reluctance to convene Parliament on a regular basis. In July 1985, Francis Alexis made an unsuccessful attempt to unseat Blaize as prime minister through a vote of no confidence. Eric Gairy also remains a force in Grenadian politics and has pressured the government by calling strikes of his union. And while the left has been discredited, long-term discontent could aid its resurgence. Opposition to both Gairy and the left, and the prospect of U.S. aid provide strong incentives for continued cooperation within the NNP coalition. Nevertheless, in the absence of economic progress, centrist unity could be weakened enough to create an opening for the left or right. Continued U.S. assistance will be vital to the NNP's survival and Grenada's stability. Having demonstrated the will and decisiveness to restore democracy to Grenada, the United States must now demonstrate the perseverance to make it work.

VII. INTERVENTION AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Although the intervention in Grenada initially sparked considerable controversy, it has come to be seen by the American public and leaders of both political parties as a successful foreign policy action — perhaps the most successful single foreign policy event of Ronald Reagan's presidency. This success flowed from three factors: the administration's recognition that there are circumstances where military force can play a positive role; the multilateral nature of the action; and a willingness to act to promote U.S. interests in the Caribbean.

Since the end of the Vietnam War, the United States has been reluctant to use direct military force in pursuit of foreign policy goals. Vietnam dramatized the costs and risks of using force as nothing before it ever had. But by 1980, with U.S. embassy workers held hostage in Iran, the Soviets in Afghanistan,

103. "In Grenada, One Year Later, Many Plans B ut Little Change," *New York Times*, 25 October 1984, p. A1.

and Cuba securing a foothold in Central America, it had become clear that not acting also carries risks: passivity can encourage aggression. By acting in Grenada, the Reagan administration made clear that it would use force in defense of U.S. interests abroad.

The success of the intervention in Grenada did not prove that the use of force is always relevant, useful, or correct, but simply that there are circumstances where it can be effective and constructive. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, (D-New York), said, "I don't know that you restore democracy at the point of a bayonet."¹⁰⁴ While there are many cases where Moynihan's doubts would be justified, particularly where experience with democracy is limited, there are cases where force has resulted in the restoration of democracy — most notably in Europe through World War II. In the English-speaking Caribbean, democratic practices are the norm; the use of force to restore democracy therefore had a high probability of success.

Much of the opposition to the intervention arose from a fear that an exhilarated Reagan administration would use Grenada as a justification for direct military action in Central America. Grenada, however, did not mark a return to "Big Stick" diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere. Rather, it represented a unique case as the president made clear in a press conference when he observed: "I can't foresee any situation that has exactly the same things that this one had."¹⁰⁵

The most critical factor in the success of the invasion was the multilateral support of the nations most immediately affected by events in Grenada. Unlike the 1965 Dominican intervention and its predecessors, the United States did not take upon itself the responsibility for defining the situation in Grenada and responding to it. Instead, it allowed the nations of the eastern Caribbean to initiate the response, and acted when help was requested.

Positive results flowed from this multilateral approach. First, the overwhelming support for the action in Grenada and throughout the English-speaking Caribbean increased domestic support of the action in the United States: approval swelled from 53 percent two days after the invasion to 71 percent a week later.¹⁰⁶ Second, the unanimity of Caribbean support made it difficult for the Organization of American States (OAS) to oppose the invasion even though it violated the organization's sacred non-intervention principle.¹⁰⁷ The *Miami Herald* reported that a resolution condemning the invasion would not have passed, while a resolution praising it might have succeeded. In speeches before the OAS's annual meeting shortly after the invasion, ten nations spoke in favor of the invasion, seven opposed it, and ten either

104. *New York Times*, 26 October 1983, p. A22.

105. *New York Times*, 4 November 1983, p. A16.

106. See *Newsweek*, 7 November 1983, p. 65, and *Washington Post*, 9 November 1983, p. A3.

107. See "OAS Criticism Muted on Grenada Invasion," *Miami Herald*, 20 November 1983, p. 32A.

remained neutral or did not mention it. In fact, despite token admonishments, some Latin American countries privately expressed support for the joint action. As one Latin American foreign minister told the *Christian Science Monitor*, "We have to protest. If we did not we would not be true to non-intervention. . . . Still, this one is understandable. And I cannot overlook the fact that the Caribbean nations not only joined the intervention but asked the U.S. for it." A Latin American president said, "It had to be done. The growing presence of Cuban troops and arms, the utter chaos of the island's government, and the whole threat to peace demanded action."¹⁰⁸

Within the Caribbean, the intervention had other positive results for the United States. Cuba's position in the region was dealt a serious blow, and suspicion of Cuban activities was heightened. In Suriname, leftist Prime Minister Desi Bouterse expelled the Cuban ambassador, suspended agreements with Cuba, and downgraded the status of Cuba's diplomatic mission.¹⁰⁹ In Nicaragua, President Daniel Ortega temporarily adopted a more conciliatory posture toward the United States after Castro admitted that he could not help Nicaragua if it were invaded.¹¹⁰ And in Jamaica, the invasion boosted the sagging political fortunes of a close U.S. ally, Prime Minister Edward Seaga. In March 1983, Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party had fallen behind leftist Michael Manley's People's National Party 38 to 41 percent; but after the invasion, Seaga surged ahead 43 to 38 and called a snap election that gave him five more years to effect his structural reform of the Jamaican economy.¹¹¹

The intervention in Grenada therefore served U.S. interests well and underscored that the United States has significant interests in the Caribbean, though these interests have changed considerably over this century. Guarding against military threats from the region, securing supplies of raw materials, defending maritime routes, and protecting and promoting U.S. investment have diminished in importance. Now, population movements from the region, growing Caribbean influence in international organizations, narcotics smuggling, and growing Soviet and Cuban influence have become the primary U.S. concerns. As the probability of a military attack being launched from the region is small, the need to oppose Soviet-Cuban penetration arises only in part from the potential strategic threat. The larger U.S. motive is *political* and it is here where the fundamental importance of the Caribbean to the United States becomes apparent.

The nations of the insular Caribbean, though small in size and poor in material resources, have become essential to the pursuit of a major U.S. foreign

108. "Latin America's Quiet Support for U.S. Intervention in Grenada," *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 November 1983.

109. *New York Times*, 30 October 1983, IV, p. 1.

110. *Ibid.*

111. See Carl Stone, "The Jamaican Reaction: Grenada and the Political Stalemate," *Caribbean Review* 12 (Number 4, 1983): 60.

policy goal: the promotion of liberal values in the Third World. As one of the few places where democratic institutions have taken root and flourished in the post-colonial era, the Caribbean has become a proving-ground for democracy. The successes and failures of these countries therefore assume a symbolic significance far beyond their immediate impact in the region. Their achievements lend credence to U.S. claims that democracy can be achieved in the Third World; their failures can prompt a search for alternative paths.

All of the Caribbean countries face critical choices about their courses of economic and social transformation. Grenada under the NJM chose to challenge the prevailing Caribbean pattern of democratic development and experiment with the socialist path. Neighboring states watched the Grenadian experiment with curiosity and anxiety until the convulsive breakup of the regime appeared to threaten the order of the entire eastern Caribbean. The dramatic failure of the NJM has temporarily discredited socialist models and reinforced the commitment of Caribbean peoples to democratic change. This commitment was eloquently expressed by Trinidadian scholar Selwyn Ryan who observed:

It was indeed ironic, though understandable, that a regime which had come to power through the use of violence should see no ideological contradiction in seeking to eliminate others who were suspected of doing the same thing. And that is one of the main flaws in the argument which dismisses elections as mere routine. Despite all the justified criticisms which are leveled against Westminster-type elections, they are nonetheless part of a package of norms and practices which are mutually reinforcing, and once they are dismissed as irrelevant, there is nothing else which cannot be withdrawn in the name of the people's democracy, guided democracy or some other variant.¹¹²

This current wave of respect for democratic practices that resulted from the events in Grenada gives the United States a unique opportunity. If it can succeed in shaping policies to improve conditions and bolster existing governmental institutions in the Caribbean, the region can become a symbol of the potential for democratic development in the Third World. History's judgement about the success of the invasion will not be based on a temporary restoration of democratic practices, positive as this is, but on whether Grenada succeeds in strengthening its economy and in establishing a viable society. Robert Leiken once observed that "U.S. behavior in its Latin American backyard is an index of our ability to live as good neighbors with Third World nations."¹¹³ By offering sustained and relevant support for these struggling democracies, the United States can demonstrate that it has both the ability and the will to aid countries interested in pursuing democratic paths.

112. Selwyn Ryan, "Grenada Questions," pp. 42-43.

113. Leiken, p. 104.