The Round Table (1984), 289 (24–30)

REVOLUTIONARY SUICIDE AND COMMONWEALTH DISARRAY: GRENADA, OCTOBER 1983

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AT ITS BEST written history consists of partly true stories. Sometimes, however, there are events about which the writing of partial truths may be impossible. To such a class belong the events in Grenada which led up to the death of Maurice Bishop and the subsequent invasion and overthrow of the military government. Some major actors are dead; some under arrest; others have left; the testimonies of the surviving participants and witnesses are both selective and unreliable given the shocking and confusing nature of those events and the natural desire to be seen to be right (whatever that means); others have left and retreated into silence. Even the contemporary documents seized by the Americans on which press stories in the USA and Britain have been based hide traps: if we accept their authenticity we still know that the written records of meetings are often the finest examples of fiction and even when accurate may omit crucial pieces necessary for understanding. This article has been written with this in mind and should be read in the same spirit. There have been too many 'definitive' statements and articles already. Here I only try to explore the probable internal reasons for the army coup, the motives for intervention, and the possible actions of the Commonwealth states, either individually or collectively, to ensure that the people of Grenada do not become an international political football.

A lesson from Chile?

In September 1980 Maurice Bishop drew this lesson from the military coup in Chile seven years before: "The Chilean Revolution failed because it lacked this last fundamental principle; that of controlling the military power in the country and arming the people". Towards the end of a moving talk, given on 1 July 1983 in London, during which he outlined the achievements of the Grenadian Revolution in education and the economy and creating great public participation in decision making, Bernard Coard identified various enemies of revolution. The audience applauded when he spoke of "those who fight revolution by pretending to be to the left of the revolution".

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From these statements of the two major political figures in Grenada from March 1979 to October 1983 we can begin to construct some analysis of the causes of the October events. On the one hand was the failure to act on clearly enunciated principles and the belief that the masses unarmed would defeat the army and preserve the revolution; on the other the absurd assumption that the most popular leader of the Revolution could be dismissed from his post, put under house arrest and then shot without consequence to the revolution.

The Grenadian Revolution had always been a strange one. In the Commonwealth Caribbean before March 1979 there had not been a successful Marxist inspired coup and its sequel—the attempt to construct a socialist society. The nationalization of much of the Guyanese economy had had little to do with socialism; Jamaica from 1972 to 1980 had been too little democratic to some and too little socialist to others and no one clearly knew what democratic socialism meant. Grenada had had an armed revolution, with minimal casualties, and had then embarked on organizing society in a way generally regarded as socialist. But the creation of a socialist society was not the only strange innovation of the Grenadian revolutionaries. The unnecessary creation of enemies was also on the agenda of the revolutionaries, though this began as its opposite.

Grenada's October Revolution

On the day of the revolution Radio Free Grenada announced that the crowd at a cricket match in Barbados had spontaneously demonstrated in favour of the revolution. In fact they had staged a small riot because the Australian organizers of the match failed to explain why there was no play to a crowd waiting from before the scheduled start. There was really no need to make this implausible assertion since nearly everyone in the Commonwealth Caribbean regarded the previous government with shame and contempt and welcomed its disappearance.

The Revolutionary Government soon began to see enemies everywhere as the book by Chris Searle reviewed in this issue demonstrates. The most puzzling feature of this was that most of the hostility was caused by the failure to hold elections. No one doubted that the New Jewel Movement (NJM), a popular front, would have won overwhelmingly. The arguments against elections always appeared to be ideological: part of a general left wing disparagement of parliamentary democracy, though it was not universal among left wing Caribbean politicians and intellectuals. This created a novel situation in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Throughout its post-emancipation history representative institutions had been destroyed by the assaults of the right, either the Imperial Government or the planters preferring no representative institutions to ones outside their own control.

More recent, post-independence events followed this pattern. If they strained at the elephant of parliamentary democracy they swallowed with ease the gnat of the Governor-Generalship. By a People's Law they instructed him to comply with the wishes of the Cabinet and even confirmed in post a man appointed by the previous government, which had itself eased out a too independent incumbent. The gnat was to prove a sizeable one. The popular institutions of the revolution thus were toppled by a remnant of the old system: Australians might have told them about the powers of such seemingly innocuous people, especially since the People's Law did not remove the Governor-General's reserve powers.

The enemies of the revolution were imagined to be the puppets of external forces. The chief danger, however, was internal to the revolution itself. Despite the hostility of the USA, the indifference of neighbouring eastern Caribbean states, the continuous pressure to hold elections and the opposition the failure to do so generated; it was, however, the breakdown of consensus among the leaders and the absence of mechanisms to mediate such disputes that ultimately destroyed the revolution. For revolutions, whether of the right or the left, can be hard on their makers. While those of the right have tangible unifiers like property, those of the left partake of the fanaticisms of religion with their emphasis on ideological purity and the peculiar viciousness they tend to mete out to their lapsed believers. The class enemy is an enemy; the lapsed faithful traitors without the protection of a political Geneva convention.

The search for incontrovertible evidence of American involvement in the days before 19 October will probably be fruitless. There is already enough evidence to hand to suggest that there were splits in the leadership known to many long before October 1983. It is important, however, not to see the issue as one of deep division between Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop. The records seized by the Americans, I have been told, reinforce this need for caution. These reports show much more confusion and disquiet about anti-Bishop moves than simple straightforward personalized confrontation. Great concern was expressed about the state of the economy which seemed on the brink of collapse. Despite its other types of support, the Soviet bloc was not buying enough of Grenada's exports. The only solution might have appeared a firm commitment to one superpower or the other. To some therefore the attempts by Bishop to achieve a *rapprochement* with the USA might have appeared the prelude to casting aside both non-alignment and their socialist experiment to please the Americans. Coard, the Finance Minister, and an economist impressive enough for the IMF, would have been the individual most conscious of the imminence of economic collapse. It is unlikely that he would have believed that a full commitment to the Soviet bloc would have necessarily provided the economic support needed by Grenada. What had Grenada to provide the USSR which could not be better and less riskily supplied by Cuba? If his technical knowledge as an economist would tend to lead him away from superficiality, so would his general political knowledge.

It is unlikely that Coard could have been so naive to think that the most popular leader of a revolution could be dropped without enormous disruption ensuing. Indeed, his attempts to keep Bishop as a figurehead leader of the revolution make no sense if Coard did not recognize this. The man I knew slightly many years ago knew about revolution. Did his patience snap? Perhaps; but it is more likely that his followers, or those who saw themselves in that light, finally decided to act, correctly believing that his long friendship with Bishop would stay his hand. Coard's followers had not his intellect nor the experience honed by four years of travelling the world as Finance

Minister. On such travels he was constantly reminded of how small and vulnerable the Grenadian economy is, how limited in crucial areas was Russian and Cuban aid, how difficult it is to restructure economic relations with the rest of the world, how frail were the internal economic successes. They would probably have seen in Bishop's attempts to deal with the USA only the betrayal of the revolution. They too probably lacked the sophistication to weigh accurately the dangers of a personality cult against the popularity of Bishop and the need to keep him in place if not power.

Their failure to appreciate the consequences of his removal and Bishop's and his supporters belief in the power of the masses entwined to produce the bloodshed of 19 October. The army had long before made itself unpopular; in addition the seized documents make plain the low state of morale prevailing in the army and that Hudson Austin had agreed to move from being commander of the army to another post. Insecurity and tension within the army combined with the natural arrogance of armies which see themselves as defenders of the nation, a role doubtless much exaggerated when the principal enemy is a superpower. The feeling of being besieged does not conduce to cool calculation.

Cool calculation probably played little part in the events of 19 October. On the one hand an army at odds with itself allied to one sort of politically naive people; on the other a different political naivety held by enthusiastic but unarmed people. The authority of the army had been challenged; the police force had been long ago pushed aside and demoralized; how was the army to cope with the freeing of its prisoners and the contemptuous way its soldiers had been pushed aside? Lost authority had to be restored. Here the missing police force and its riot control techniques were essential and missing. Armed men, touchy and threatened, not trained to deal with civil disturbances but to see such things as counter-revolutionary activity, combined explosively with large hostile crowds of people. The soldiers might have believed large numbers in the crowds to be armed since there was a People's Militia. The soldiers behaved the only way they had been trained to do—and shot to kill. Others it seems leapt to their death from the walls of the fort. The deliberate shooting of Bishop and the other prominent political figures had then to be done as the only way to ensure the safety of the perpetrators of the crime. Up to the invasion there was no evidence of the murderous purge of Bishop's supporters which should have followed the initial murders if those had been planned.

The eve of the intervention

The situation on the evening of 19 October 1983 was this. Perhaps 50 people had been killed at the fort; not many but equivalent to 25000 in the UK—other readers can do their own calculations and ponder the effects of such killings on the fabric of their societies. The leader of the revolution was dead. A jittery army in charge. Having acted to preserve their own authority and the purity of the revolution, the evidence of the few days left to the army government reveals the final irony: the desperate appeal to many previously suspect elements in Grenada in order to form a broadly based government. With or without such support the army would have found either governing the country or preserving the revolution nearly impossible and would have had to resort to straightforward repression. The killing would have continued—especially if pro-Bishop NJM supporters had been willing, so some people in the UK asserted, to start a People's war, using the weapons of the militia and army supporters.

The reasons for intervening were fairly clear. These varied for each of the states involved. Of those with primarily ideological reasons Jamaica stands out. The record of the present Jamaican administration and the snap election called in November 1983 suggest little more than lip-service to the principles of representative democracy; Seaga's dislike of Cuba and communism are notorious. The USA had its own ideological reasons similar to those of Jamaica, but combine these with a long tradition of intervention 'in its own backyard' and what one of its most distinguished historians has described as the paranoid style of its politics. The USA also was pressed, and contrary to popular belief small weak states can pressure large powerful ones, by the eastern Commonwealth Caribbean states. Of these the pressure came from the smallest ones, those in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

It is neither true nor just to see them as entirely manipulated without a will of their own by the USA. They were opposed to the Bishop government on many grounds, not all of which do them much credit; but as recently as 1982 had defended Grenada against American attempts to exclude it. Given their ideological dislike of communism, had they made cold calculations about what was most to their political advantage, the clear answer would have been to leave the military regime alone. What better proof of the ultimate end of communism than a repressive and blood-stained military regime? Their message to their own people about the illusory promises of communists could not have had better support. Some such calculation allied with sensitivity over its border problems with Venezuela must have guided the Trinidadian position; Belize and Guyana with major border problems cannot afford to countenance intervention.

The Caricom leaders indeed favoured the imposition of sanctions which would have had long-term effects on the insecurely based military regime. But anyone who had heard on the night of 20 October the interviews with Miss Charles and Mr Adams on Alex Pascall's 'Black Londoners' programme could not fail to note their moral indignation at what had happened: "It was dangerous in that it might prove an example all too readily followed; without precedent in the Commonwealth Caribbean, it might become fashionable." But beyond that there are all the ties, of family, friendship, knowledge, business, history between these islands. The events of 19 October were not 'insignificant events in an insignificant place' to the leaders of the Eastern Caribbean states. Rarely in politics do moral outrage and political predilection combine so neatly. Of all the intervening states those of the OECS had the least tainted motives. For them the disputes of civil society had to be settled by the means of civil society.

But what were the means of intervention available to them? Their own military force was unequal to the task so that clearly outside help was needed. As Tanzania discovered when faced with a somewhat similar problem there is neither an international organization able or willing to intervene since the UN

had disqualified itself by its actions in Korea and the Congo, nor is there a Commonwealth force: sticking to the letter of international law there should not be. At hand was a superpower ready and willing for its own reasons. A better example of an acute dilemma is difficult to find: the irresponsibility of not acting is matched by the irresponsibility of encouraging an increasingly erratic superpower. So occurred an intervention not unpopular in Grenada itself. Perhaps some little weight should be given to that local opinion though the implications for countries like Nicaragua and Commonwealth African states suggest that international law should have been upheld.

Intervention or non-intervention?

In a famous phrase Tallyrand once said that non-intervention is a political and metaphysical phrase meaning much the same as intervention. But the distinction between the intervention and the subsequent occupation could help in considering ways in which worsening outcomes might be avoided. The Commonwealth might yet provide forces to replace the Americans and the intervening West Indians. It is possible to deplore the intervention but to see and act upon the necessity of supplying troops in order to mitigate its consequences and to begin recovery from the turmoil that ensued. Such a step, it is sometimes claimed, will legitimize a breach of international law. Many Commonwealth countries have taken the position, however, that they should steer clear of an American mess.

It is precisely the nature of the mess that makes some international force necessary to reconstitute law and order. The mire of conflicting stories about atrocities, Cuban and Soviet involvement and plans for Grenada, propaganda lies during the invasion and afterwards, the cavalier treatment of the present Grenadian authorities, and accounts of brutality towards prisoners, rapidly undermined the moral basis of the intervention and had quite soon, according to some reports, begun to exhaust the goodwill of many Grenadians. In any case the preponderance of American and amongst the Caribbean states of Jamaican forces has meant that the reactionary elements have predominated.

Hence despite the genuine achievements of the Grenadian revolution many healthy babies are being thrown out with the bathwater and many in cooperatives and trades unions who supported the ends but not the means of the revolution, and not all the ends either, are being treated as if they are Soviet agents. A victory they had long sought and fortuitously found is being misused. There are therefore two different political arguments for replacing the Americans. They appeal to different political tendencies in the Commonwealth and can be advanced in conjunction with a firm denial of approval for the intervention. Those countries allied to the USA can argue that the continuing occupation has serious effects on the moral position of the USA and its effectiveness as leader of the Western world; therefore despite their strong defence of international law reality must be faced and the Americans made aware of the necessity of withdrawing completely.

The non-aligned members of the Commonwealth equally need to accept the reality of the intervention and decide that it is more important to preserve those people and achievements with social objectives similar to their own. The two positions are not completely distinct. There is also the belief shared I hope by both groups in the rule of law, that people are not judged guilty by association or ideology but only for their actual actions.

In the end I am arguing that action in the world is never as perfect, and by nature cannot be, as the logic of argument or international law; that the intervention must be differentiated from the occupation; that there is a moral imperative to act on this distinction. Note too its implications for those countries fearful of the Grenada precedent: it clearly states to those wanting to intervene in Southern Africa and Nicaragua and indeed already doing so that even if international law is broken the international community has an obligation to ensure that interveners are not occupiers—if this has no practical effect other than extinguishing much unctuous hypocrisy this in itself might restore some moral sense to international affairs. It will also expose those who prefer the inaction of moral purity when it suits them. Hell will surely be full of many who acted in a moral muddle but all those too pure to act in a wicked world will certainly be there. The leaders of the Commonwealth can choose but may well choose not to believe in hell. But the problem of the mini-states is at least under consideration.

In the beginning and in the end it is a Grenadian problem. The last words on that sad day in October should be left to the murdered Maurice Bishop. The words quoted in the Searle book suggest that faith in the masses and their perspicacity was not wholly fantasy though I for one can only wish that the solution of the dispute had been by such retrospectively gentle means. In a national broadcast in September 1979 Bishop had pointed out that rumours were means of destabilization and explained two current ones:

> The early rumour that I had been bitten by a bee and was no longer able to see was meant to suggest that Gairy's mystical and *obeah* qualities had begun to work on me . . . The later rumour, that my colleague and brother, Comrade Bernard Coard, had cuffed me, was meant to suggest that there were serious divisions in the leadership of the party and government, and that a power struggle was taking place.

The Round Table (1984), 289. CHOGM Documentation

Grenada

9. Commonwealth Leaders discussed recent events in Grenada which have caused such deep disquiet among them and in the wider international community, and on which most of them had already expressed their views at the United Nations. They reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and called for the strict observance of these principles. They recorded their profound regret over the tragic loss of life in Grenada.

10. Heads of Government agreed, however, that the emphasis should now be on reconstruction, not recrimination. They welcomed the establishment of an interim civilian administration in Grenada. They looked forward to its functioning free of external interference, pressure, or the presence of foreign military forces and noted its intention to hold, as early as possible, elections which would be seen by the international community to be free and fair. On this basis, and given the readiness of the countries of the Caribbean Community to assist in the maintenance of law and order in Grenada if so requested by the Interim Administration, Commonwealth leaders confirmed their readiness to give sympathetic consideration to requests for assistance from the island state. In doing so, they stressed the importance they attached to an early return of Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean to the spirit of fraternity and cooperation that had been so characteristic of the region.

11. Time and again in their discussions, Commonwealth leaders were recalled to the special needs of small states, not only in the Caribbean but elsewhere in the Commonwealth. They recognized that the Commonwealth itself had given some attention to these needs in the context of economic development but felt that the matter deserved consideration on a wider basis, including that of national security. Recalling the particular dangers faced in the past by small Commonwealth countries, they requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study, drawing as necessary on the resources and experience of Commonwealth countries, of the special needs of such states consonant with the right to sovereignty and territorial integrity that they shared with all nations.

The Round Table (1984) 289

REVOLUTIONARY SOURCES

Grenada: The Struggle against Destabilization, Chris Searle, Writers and Readers, London, 1983, 164 pp, £3.95 pb, also hb.

This book is useful in ways which the author did not intend. Chris Searle has allowed Grenadians who supported the Revolution to speak for themselves and his own views seem to coincide with the official ones. The shortest part of the book provides a brief introduction to the Gairy period of Grenadian history, focusing on the development of the New Jewel Movement and its choice of a revolutionary solution. The second part discusses the types of destabilization to which the Revolution was exposed and the third part gives details of the institutions of the Revolutionary society. There are four appendixes: an interview with Bishop, one with Cheddi Jagan, an article attacking the press in the rest of the Commonwealth Caribbean which originally appeared in *The Free West Indian*, the Revolution's own newspaper, and extracts from a speech on the deficiencies and responsibilities of the press by Bishop. Throughout the book there are lengthy direct quotations from the famous and unknown of Grenada and many poems and songs. It is an extremely useful source book for views supportive of the Revolution. The reader ignorant of Grenada has to wait for the Bishop interview to discover what was worth preserving in the Revolution, and this detracts from the usefulness of the book.

Its major defect, the uncritical acceptance of the official line (best seen in the section on religious destabilization), is also its major virtue. The emphasis on countering threats and mobilizing the people, the creation of a seemingly endless succession of enemies, provides much evidence to explain the paranoia of the leadership and the bloody end of the Revolution. Paranoia in Grenada was not the creation of imaginary enemies, but the discovery of enemies everywhere. Power shifted imperceptibly from the civil to the military leaders and these tensions found their release in the confusions and misjudgements of October 1983. Many of the statements, both those of the author and those of whom he quotes, can now only be read ironically; but hindsight is the most meretricious of critics.

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no question as to whether the economy is viable or not; but nor can there be any guaranteed minimum wage—the level of consumption in any individual household will depend upon the overall production of the commune and the contribution made to it by that household. And both the right to migrate, and the right to choose one's form of employment are very restricted.

There are those who argue—and set up political parties to advocate—that this form of solution is in principle better for a small island community, holding forth the prospect of both a fairer distribution of the work and of the rewards from work than capitalist structures, and the prospect of more harmonious development. Whether that is the case or not, the problem of transition, ie the problem of passing from present structures to those radically different structures, has proved to be difficult in the extreme.

The fourth type of solution is perhaps the most radical of all. Yet it is one for which there are precedents.

That solution, that future, would involve the absorption of the small island community into the nationhood of a larger, modern industrialized economy. The model, if you like, would be Martinique and Guadeloupe, and what the French appear to be trying to achieve with New Caledonia and Tahiti; or to cite a less controversial example, the state of Hawaii as it was absorbed by the USA. It is worth reminding ourselves that this solution was suggested for Malta by Prime Minister Dom Mintoff.

It may be that this form of future offers a more real prospect of an acceptable solution for the Grenadas of this world than most other futures currently under discussion.

Why so? Let me offer four reasons. One, because the current state of world altruism is not such that we can expect either the Commonwealth or any other form of international organization to extend to small countries the financial support, the subsidized services and the rights of migration that larger industrialized countries extend as a matter of course to the peripheral islands of their own nation. Two, with the cutting off of the prospect of migration and with the diminution of the remittances home which often follow such migration, the future of many small countries trying to retain Western structures and to struggle with the problems of economic development on their own is becoming increasingly difficult. There will be successes, but they will be a minority. Three, the interference of external powers, interventions of a neo-colonial kind such as happens when a great power invades to replace a government and overturn policies, but without accepting any of the pursuant responsibilities of raising living standards to the invader's own level—such interventions will become increasingly unacceptable, and, where they occur, are likely to exacerbate world tensions. Four—let me be specific—had the population of Grenada been afforded the opportunity of holding a plebiscite to determine whether they wished to become an integral part of the USA (or Canada—for that matter), there is every chance they would have voted overwhelmingly to do so. That course may still in the long run turn out to be the cheapest way for the US government to ensure that potentially hostile regimes, or regimes offering rival and 'threatening' social systems, do not exist 'in our own back yard'. And, unlike periodical armed interventions, it might well be a solution that could be accepted by the international community.

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The Round Table (1984), **292** (377–382)

Security of small states

SECURITY DILEMMAS OF SMALL STATES

JONATHAN ALFORD

HOW 'SMALL' is 'small'? Does the qualifying adjective apply to area, or to population, or to resources and wealth? Some states, like Singapore, are tiny but hardly weak. Others which appear large, rich, populous and powerful turn out to be so politically fragile that a small group of determined men can effectively hijack the state—just as with the small and weak—as with Iran.

The problem is that the upper end of the band is very hard to define. We all know what we mean when we talk about micro-states and there are some candidates for everyone's list but a definitional approach—even a complex one which takes account of size, population and wealth—is probably unproductive, at least in a predictive sense. Even if we have difficulty in agreeing on what a small state 'is', we do have some sense of relative weakness and of the security problems created by that weakness. It does not make much sense to begin at the other end, however, and say that a weak state is a state that needs external security support. In that sense, the European states are weak states, for we feel the need to invoke the power of the USA to offset the power of our Soviet neighbour.

It is necessary to establish a calculus of risk for small states in which threat—internal or external—is measured against potential resistance to threat. External threat is much more likely to be a function of geography than anything else. I doubt if anybody hijacks a small state just because it seems a good thing to do, not least because many of the states are 'hijackable' precisely because they are poor (and so cannot afford to maintain adequate defences) and the acquisition of this poor state will almost certainly add a burden to the economy of the hijacker. Larger powers generally seek to take over the control of small, weak states because of where they are—and not just because they are small weak states. They must offer some geographical advantage—whether in war, in a liberation struggle, in the East–West competition or, in defensive terms, to pre-empt a potential military opponent and prevent him from gaining a

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position of military advantage. Often, micro-states are islands, which offer stepping stones to other places. This was George Quester's view in his *International Security* article, 'Defending the micro-states'. 'All too easy to seize, the islands still today offer advantages today for projecting power onward elsewhere.'[1]

In a sense, we have to explain Grenada—but it must be done in a way which makes clear why it was Grenada and not St Kitts or St Lucia that was hijacked. Perhaps the airfield *was* important. Nor should we immediately conclude that *every* small state is about to be gobbled up by some great metropolitan power or even *relatively* powerful neighbour. It is unlikely that a new form of colonization is about to take place, even if that might improve the security of small states. The boring thing about this approach is that it rejects theory and demands a case-by-case approach which must, to a very large extent, involve a careful analysis of historical claims, deprivation and affinity in order to see who might push things to the point of violence—and whether violence will succeed. On that score, we have to admit that the US administration was anxious about Grenada long before the crisis of 1983, but few could have predicted the attempted hijacking of the Seychelles by mercenaries from South Africa.

I am not sure whether it is this that we have to worry about most, or whether it is the takeover of the micro-state by revolution from within. There are plenty of inhibitions against the former and one can in practice record only a very few cases in the post-war world where a micro-state has been swallowed by another larger state. One can list a few colonial and post-colonial disturbances—Goa, the Falkland Islands (before Argentina was forced to disgorge), perhaps Chad, the Spanish Sahara, Kuwait (the Iraqi threat of 1958). Foreign offices worry about a few other historical claims (Guatemala and *Belize*, Mexico and *Belize*, Venezuela and part of *Guyana*, Ethiopia and/or Somalia and *Djibouti*) but it is encouraging to note how few of these small and apparently non-viable states have been taken over by direct conquest. This would lead one to argue that the inhibitions and disincentives against the permanent acquisition of a micro-state by force are still rather powerful and that we ought not to worry too much about it.

Much more likely is the thing which it is far more difficult to prevent and that is the deliberate take-over of the levers of power in micro-states by a small group acting against the wishes of the majority. Quester's arithmetic[2] concluded that 'a ratio of controller-to-controlled of perhaps one per 2000' might be sufficient, which led him to argue that some 50 determined men could control Grenada. Bernard Coard may not have had many more than this. Quite how one discovers what the wishes of the majority are, I do not know. Reverting to the case of Grenada, it seems just as likely that Geary 'hijacked the state' as did Maurice Bishop or Bernard Coard. Our only valid criterion for supporting a takeover or working to prevent it is, to adapt Franz Josef's famous question: 'Is he a patriot for me?' Do we like their politics? Do we like their human rights record? Whose side are they on? The French in Chad, for example, have been marvellously inconsistent (or pragmatic) in who they decide to back at a particular moment. This, as we saw in Grenada, is likely to raise some very awkward questions in attempting to decide what is or is not a 'legitimate' regime and so whether it should be supported or removed if possible—or at least isolated and made to bear the weight of our disapproval. This last, of course, seems quite likely to ensure that the regime concerned will have the approval of the socialist camp.

I cannot answer these questions, but one cannot begin to address the security problems of small states without clarifying the question of regime legitimacy because, at least in the Western democracies, that will determine whether calls for assistance should be met or denied and it is to calls for assistance that I now turn. Forget for the moment whether and under what circumstances it is 'right' for outside powers to intervene. Concentrate instead on what security assistance outside powers can provide both to preserve the regime against domestic threats and against invasion by a hostile power.

Dealing first with non-crisis conditions, it is reasonable to suppose that one of the things that a micro-state cannot do is adequately to train its own security forces, whether police, paramilitary or military. They will need help, and this can be provided either by training abroad certain key members of the security forces (police or armed forces) or by training in place by means of training teams and secondment. Outside powers can also provide physical security in terms of guards, bodyguards and technical advice and assistance either on a governmental or non-governmental basis. All this, one has to assume, is on request and paid for either from overseas assistance budgets or by local contribution.

Second, there is the provision of arms and specific technical training in their use and maintenance. If a micro-state thinks that it has a security problem, internal or external, it will need the appropriate level of appropriate arms and they will have to come from outside. Deciding how to interpret 'appropriate' in each case will hardly be easy.

Third, and increasingly for island micro-states, there is a growing problem of management of Exclusive Economic Zones and the prevention of illegal operations—whether fishing, smuggling or drug-running. Surveillance is not an easy task, whether electronic, air or sea surveillance, and it is reasonable to assume that EEZ policing will tend to demand assistance from outside.

Finally, under this non-crisis provision, but still well within the security field, there is a large area of information and intelligence which will—again by definition—be hard for small states to manage. Certainly advice and probably provision, training and management will be needed. Not much of this would count as military intelligence but much of it would be very relevant for regime security.

Turning to crisis, I shall deal first with internal crisis management, that is a severe threat to regime longevity. Police imported can often deal rather effectively with a breakdown in law and order, but cannot easily deal with armed insurrection. Reserves of police power are very unlikely to be available in a micro-state unless much planning has been done and no police force in a micro-state is likely to be permanently established to deal with a major crisis of government confidence. Unfortunately, uncommitted reserves of police power are not often available anywhere else either. We have not hitherto thought in terms of globally mobile police forces. The former metropolitan powers can usually scramble a scratch force together in a crisis and the sight of British policemen wading ashore in Anguilla or French Gendarmes in the New

Hebrides is not unfamiliar but if there is real anxiety about the breakdown of law and order in micro-states, a *regional* police solution may be the best answer. There would be much to think about, not least the funding, but some potential concentrations of vulnerable micro-states (like the Pacific or the Caribbean) might move to build a system of on-call police reinforcements. I can only suggest some of the things which would have to be enshrined in a regional police reserve—earmarking, organization, legality, training, intelligence, liaison and language. It could work, given thought, political will, encouragement and a sense of urgency.

If there is armed insurrection, armed force may be needed and that means peace-keeping albeit on a small scale. One cannot generalize on this point because it will depend on the size and loyalty of the armed forces maintained by the micro-state and the size of the insurrection. There seems a rather high probability that very isolated micro-states who believe themselves to live in a benign environment will maintain only very small armed forces or none at all. Thus there will be little additional state power available to draw on in an internal crisis and external armed support could quickly be needed. Again one asks whether that should be regional force or former metropolitan power. There would be much in favour of regional force, but the difficulties of combining disparate elements of regional force under a coherent command structure would, *prima facie*, seem to be very much greater than with police forces. It has always seemed so with the United Nations and experiences of other regional peace-keeping groupings—such as the OAU—have not been wholly felicitous. Thus if there is a single external military power under obligation to stiffen a regime, it might be better to use that power in the short run—ie in a crisis—giving way to regional forces again in the longer run when the crisis has been defused. That was very much what happened in Grenada, however it was dressed up, and it is in practice very hard to imagine the other Caribbean states being able to muster the force necessary to overturn Coard, backed as he was by a substantial military force of Cubans.

Let us therefore assume that the former metropolitan powers or some other large power with the ability to insert force at short notice may have to come to the aid of a regime facing a substantial armed insurrection which the micro-state does not have the forces to deal with. How best is that done? The answer is through sound contingency planning. It is very much easier to have a plan in the drawer, even if it has to be modified in a hurry due to circumstance, than to have no plan at all and only vague undertakings. The military will, of course, ask for political guidance. Where are we likely to be sent? And in what strength? An open-ended commitment to rescue micro-states is hardly helpful, but political guidance can be given to prepare certain plans on the basis of some descending scale of likelihood multiplied by vulnerability. Plans mean only an appropriate shopping list of units, transport, suitable route-activation plans, modest intelligence requirements, maps, communications plans and logistic support. If this is well done, all concerned with the provision of forces in a crisis have a common starting point and reaction-time can be greatly reduced. The common elements in my own experience of contingency planning is for the political departments to be reluctant to admit the need for a plan and for the military to ask for far more concrete detail than can be given. It is not enough to

say 'have forces, will travel'. Some expenditure of imagination is necessary to translate that vague willingness to help a micro-state into something which not only gives the regime some self-confidence that help will in practice be forthcoming but may also serve as a deterrent to those who might challenge the regime.

Finally, I would turn to the external threat to micro-states. I indicated earlier that I do not see other states as simply waiting around to gobble up micro-states. In practice most are islands and gobbling up islands is still quite a lot harder than mounting a land invasion. One can hardly imagine a replay of Hassan's 'Green March' in the Western Sahara against an island. Amphibious forces are quite expensive to maintain. *Some* islands are vulnerable, as we know to our cost, but it is a long voyage from anywhere to Ascension, St Helena, the Seychelles or Bermuda. So my inclination is generally not to worry much about external threats to the security of most micro-states. We do not in fact live in as anarchic a world as all that, not least because every potential whale thinking of swallowing a sprat has to weigh up what it would tell the rest of the world about the nature of the whale. Not often would it be worth it, and we only need to worry about when it might seem to be worth it. In large wars, of course, all bets are off and great powers at war will seek to take or to defend small states if it is in their strategic interest to do so, but that is a quite different calculation and not relevant to this discussion.

In so far as there are external threats to small states from regional neighbours we need to be very specific. We need to pay particular attention to the symbolism of garrison forces for states like Belize (threatened by Guatemala), Chad, Djibouti and possibly some of the smaller Gulf Sheikhdoms (perhaps threatened by Iran). The reason why small states that feel themselves under threat seek the reassurance of stationed forces is precisely because there is the hope of invoking much greater forces from the external guarantor power. The guarantor is forced to think about his exposed and potentially vulnerable garrison which will give an urgency to reinforcement plans which would otherwise be absent. This, of course, is precisely why large states are reluctant to enter into security relationships with small states and seem to spend most of their time trying to wriggle out of them.

I am excluded from my title from speaking about residual colonial responsibilities, because these are hardly 'states'. I have chosen at least to imply that I have been discussing *very* small, ie 'non-viable', states or micro-states of which there are no less than 38 with populations of less than one million. My conclusions, such as they are, fall into three main groups.

The first concerns my inclination generally to regard external security problems of micro-states as manageable but that where a threat is palpable, some element of stationed forces may be a permanent necessity, whether from a regional grouping under regional security arrangements (such as CARICOM or the GCC) or from a former metropolitan power (Britain or France). The UN must be at least a theoretical candidate but agreement in the Security Council may be hard to obtain. However, whales do not often swallow sprats. One could even argue in the South African case that whales sometimes give birth to sprats.

The second is a domestic crisis with which the micro-state cannot cope. An almost infinite variety of circumstance might be envisaged but, almost by definition, domestic forces hostile to a legitimate regime could easily become unmanageable. This is the greatest danger that micro-states face in all its complexity. I would argue that the most appropriate response is additional policing and that it is in this area that something concrete can and should be done. Soldiers do not make very good policemen, but violence can obviously reach the point where armed insurrection rather than extensive disorder is at issue. My preference then is for the military reinforcement by a single power even if there is some window-dressing or legitimization by small regional contingents. After all, Grenada worked. After the crisis has been 'solved', it is possible for regional forces to hold the ring for reconstruction but I would be extremely sceptical about forceful *regional* solutions to major internal security problems unless an unusually high degree of regional homogeneity exists, as perhaps in the GCC.

Finally, there is steady-state security assistance. Micro-states are unlikely to provide much or even any of the logistics, training, intelligence, and infrastructure normally associated with internal or external security. To the extent that this is sought by a legitimate regime, others must try to provide it and generally do when it is requested. My own—perhaps prejudiced—view is that this is, if properly regulated, just as much a part of development assistance as is aid and trade. 'Nothing has ever been made until the soldier has made safe the field where the building shall be built; and the soldier is the scaffolding until it has been built, and the soldier gets no reward but honour'—in this case convert to 'soldier and policeman'.

I would certainly have no difficulty in agreeing with George Quester's conclusion.

> Above all, the amount of serious thinking assigned to the international problems of such states needs to be increased, in place of comic-opera relaxation, in the national capitals of the world, as well as in its international organizations.[3]

References

1 George Quester, 'Defending the micro-states', *International Security*, Fall 1983, Vol 8, No 2, p 167.
2 *Ibid.*
3 *Ibid*, p 175.

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For location map of the small states see inside back cover.

The Round Table (1984), **292** (383–391)

ASEAN AND HONG KONG

LEONARD RAYNER

THE ASSOCIATION of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is part of the non-aligned movement but, in effect, its only antagonists are the Soviet Union, together with its proxy Vietnam, and the People's Republic of China. As the Soviets have diplomatic and official trade representation in most of the six ASEAN countries while China does not, it would seem that the People's Republic is the greater enemy.

Since the emergence of the pragmatists in China under Deng Xiaoping with their concerted movement to achieve the 1975 four modernizations programme and the reunification of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, the ASEAN countries are reappraising the Chinese threat as they see it. Their image of China's growing power enhanced by the economic and financial muscle of Hong Kong and Taiwan creates a science fiction portrayal in some Southeast Asian minds, of a potential megapower capable of overshadowing the super powers. Hong Kong alone now ranks third among the world's financial centres.

In early July 1984, on his way to attend an ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in Jakarta, USA Secretary of State, George Schultz, was so conscious of the China problem that he felt it incumbent to call in Hong Kong on his way for a briefing on the Sino/British talks on the future of the colony. Shultz's mission to Jakarta was, in part, to reassure ASEAN that closer US ties with China would create no threat to regional security. But President Reagan's statements during his visit to Beijing earlier in 1984 gave rise to doubts about the soundness of Washington's policies. For example, his conflicting remarks, in this same Beijing speech—that the USA would not turn its back on Taiwan but that the unification issue was an internal Chinese affair—hardly made for clarification. Nor did he publicly justify the fact that the Pentagon is prepared to supply defensive military equipment to the People's Republic which already has, numerically, the largest military force in the world. Available evidence shows that China's most likely enemy, the Soviet Union, will not weaken itself, *vis-à-vis* the west, by becoming embroiled in a war with the People's Republic, which raises questions about the real purpose for this equipment.

This year the British and Chinese will reach agreement that Hong Kong's sovereignty will revert to China in 1997. According to Chinese official sources, the takeover of the nearby Portuguese territory of Macau will be arranged to dovetail into the 1997 Hong Kong deal although, if Portugal joins the Common Market in 1986 and succeeds in obtaining associate status for the territory, Beijing may well see advantages in postponing the takeover. However British

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fight within National and against the New Zealand Party for the conservative vote.

Yet for all its problems, New Zealand remains a beautiful, friendly country, and astonishingly cheap for the tourists who must now provide its economic salvation. Politics may be divisive, but Heretaunga candidates still took the afternoon off to serve burgers for charity in the Upper Hutt McDonalds, and Lady Muldoon was charming in her congratulations to Mrs Lange in the moment of defeat. Somehow there can be confidence that New Zealand will turn its positive pessimism to constructive ends.

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THE GRENADA CRISIS IN BRITISH POLITICS

ANTHONY PAYNE

IT IS EXTREMELY RARE for political developments in the Caribbean to have a conspicuous impact on British politics, but that is what occurred in October 1983 in connection with the so-called 'Grenada crisis'. For a few days the headlines in Britain were dominated by events in this tiny Eastern Caribbean island whose precise location and recent history were as unfamiliar to most British politicians as they were to the general public. There was even an emergency debate in the House of Commons which caused the Thatcher government considerable embarrassment. Popular attention has now moved on, but that should not deter further reflection upon one of the few recent occasions when an issue of foreign policy towards a distant part of the world has provoked sharp party political conflict in Britain.

Although there had been some doubts expressed in Britain at the time of independence in 1974 about the wisdom of passing Grenada unprotected into the hands of the notorious Eric Gairy, they had subsided fairly quickly. The problem only reappeared, from a British point of view, in March 1979 when the radical New Jewel Movement (NJM), led by Maurice Bishop, took power by force in Grenada, thus bringing to a welcome end the corrupt and incompetent Gairy regime. The *coup* came at a time when the Labour government in Britain had been trying for some while to arouse the interest of the US administration in the threat to the stability of the Commonwealth Caribbean caused by the continuing economic difficulties facing the region. Callaghan's Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Ted Rowlands, knew the area well and had struggled manfully to alert his colleagues to its problems. A Labour administration in Britain ought to have responded warmly to the social democratic aspirations of the early New Jewel Movement and perhaps would have in time. But the particular circumstances of the New Jewel's assumption of power (the first successful *coup* in the Commonwealth Caribbean) alarmed the Foreign Office and persuaded it to reject the new Grenadian government's immediate request for military assistance to protect itself from a possible mercenary invasion. Apart from this almost instinctively negative step, the Labour government did nothing to signal its view of events in Grenada. Within two or three weeks of the

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coup it was swept into an unwanted election campaign and was henceforth effectively incapacitated from establishing a policy.

The Thatcher government made no immediate declaration of position either, but the general stance of its foreign policy towards the Third World—suspicious of aid, dismissive of strategies of change, supportive of US political interests—quickly became apparent and augured ill for the new People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada. A series of specific decisions subsequently gave force to the British government's hostility to the regime. Export licences for the purchase of two armoured cars were refused; representations for the negotiation of a new bilateral aid agreement were treated coldly, although not formally rejected; rehabilitation aid to the banana industry of the Windward Islands following severe hurricane damage was not given to Grenada despite the close links that bind the industry together within the Windward Islands Banana Association (WINBAN); and considerable diplomatic efforts were made to persuade the EEC Commission not to give financial assistance to the building of a new airport in Grenada which the US State Department alleged would provide an extra military base in the Caribbean for Grenada's post-revolutionary ally, Cuba. By these and other means Britain under Thatcher sought to undermine the position of the Bishop government, giving faithful support to the policy of its major ally across the Atlantic, the USA.

Arguments advanced by British ministers to justify their discriminatory policy all related to illiberal aspects of the Grenadian regime, in particular the government's failure to call conventional elections, its holding of political detainees without trial and its closure of the island's main newspaper. Few would now deny that there was an unattractive authoritarian side to the Grenadian revolution to which these characteristics were an early clue. Yet, even in these terms the Conservative government's position was hypocritical and short-sighted—hypocritical in that it was quite possible to find a number of other countries against which similar charges could be made who were still in receipt of British aid, short-sighted in that ministers do not seem to have asked themselves whether the 'offending' features of the Grenadian regime could not have been ameliorated by friendly contact with Western powers to the advantage both of Grenada and the West as a whole. In truth, the hostility to Grenada was crudely political. In a revealing moment, Rowlands' successor as Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Nicholas Ridley, was quoted as saying: 'Grenada is in the process of establishing a kind of society of which the British government disapproves, irrespective of whether the people of Grenada want it or not'.

In the face of such attitudes the Grenadian High Commission in London continued its patient efforts to persuade the Foreign Office of its government's desire for friendly relations with Britain, whilst growing criticism of the Thatcher government's stance began to develop amongst those in Britain—academics, journalists, businessmen, and aid activists—who knew Grenada and were coming to be aware of the serious and increasingly successful way in which the PRG was striving to overcome the long legacy of underdevelopment in the island. Their opportunity came when in 1981 the all-party Foreign Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons announced that it was to embark

upon an exhaustive enquiry into 'the British approach to stability, security and development in the Caribbean and Central America'. For over a year the Committee deliberated, taking evidence from many expert witnesses and itself visiting several Caribbean territories, including Grenada where they were received with interest by the government. Eventually, in December 1982, it published a substantial report criticizing recent British policy towards the region, especially the tendency, so prominent since 1979, to subordinate British views to those of the USA in virtually all matters of substance.

Grenada was obviously one of the Committee's major concerns. In marked contrast to the received wisdom in government circles, the report spoke of 'the considerable degree of success achieved by the economic and social policies of the PRG, and of the extent to which they have improved the lot of the ordinary people in Grenada'. Whilst conceding that there were some grounds for anxiety about aspects of the revolution, it nevertheless called upon Britain to make a positive contribution to the growing call from other Commonwealth Caribbean countries for Grenada to be bought back from the economic and political isolation into which it was being forced by the hostile policy of the USA. The Committee therefore recommended that British representation on the island (which they found to be inadequate) be strengthened so that the government would be better informed of economic, social, and political developments in Grenada and, even more importantly, urged that the government should cast aside its existing policy of opposition and instead 'work to promote a dialogue with the government of Grenada'.

The Committee's critique of British policy towards Grenada and the Caribbean as a whole was formally presented to the House of Commons by the chairman of the Committee, senior Conservative back-bencher Sir Anthony Kershaw, as an all-party report of a Select Committee. It should be pointed out, however, that by this stage the report had effectively been turned into a Labour Party document. Several Conservative members had regularly absented themselves during the course of its compilation and some had not even travelled to the region with the Committee. Although the section on Grenada was carried unanimously without a vote, the report as a whole was opposed by the only two Conservative MPs present at the final meeting (apart from the Chairman) and was thus passed only by the five votes of the Labour opposition members. To make their rejection of its conclusions absolutely categoric, three of the most rightwing Conservatives issued an additional press statement on the day of the report's publication, reiterating their objection to what they saw as its anti-US stance.

The effect of these party political manoeuvres was to reduce considerably the political impact of the Select Committee's report. This was disappointing, especially as regards Grenada, since hidden amongst the evidence given to the Committee were signs that officials in Whitehall had come to appreciate that the US case against the Bishop regime was grossly exaggerated. One clear illustration of this was a difference of opinion over Grenada's new airport. A senior Foreign Office official in evidence to the Committee specifically declared—in contradiction to State Department opinion in Washington—that his department had no evidence to suggest that it was intended for purposes other than tourism, a point of view already implicit, one might add, in the decision taken to provide Export Credit Guarantee cover for the contracts which the British electronics firm, Plessey, had won to provide equipment and services for the airport. To what extent, if any, there were disagreements between officials and ministers in interpreting events in Grenada and the Caribbean is, of course, impossible to say, although there are good grounds for supposition. What is clear is that the tone of the government's official reply to the Committee report, tabled by the then Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym, in March 1983, was dismissive of the case advanced against government policy.

This was true both in terms of the overall argument and in respect of the specific case of Grenada. In this connection, the reply restated the Thatcher government's policy, first announced in February 1980, that 'greater weight should be given in the allocation of British aid to political, industrial and commercial considerations alongside our basic development objectives'. Grenada was by this stage receiving substantial aid from other sources—a fact which the government said had to be taken into account—and there remained the hoary question of human rights to consider. In every respect the government's stance was complacent: it considered its present diplomatic arrangements in Grenada to be satisfactory and it would not agree to begin formal negotiations to draw up a new bilateral aid agreement, promising only, in that familiar Whitehall phrase, to keep the situation under review. In short, there was no sign that the government was aware of the tensions that were building up both in Grenada and in the region, about which the Foreign Affairs Committee via its Labour membership had tried, as best it could, to warn. And there, as far as Britain was concerned, the situation languished—the government smug and confident, opposition forces defeated—until events in Grenada themselves reached a crisis point with the brutal murder of Maurice Bishop by troops of the People's Revolutionary Army on 19 October 1983.

When news of this tragedy broke, decisions were needed, and needed quickly, in London as elsewhere. Britain could not avoid being drawn into the crisis by virtue of its long-standing historical links with the Commonwealth Caribbean, but faced a number of difficulties in deciding how to react, not the least of which turned out to be a lack of reliable political intelligence about the fast-changing situation on the ground in the Caribbean. Quite clearly, the British High Commissioner in Barbados was not invited to take part in the talks which took place between the leaders of the Eastern Caribbean states, representatives of the governments of Jamaica and Barbados and the US ambassador to Barbados on the evening of Friday 21 October during which the invasion of Grenada was planned. But he will already have known of the attitude of mind of these Caribbean leaders and of their desire to revenge Bishop's death and was, in any case, fully informed by the Barbadian Prime Minister, Tom Adams, on the morning of Saturday 22 October of the plan to form a multinational invasion force. According to both sides, Adams expressed his personal wish that Britain should be involved and a telegram containing this information was swiftly dispatched by the High Commission to the Foreign Office, where it was received at about 5 pm London time. The Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, was in Athens for a meeting of EEC foreign ministers, but we know that both he and the Prime Minister were fully informed of these developments. What we do not know, of course, is their immediate

reaction to this verbal request for British involvement.

At this point, according to the British government's version, the signals became confused. Adams had indicated to the High Commissioner that a letter setting out the request was being typed. On the following day in another meeting he said that the formal invitation would probably be handed over later that Sunday. Yet nothing was received. On that same day, the British Deputy High Commissioner in Barbados visited Sir Paul Scoon, the Governor-General of Grenada, in his home in St George's. Notwithstanding all the subsequent claims made about Sir Paul smuggling letters out to various local leaders calling for assistance, both he and the Deputy High Commissioner have confirmed that no request for British help was made at that meeting, a fact which was transmitted to London by the Monday morning. Meanwhile, the leaders of all the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) states had met in Trinidad on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October and, according to the statement made by their chairman, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, had decided to support a package of sanctions designed to isolate the Grenadian military regime, rather than immediate military measures to bring it down. These three factors combined to persuade the Foreign Office that the original invasion plan had been superseded by more restrained counsels.

Moreover, this accorded entirely with the information it was getting from Washington during the same weekend. British Embassy officials made several contacts with US administration personnel and all received the same message: that the USA was proceeding 'very cautiously' and that Britain would be consulted immediately if the USA decided to respond positively to the Eastern Caribbean request. Thus when the Foreign Secretary authorized the diversion of HMS *Antrim* from Colombia to Grenada on the evening of Saturday 22 October, he was doing no more than he thought the Americans were doing in diverting their Lebanon fleet, taking a precautionary measure to protect nationals in Grenada. In these circumstances, one can more clearly understand how in the House of Commons on the afternoon of Monday 24 October, Sir Geoffrey Howe could have answered an opposition question about US intervention by saying that he had 'no reason to think that American military intervention is likely'. He was simply telling the truth as he knew it. Of course, whether he ought to have had reason to know or guess differently is another matter.

In such circumstances, the news of the US invasion on the very next day constituted a grave embarrassment for the Thatcher government. Howe had to come to the House of Commons and announce the occurrence of the event that only 24 hours previously he had declared to be unlikely. He admitted the existence of British anxieties about it and reported that as soon as the government had heard what the Americans were actually planning, which was only the previous evening, Mrs Thatcher had personally telephoned President Reagan to transmit 'her very considerable doubts' about the action. Despite all this and the further aggravation that Grenada was a Commonwealth country whose Queen was also Queen of England, the Foreign Secretary refused to condemn the invasion, repeatedly falling back on the lame formula that 'there is room for two views on this matter'. The Labour Party spokesman, Denis Healey, was thus able to denounce the American invasion not only in its own right but also because it represented 'an unpardonable humiliation of an ally'. In an emergency debate the following day Healey further developed his attack on Mrs Thatcher personally and the Conservative government in general for their previous servility to the US President. 'It really is time', he demanded, 'that the Prime Minister got off her knees and joined other allies of the United States, who are deeply concerned about the present trend in American policy'. Yet, even in the face of bitter criticism of this sort, no member of the governnent could be induced to use the word condemn in regard to the American action. The furthest that Howe would go was to concede that the extent of the consultation between London and Washington about Grenada was 'regrettably less than we would have wished'.

The Grenada issue was also used by the opposition parties to develop broader arguments about the merits and demerits of close alliance with the USA and the particular matter of the control of the firing of American missiles based in Britain. The party political argument rumbled on for quite some time. After enduring several more days of widespread criticism of her failure to make clear the views of her government, it seems that Mrs Thatcher eventually decided to speak out more openly. Questioned in a radio programme she had this to say:

> If you are going to pronounce a new law that wherever there is communism imposed against the will of the people then the US shall enter then we are going to have really terrible wars in the world.

She was, she went on, always delighted when people had the yoke of communism lifted from their shoulders, but 'that does not mean that you are entitled to go into every country . . . which is under communist oppression'. That was as far as Mrs Thatcher was prepared to go by way of condemnation of the American invasion, but it was enough to indicate her views and no more than she could say without imperilling the special relationship with Washington that she so valued.

In retrospect, what lessons are to be learnt from the affair from the point of view of British foreign policy? In a further report the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee took up the specific question of Grenada and, despite being more heavily Conservative dominated than before following the 1983 election, took the government to task for what it condemned as 'a somewhat lethargic approach' to the handling of the crisis. Its criticism was composed of several elements. First, the Committee charged that the government had not been sufficiently alert to the potentially critical nature of the economic and political situation in the Commonwealth Caribbean and had been complacent in the extreme in its reaction to the first Foreign Affairs Committee report on the subject. As previously indicated, this was undoubtedly the case, a point to which Denis Healey and several members of the former Committee themselves drew attention in the emergency parliamentary debate on Grenada on the day after the invasion. Second, the Committee alleged that the government had been 'insufficiently attuned to the political feelings of Caribbean Commonwealth states, and to their sense of interdependence, and therefore poorly equipped to evaluate accurately the signals coming from the Caribbean governments'. This does seem a harsher

judgement. The British government was aware of the mood of Eastern Caribbean governments and of the division of opinion which existed in the wider CARICOM grouping, and can hardly be blamed for falling prey to the deliberate act of deceit perpetrated on their CARICOM colleagues by what one might call the invading Caribbean states. So too did the Trinidad government much closer to the scene. Third, the Committee accused the government of 'reacting passively to events' and of failing to take a diplomatic initiative of its own during the course of the critical weekend before the invasion took place. This is again a fair point. As the report of the Committee itself asked:

> If, as both the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have suggested, the United Kingdom Government was from the start opposed to the use of military force in Grenada, why did they not take positive steps to make their opposition clear?

An emissary could have been sent or, at the very least, phone calls made to the major Caribbean protagonists. The government here stands accused at the highest level of not taking the crisis seriously until it was too late.

Fourth, and last, the Committee raised the crucial question of the British government's relationship with Washington during the affair. In a masterly piece of understatement, it concluded that

> . . . it was not the intention of the United States Government that the United Kingdom should be actively involved in the military intervention in Grenada, and that the timing, nature and extent of the information provided to the United Kingdom Government by the United States were consistent with that position.

It was a nice way of saying that Britain was deliberately misled by its closest ally. Without doubt, this is, in the long run, the most important implication of the Grenada affair from the British point of view. Interestingly, it was the one part of the Foreign Affairs Committee's report that the government was prepared to concede in its formal reply to parliament in June 1984. In respect of the other accusations, it made the expected ritual denials, but on the critical matter of the role of the USA its position did not attempt to conceal a strong sense of disgruntlement. 'It was recognised from the beginning,' said the reply, 'that it was important to find out how the United States proposed to react' and, furthermore, that 'the United States response would be crucial'—an implicit indication that more notice had been taken of the signals coming from Washington than those coming from the Caribbean. And on this critical matter, the government formally expressed agreement with the Committee that some of the indications received from Washington had 'proved ultimately misleading'.

Making the best of the situation, the rest of Sir Geoffrey Howe's 'observations' strongly defended the government's non-involvement in the invasion as the right decision, pointing out that it had been able, as a result, to play a bigger part in the rebuilding process in Grenada and in the task of smoothing over intra-Commonwealth differences of opinion over the invasion.

In the midst of all the discussion of who said what to whom precisely when, sight should not be lost of the government's actual response to the Grenada crisis. It did *not* involve itself in an act which was a major breach of international law. The logistics and timing of the invasion meant that Britain could not have realistically played a major role, but there is no doubt that HMS *Antrim* could have been brought into the action and a token involvement achieved, if so desired. It is to the credit of the Thatcher government that, for whatever reason, it did not join with the USA in this particular course of action.

In fact, there is some evidence that the collective impact of two critical reports by the Foreign Affairs Committee on the matter of British policy in the Caribbean, combined with the barrage of denunciation to which the government was subject in parliament during the actual days of the Grenada crisis, has at last succeeded in convincing policymakers in Whitehall that there might be a need to re-evaluate Britain's recent role in Caribbean affairs, especially with respect to the position of the USA. Contained within the government's June 1984 statement of position was the hint of a realization that close and automatic alliance with the USA was not the only available policy option. In a passage that is perhaps of some significance for the future despite its careful diplomatic wording, the government stated its belief that 'an increased American involvement in the Caribbean', which it recognized as a fact of life, nevertheless 'need not inhibit Britain from maintaining a distinctive policy towards the area'. This might mean various things, and there are still certainly plenty of other signs of support for Washington's policy, such as continued British participation in US dominated naval manoeuvres in the Caribbean. It is to be hoped, however, that one impact of the Grenada crisis on British politics might be to lessen the extent of this country's recent very close adherence to US policy in Caribbean and other matters. Only when this is done can the basis of a coherent post-imperial foreign policy for Britain be laid.

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ENDING HUNGER—A TASK DELAYED

JOHN MADELEY

NOVEMBER 1984 is an important anniversary for humanity. In November 1974, at a major world food conference in Rome, some 150 governments unanimously resolved to take action to ensure that 'within a decade, no child will go to bed hungry, no family will fear for its next day's bread, no human being's future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition'.

The decade is now ending—what a feast there *should* have been to celebrate! No more lives crippled, marred and brought to a premature end by the ancient enemy, hunger. But the decade has failed. 'Tonight more children will go to bed hungry, their capacities stunted, than on the night in 1974 when those words were spoken' said UNICEF's 1984 'State of the World's Children Report'. During this year a total of 30 million people are likely to die from diseases associated with hunger and malnutrition. Another 500 million people struggle to survive the hunger which is their daily lot.

Governments must now account for their stewardship over the last decade. Only by examining why it all went wrong will humanity have any chance of eliminating hunger in the next 10 years. Did government ministers really mean it when they passed their resolution 10 years ago or did 1984 then seem such a long way off that they hoped something would 'turn up' by then?

The grim fact is that having passed their bold resolution that should have rescued millions from the daily pain caused by having too little food, governments of western and eastern countries have largely ignored it, casting doubts on whether they ever really had the will to create the conditions that are necessary for hunger to be overcome. Certainly the effort needed for such a gigantic task was seriously under-estimated. But if the 'end hunger' decade has failed, there are at least just a few seeds of hope, provided the lessons of the past 10 years are taken to heart.

The causes of hunger are complex. For everyone to have enough food, it is not enough just to increase the *supply* of food. People go hungry, sometimes when food is plentiful, because they simply do not have the money to buy it. 'Nowhere in the world do people go hungry who have money in their pockets' points out Professor Hugh Bunting of Reading University. Rising living standards and more money in the pockets of the hungry is the rock on which hunger can be overcome; it would mean that those who do have enough food

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Roundtable

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Editorial

CROWN AND COMMONWEALTH

THE BRITISH are still a very monarchical people. This is attested repeatedly, week in and week out in the mass media where even the most trivial occurrences or suppositions regarding members of the Royal Family are fully and colourfully reported and discussed. The Queen undoubtedly is the principal symbol of national identity and is a, perhaps the, major focus for national loyalty. Republicanism is merely a minority cult with no political clout whatsoever in the country. The national anthem indubitably still is 'God Save the Queen'; British coins and postage stamps bear her image—and it is Americans who occasionally point out to the British that such postage stamps with well nigh unique implicit national arrogance obviously regard it as superfluous actually to name their country. The Queen undoubtedly is the prime personification of the state and the nation, their history and continuity.

The Queen is also, of course, of central symbolic importance as head of the Commonwealth—a role not widely understood and, indeed, recently somewhat misunderstood and misrepresented in Britain. Today, in the last quarter of 1984, there are 49 full and independent members of the Commonwealth. The Queen is head of state, however, in only 17 of them and, therefore, represented in each of these (except in the UK) by a Governor-General. Twenty-six are republics and six (Malaysia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tonga, Western Samoa and Brunei) have indigenous monarchs. Indubitably, she is Head of the Commonwealth, but in this symbolical, ceremonial and discreetly advisory role, she exercises no constitutional function—which is not to say that there are no constitutional *lacunae*.

Indeed, in recent months there has been some considerable critical comment in the British media, much of it from self-professed monarchists and ardent nationalists, critical of the Queen's role in the Commonwealth and implying that the Crown is likely to be tarnished by its involvement in Commonwealth affairs, whether by seeming to allow too visible an association with a particular political figure (even if that figure happened at the time to be Chairperson of a CHOGM) or just because the critic dislikes her close identification with general or specific pan-Commonwealth causes.

Not for the first, or perhaps the last, time Mr Enoch Powell recently was prominent in expounding his views on this subject. On 20 January 1984 he attacked the internationalist and by inference pan-Commonwealth character of some recent royal speeches. Though he was studiously unspecific as to exactly which speeches he meant, he was widely understood to have been referring not least to the Queen's Christmas broadcast to the Commonwealth.

As *The Economist* (heir to Walter Bagehot) was quick to point out, here Mr Powell made three uncharacteristically crude errors. In the first place he maintained, wrongly (and as Mr Hodson shows in his article in this issue) that

the Queen always speaks according to her ministers' advice. In fact this is only true of speeches she makes as queen of a particular country (we have noted that she is head of state for 17 states). When speaking as Head of the Commonwealth, she neither seeks nor expects guidance or clearance from any one government, not even that of the UK. The second mistake made was to complain that the Queen's remarks had shown undue concern for 'other countries in other continents'. But is isolationism and parochialism to be preferred to pan-Commonwealth involvements? Mr Powell's third main assertion was perhaps the most surprising. After rightly noting that 'the Crown rules by consent', he went on to claim that 'the institutions of consent never have been, or could be, extended beyond the national bounds'—a judgment for which Commonwealth experience and its continuing multifarious activities provide many refutations.

The Crown and Grenada

Over the past year, much comment and speculation has centred on the propriety and the precise role played by Sir Paul Scoon, as Governor-General of Grenada, when US troops were invited to invade his tiny Caribbean island and then the US government took initiatives to·stage manage the process of inducting a new administration. For whatever the facts about Sir Paul's actions (especially during October 1983), which have already elicited a tremendous amount of exegesis and comment, there remains some obscurity about their constitutionality.

Interpretive difficulty begins with the question of the precise status of Grenada following the *coup d'état* of March 1979, which overthrew the elected government headed by Sir Eric Gairy as prime minister. Up until then Grenada had evolved from British colonial status to full independence via the transitional status of the associated states of the erstwhile British-dominated eastern Caribbean. Grenada had become an independent member of the Commonwealth in February 1974, with the Queen becoming the Queen of Grenada and the Governor becoming Governor-General as the Queen's representative in a constitutional monarchy. Under the new constitution of 1973, the Governor-General assumed the role of the sovereign's representaives, acting largely on the advice of the island's Prime Minister, with few prerogative powers left.

On 13 March 1979, Sir Eric Gairy's government was overthrown and replaced by a People's Revolutionary Government under Mr Maurice Bishop, which swiftly promulgated certain People's Laws. The 1973 constitution was torn up, and a promise was made of a new constitution, to be submitted for popular approval by referendum. Aspects of the now defunct constitution of 1973 were specifically revived. Apart from a few, rather minor, powers of the Governor in relation to appointments to public office, the Governor-General was told to exercise his functions only on the advice of the new Cabinet or of a minister acting directly under the general authority of the Cabinet. Thus, in practice, the Governor-General was to be no more than a mere figurehead with only residually the ostensible powers of a constitutional monarch.

Then in October 1983, in a rush of politically murderous internecine strife, Bishop and some of his closest Cabinet colleagues were kidnapped and killed. As had been, in fact, the case for more than four years, Sir Paul Scoon was powerless to act other than on his own initiative in a territory which still ostensibly owed allegiance to the Queen as its Head of State. The British government had since 1974 no active constitutional role to play in Grenada's political life—though undoubtedly she still had an interest in her former colony and they were co-members of the Commonwealth. The Queen as Queen of Grenada could not look to her ministers in the UK for advice, and in the absence of any advice from her ministers in Grenada she could only stand and watch what Sir Paul had decided to do on his own. As a former senior official of the Commonwealth Foundation, Scoon was well known to some of the top men of the Commonwealth Secretariat at Marlborough House, and Mr Ramphal, the Secretary-General, was formerly foreign minister of Guyana—perhaps this last fact inhibited Sir Paul from consulting with the Secretariat; in any case reliable evidence is not available on this point.

It has been argued that in the circumstances prevailing in Grenada by late 1983 it is doubtful whether constitutionally Sir Paul had any right to ask for intervention either from other countries in the Caribbean or from the USA. His country had become chaotic and subject to military rule. Had not Sir Paul ceased to be in law the sovereign's representative? In practice he took the only action he could to spare his country from further chaos.

It seems that Buckingham Palace was kept informed intermittently of events up to the time of the invasion by the USA and other forces, but disavowed any involvement of the Queen in any decision by Sir Paul to invite other countries to intervene. Sympathy for the Governor-General's personal and *ex officio* predicament had to be the extent of the Queen's involvement.

From the time in 1974 when Grenada ceased to have associated status and became independent, Sir Paul, as Governor-General, was in no way answerable to Her Majesty's Government in the UK. Thus the Grenada affair again pointed up the embarrassing potential for the Crown of constitutionally loose or somewhat unclear links which it has with such politically unstable members of the Commonwealth which continue to retain the sovereign as their Head of State. Perhaps the time is ripe for seminars for palace officials on such matters?

Looked at in another light, however, the Commonwealth association has since October 1983 proved to be a useful supplier of expertise and a facilitating agency in the difficult process of restoring stability and confidence within Grenada—but within strong constraints of which current US interest and preferences comprise a major part.

The Crown and the changing Commonwealth

It is a commonplace but none the less true that the Commonwealth is an evolutionary, an ever-evolving, organization. The British Crown, so often thought of as a symbol of staid conservatism, has in fact proved to be a remarkably adaptable institution. Because there is no longer a British Commonwealth but rather a post-colonial Commonwealth of nation-states the continuing conjunction of the Crown and the Commonwealth is sometimes misunderstood and regarded as anachronistic, especially by those who know

little or nothing of the history of the Commonwealth since 1949 and what the title and role of Head of the Commonwealth really means. The Commonwealth is not a simple but a complex and sophisticated thing and it requires some sophistication properly to appreciate it—its possibilities and its limitations.

On the evidence of the articles in this issue written by H. V. Hodson and the editor of *The Times*, it is clearly possible to advance more than one cogent view of Crown and Commonwealth and the degree to which they are and ought to be distinct but complementary institutions. Calm but well informed discussion of this matter is surely to be preferred to the chauvinistic pro-monarchical and anti-Commonwealth animosities which have appeared like ugly rashes in the pages of some of Britain's 'popular' papers in recent months.

In his famous set of essays, *The English Constitution*, Walter Bagehot (which is still where everyone should start—even though the essays were composed more than a century ago—when they think seriously about the changing character of constitutional monarchy) rightly emphasized 'the value of constitutional royalty in times of transition'. The Commonwealth in its present character is a worthy enterprise and a very novel one. It is concerned with the peace and prosperity of no small part of the contemporary world. The transformation of the erstwhile empire into the present-day Commonwealth undoubtedly has been smoothed and facilitated by the willingness of the Crown to abet and assist in this transformation willingly and out of the conviction that the evolving pattern is basically right.