

## GRENADA

Editor's Note: On October 25, 1983 the United States invaded the Commonwealth Caribbean nation of Grenada, allegedly responding to a request for outside help from the Governor-General, relayed and supported by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Leading up to that invasion were the following events that occurred during the preceding two weeks: Prime Minister Maurice Bishop's refusal to accede to the demand that leadership become more hard-line and "revolutionary"; Bishop's being placed under house arrest by militant elements within the New Jewel Movement/People's Revolutionary Government (October 12); Bishop being freed by 3-4000 of his supporters and their going to Fort Rupert to free other supporters, where Bishop and others were killed (October 19); political power being seized by a 16-member military council with Hudson Austin as head (October 19). Thus the social experiment that was begun when the new Jewel Movement seized power in 1979 and created the People's Revolutionary Government to institute "revolutionary democracy" was brutally terminated.

The following is an excerpt of a viewpoint on the Grenada affair by Dr. **Anthony P. Maingot**, Immediate Past President of CSA and Director of the Graduate Program in International Studies at Florida International University, that appeared in the October 30, 1983 issue of The Miami Herald under the title, "Requiem for a West Indian Utopia."

What triggered the bloody denouement? Bishop's trip to the United States and his search for a rapprochement with the Reagan Administration? His hint to West Indian leaders that a "constitutional process" would start in Grenada? Was the utopian beacon still calling? Reason tells us that were it only Bishop who was assassinated, that could be seen as a personal matter between competing leaders. But since it was virtually the whole group of original 1973 utopians who were eliminated, it became what Machiavelli called an "act of state."

We will never read Bishop's memoirs. We will never fully understand these four years of revolution. Another chance of knowing ourselves better has been buried with the utopia.

And, yet, there are some lessons that can be drawn from this West Indian tragedy.

First, despite its imperfections, parliamentary democracy does what authoritarian systems can never do: solve the problem of succession. It is disheartening to know that what took place in Grenada was more akin to the Stalin vs. Trotsky battle of the 1920s. In both cases the totalitarian state was still in its infancy. The one that will inevitably come in Cuba will probably be more akin to the Khrushchev vs. Beria struggle simply because of the consolidation of state control in both cases.

Second, precisely because the problem of succession often presents opportunities to influence events in authoritarian states, their diplomatic isolation is counterproductive. In this regard, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, by refusing to isolate Bishop, behaved more rationally than the United States. They, not the United States, should be fully in charge of helping Grenada return to the democratic fold.

As this is written, there is no evidence that the intervention was legal. The United States claims humanitarian reasons that, if true, would justify a rescue operation, but not the overthrow of the regime. The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States claims a preemptive strike that has no legal grounds in the OECS, U.N. or OAS charters. And yet, in these deeply law-abiding

states, which for four years respected Grenada's right to shape its own destiny, the intervention enjoys wide support. The people's reasons are a complex blend of revulsion at the brutal murders and a sense of communal solidarity with those believed to be oppressed. At a minimum, all this should mean a careful study and perhaps re-evaluation of the charter sections on non-intervention.

To a United States, which has operated under the "sphere of influence" philosophy, the intervention is merely No. 30 since 1903. To the Eastern Caribbean states, it is their first. Hopefully it will be their last.

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