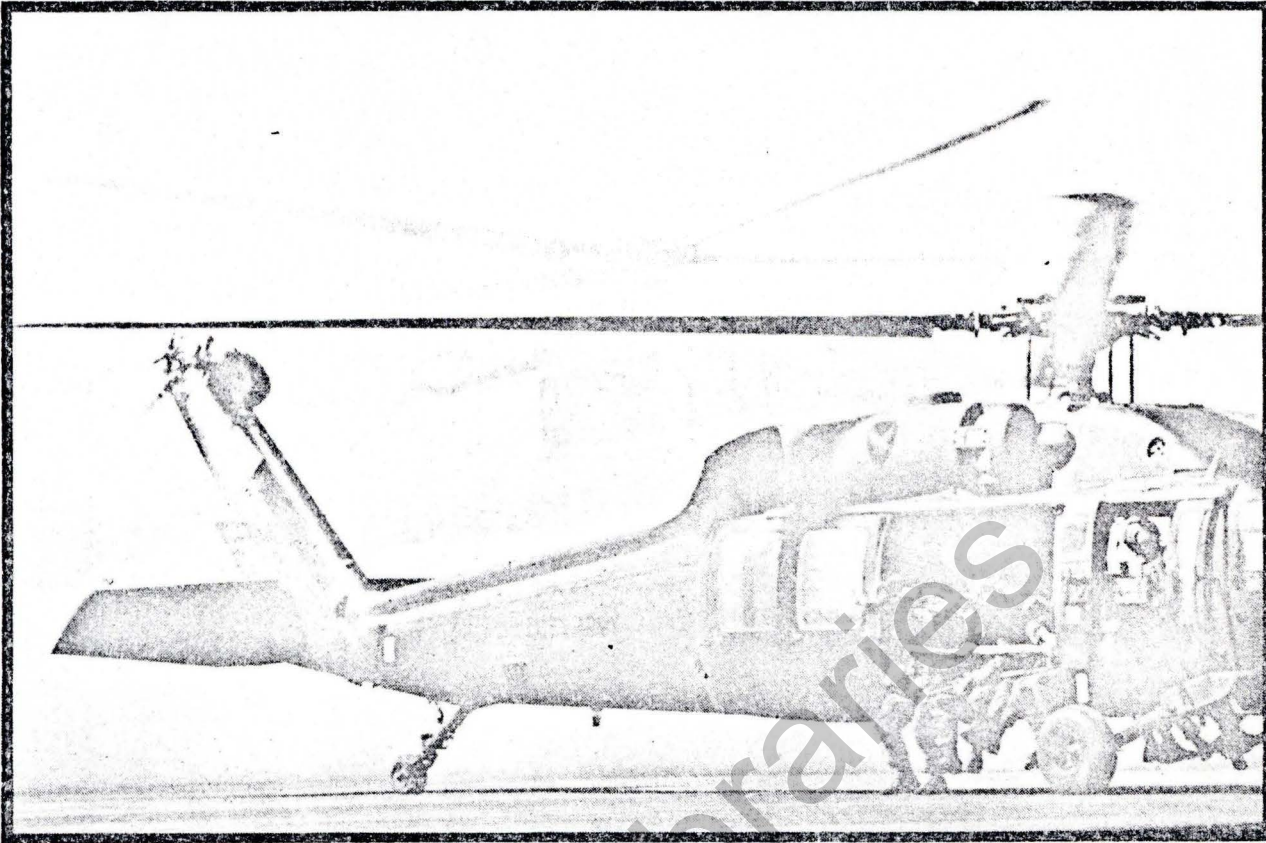


Sorting them out one by one



Gunship diplomacy

The ideologies differ — but the White House and the Kremlin have identical responses when their systems are challenged

Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army has power to do so. It cannot be otherwise. — Stalin.

I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people — Henry Kissinger, justifying funds for the CIA to block Allende's rise to power in Chile.

President Ronald Reagan bristled when he was asked at a Washington press conference if what he himself had called the invasion of Grenada could not be compared with Soviet aggression by invitation in Afghanistan. Both superpowers have responded with covert actions, disruption by surrogates, and finally invasion to counter secession from the political and economic systems within their spheres of influence.

Yugoslavia was drummed out of the community of European communist states. Nikita Khrushchev intimidated the first Polish 'revolution' in the mid-1950s. Hungary was invaded in 1956. In the 1960s,

China was cast out by the Soviet bloc as a pariah state. All these heretics wanted their own path to socialism, rejecting the Soviet system as an absolute model.

After the Prague Spring was blighted in 1968, the Kremlin provided a posthumous figleaf of socialist legality for crushing dissent and unorthodoxy. The Brezhnev doctrine declared that "the sovereignty of individual socialist countries cannot be counterposed to the interests of world socialism and the world revolutionary movement". Moscow was saying there could be no deviation within the Soviet-dominated socialist system. Keeping the system intact is vital to Soviet security and prosperity.

Before the Brezhnev doctrine, there was the Monroe doctrine, the UK Labour opposition spokesman, Denis Healey, points out. This 'No trespassers' sign helped the US grab territory by force and exercise hegemony over the Americas. Washington also crushed governments seen to be hostile to US commercial interests.

None of the arguments offered by the Reagan administration for the invasion of

Grenada will wash off the guilt of aggression. The contention that the lives of US citizens — students at the medical school — were at risk, is clumsy. Before their debriefing after returning to the US, some of the school's administrators had said the students were not in jeopardy. Reagan is selective in his concern for the safety of US citizens: US nuns, peace corps workers and trade unionists are killed in El Salvador and Guatemala by rightist death squads without provoking US retaliation. Grenada under its leftists could not have been a strategic threat to the US, Healey points out. The Cuban missile crisis proved that with their long and vulnerable lines of communication, the Soviets may not sustain a credible offensive in the Caribbean against the US. Moreover, lately the Soviets themselves have been cautioning Cuba and Nicaragua to look for an accommodation rather than confrontation with Washington.

True, since the US imports oil from Nigeria and the Middle East, and given its commitment to the defence of Europe, the Caribbean passages are important. But the

Sorting them out



Blight of the Prague Spring: enter the Russians

US has a naval base in Guantanamo in Cuba, and the all-seeing eyes of electronic surveillance to make sure that these seaplanes are immune from Soviet-inspired disruption.

As Richard Ullman, professor of international affairs at Princeton University, writes in the *Foreign Affairs Quarterly* having visited Nicaragua in August: "To assert that . . . Nicaragua poses a dire threat to the stability of the hemisphere and to the security of the US . . . evinces a frame of mind that future historians are likely to discuss more in terms of pathology than in those of logic." Nevertheless, Reagan's invasion of Grenada is neither pathological, paranoid, nor the gut reaction of a trigger-happy cowboy. Nor did he strike out blindly under provocation. The invasion is the logical development of the way US administrations, from Washington to Reagan, have identified the international environment necessary for US "security and prosperity".

While the Soviet Union insists that Soviet security and prosperity demand that "the socialist system under its hegemony" should not be interfered with, the US sees that the capitalist system of private enterprise and unfettered access to global markets should be kept intact for its affluence and security.

These are revolutionary times: since the Second World War, several countries outside the Soviet sphere have either broken away from the capitalist path of development or are heading towards socialist strategies. Washington thinks such movements are not compatible with US national self-interest and security, and that they foul the international environment necessary for US prosperity. Hence President Kennedy's sanction for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba; US support for the overthrow of the reformist Arbenz in

Guatemala; the bloody coup against Salvador Allende in Chile during Nixon's tenure. The other side of this anti-socialist coin is the patronage given to the squalid

Under-Secretary of State Robert Olds, State department memo, 1927:

We do control the destinies of Central America, and we do so for the simple reason that the national interest absolutely dictates such a course . . . Until now, Central America has always understood that governments which we recognise and support stay in power, while those we do not recognise and support fail.

dictatorships in El Salvador, Chile and Guatemala.

The real threat posed by Cuba, Nicaragua and pre-invasion Grenada is the prospect of an attractive alternate ideology of development in the US backyard. There are many failings in Cuba and Nicaragua, but their performance in providing housing, health, education and land for the masses is impressive.

Ullman does not see in Nicaragua an intolerably repressive society. "Although the Sandinistas hold a majority of seats in the 51-member council of states that makes Nicaragua's laws, their practice is to legislate by a consensus that includes the representatives of the opposition parties and of the social and economic organisations (trade unions, chambers of commerce,

farmers' organisations, etc . . .) that are not Sandinist. When draft legislation meets with opposition, it is modified until it gains general approval. Even severe critics of the Sandinistas concede that the council (whose members are elected by their particular organisations) has thus far functioned as a genuinely deliberative and pluralist legislative body . . . Nicaragua is no longer a state in which the bulk of the population is terrorised by its own armed forces. In that respect, it is nothing like (as) . . . repressive as some of its neighbours." Yet for the White House, the risk is that the 'revolutionary virus' could infect the impoverished masses and intellectuals disenchanted with the existing order in the region.

Since the Second World War, the US reach has gone beyond its backyard. US security concerns now stretch "from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli" and way beyond. The winds of revolutionary change have blown down conservative rulers and colonialist regimes in Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Preventing this "creeping communism" from infiltrating other countries in Africa which supply strategic minerals to the US is a policy priority for Washington.

The US hopes to frustrate efforts by the socialist states to consolidate themselves. It refuses to deal with them. Covert CIA operations are on. There is support for armed attacks by insurgents such as Jonas Savimbi's Unita in Angola and the Nicaraguan *contras*. Incursions by proxies from the Condeca (Central American Defence Council) in countries such as Honduras, and raids by South Africa are other devices. The image of unpredictable US military response is kept vivid to force the socialist states to divert resources from welfare to defence. The US will not talk to them until they dismantle their socialist systems. Hence the rejection of overtures from Cuba and Nicaragua for peaceful co-existence and from Angola for US investment. Hence, also, the snubbing of Grenada's Maurice Bishop by the Reagan administration. The US has put pressure on its Atlantic Treaty allies and international financial organisations to deny aid to Caribbean socialist states, despite their determination not to be dependent on the Soviet Union. Reagan's relationship with socialist China is a shotgun marriage forced on him by the cold war. In any case he has not abandoned his concubine, Taiwan.

Fear that the spread of socialist states will diminish areas of opportunity for private enterprise is generating a new international morality to sanction military intervention. The invasion of Grenada has been polished up as the "rescue" of a small state that had gone under a dictatorship of "thugs". "Grenada," said *The Times* (London) "is almost the first small defenceless country to be rescued from that prison. Its rescue should be welcomed and fully consolidated. A more important task for the West now is

not to feel hangdog about this rescue... From this small beginning, a strategic initiative should be seized." Of course, foetid dictatorships that do not stray from the capitalist path are exempt from this benevolence. This high moral ground of "rescue" has been used in history to intervene in revolutions that brought in a new economic order. It was the logic used for international intervention against the Russian revolution, and, much earlier, against the French revolution.

Currently, US gunship diplomacy is being deployed to protect another of its "fundamental interests" — an assured supply of oil from the Middle East for itself, its Nato allies and Japan. The threat to these supplies, older and more abiding than that posed by the Iran-Iraq war, is Israeli expansion and the continuing denial of the rights of the Palestinians to a state of their own. Rather than put pressure on Israel for a just settlement of the Palestinian problem, the US is reinforcing Israel's brute military force. Again, this is not a Reagan policy innovation.

His predecessor favoured a special relationship with Israel, using it as the preponderant power to protect US interests.

With increased military aid, Jordan is to be used as an interventionist force against

President John F Kennedy, Bay of Pigs invasion, 1961:

If the nations of this hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside communist penetration; then I want it clearly understood that this government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations, which are the security of our nation.

unrest in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states. This design may oblige Israel to desist from policies that could destabilise King Hussein. The Gulf states are expected to be happy to see Arab faces among the international "rescue" brigade.

Syria, set on regional hegemony, could be the spoiler. Like President Gamal Nasser, who adopted the Palestinians to give legitimacy to his claim to Arab leadership, Assad is taking charge of the docile PLO rump, eliminating Yassir Arafat. Assad's objective is not a just settlement of Palestinian demands. He will control PLO guerrilla operations against Israel to make himself indispensable for Israeli security. Should he obtain the allegiance of Palestinians exiled in the Gulf states, he could use them as a lever to prise open the fabulous Arab treasures to pay for his arms purchases. The Gulf rulers may find life as

Syrian 'protectorates' uneasy. New alignments could be formed within the Middle East, threatening fresh instability.

The war in Grenada is over, but its vibrations resound through international politics. Since nothing tempts like success, Reagan may decide to "take out" a so far undisclosed enemy in Lebanon. That may look like Reagan petulance. There is a method in casting Reagan as an intemperately angry old man. A Reagan "police action" would achieve the running objective of US policy to bring Lebanon into the US military orbit, to strengthen Nato's flank in the eastern Mediterranean.

The US Rapid Deployment Force would have another staging post. A Reagan military strike followed by a continuing US presence in Lebanon would restore Amin Gemayel's authority and his treaty with Israel, which gives Israel security and access, indirectly, to Arab markets.

Syria, again, could work against these expectations, fomenting new tension.

On another plane, the Grenada invasion could precipitate a polarisation within the Third World that would aggravate domestic tensions. The six Caribbean states that went to Grenada as camp-followers of the US are under siege from their people's urge for social justice. They, and others in similar peril, may now look to the US Marines to rescue them if they are in danger of being dislodged by agitation from within.

The outlook for national sovereignty is turning bleak. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shridath Ramphal, was the lone "still small voice" of international morality. He unequivocally emphasised the sovereign right of a nation to immunity from external aggression. Beyond clucking his tongue in muted disapproval, the United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, did little to push forward a process that would at least lead to the vacation of aggression, as Ramphal's Commonwealth force was expected to achieve. The habitually moralistic India, now leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, was discreet in its disapproval. Most of the Non-Aligned nations have skeletons from past aggression in their cupboards. India is embarrassed by its dubious stand on Afghanistan.

The aftermath of Grenada is that the superpowers have moved closer to carving up the world into opposed spheres of influence, a perilous development in the thickening gloom over nuclear disarmament prospects. There is one streak of hope: China has revised a proposal, first made under Mao, in which the Third World could combine with Europe to counterpose a third force that could effectively say "a plague on both your houses" to the superpowers. The same alignment is proposed by the British Liberal leader, David Steel, who argues that detente is too serious to be left to the superpowers.

Denzil Peiris

Divided they fall

Grenada's leaders did not dream their own tensions would set the fuse for destruction of a bold social experiment

"People of Grenada: this revolution is for work, for food, for decent housing and health service; for a brilliant future for our children and grandchildren."

Brave words from Maurice Bishop, leader of the New Jewel Movement, launched the revolution that toppled the regime of Eric Gairy, who had dominated the country for nearly 30 years. The People's Revolutionary Government kept by and large to the terms Bishop set out on 13 March 1979.

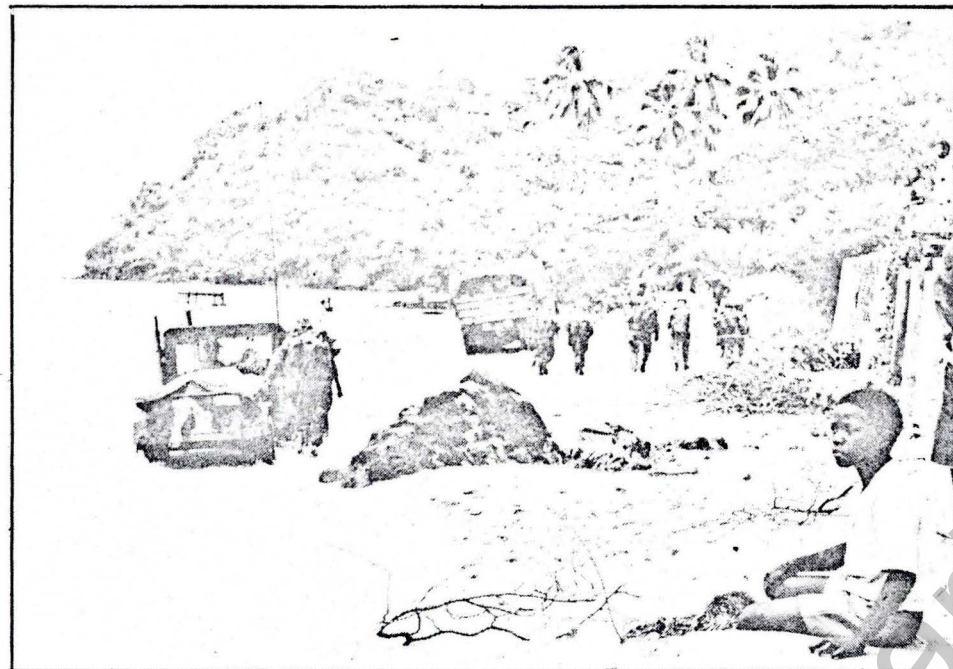
The economy had shown signs of healthy resurgence. Indeed, Finance Minister Bernard Coard's economic strategy was endorsed by a glowing report from the World Bank in 1982. The bank's report, which noted that the government had inherited a deteriorating economy, said: "Grenada has been one of the very few countries in the western hemisphere that continued to experience per capita growth during 1981." In this year's review of the economy, Coard boasted a 1982 growth rate of 5.5 per cent.

Achievements in social benefits were equally impressive. Unemployment had been reduced from 50 per cent under the Gairy administration to some 14 per cent by late 1982. A popular education campaign had resulted in an adult literacy rate of 98 per cent.

The news on 12 October stunned a world that could not sense the turmoil building within. Bishop was put under house arrest. A week later he was shot dead. That provided the Reagan administration, obsessed with the so-called threat to its security from Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua, with a pretext to invade. A unique experiment in Caribbean socialism was swept aside. Invasion was a possibility Grenadian leaders had constantly warned of; they could not foresee they would bring it upon themselves.

The events that led to the killing are not clear, but recently there appear to have been signs of a dramatic reversal in the state of the economy and a deterioration of party morale, serious enough to raise doubts about the quality of leadership. On 14 September matters came to a head. The

Sorting them out



Lost horizons: hopes ebb as US troops move in

central committee of the NJM called an extraordinary meeting in a last-ditch attempt to pull the revolution back on course.

The committee was faced with deteriorating economic indicators. "The crisis," Bishop said, "has been compounded by the weakness in the material base, electrical blackouts, bad roads, retrenchments and jobs as an issue." The agricultural sector was also not performing well. Again, Bishop accepted this: "The mood among the farmers is very low, they criticise and attack workers for not producing." Coard's review of the 1982 budget shows that government farms were also making a loss.

The committee found reports from the St Andrew's area particularly disturbing. It is a former Gairy stronghold and people there were demoralised at the prospect of losing jobs and trade from the Pearls airport, with the ill-starred runway at Point Salines due to open in March 1984. Coard's wife, Phyllis, a member of the committee, warned of the possibility of counter-revolution in the district. St Andrew's is the home of many of the island's industries and the committee was aware that the revolution's success would increasingly depend on economic performance.

There was evidence, too, of disillusionment in army ranks. According to

committee member Liam James, the army was in a "state of rot and demoralisation". There were reports that people in the security forces were resigning, often leaving the country for Trinidad. Committee member Tan Bartholomew conveyed complaints from the army that "ministers are buying new cars when soldiers cannot get food to eat".

The NJM is a cadre party. Its task was to play a leading role in the revolution but, significantly, it was here that the committee found the greatest cause for concern. Chalkie Ventour put it bluntly: "The party is facing disintegration. Comrades are complaining of the amount of tasks, some are showing signs of resignation. Comrades are afraid to speak up, they show timidity and fear to express their positions."

In short, the leadership was becoming isolated. Bartholomew said: "The central committee does not report frankly, the flow of information is a major problem. Internal party democracy has been destroyed and decisions are handed down without involving the full members."

As early as October 1982, the central committee had had to address the question of party discipline and performance. This was when Bernard Coard resigned from the committee, warning his colleagues that unless problems within the party were ironed out, the NJM faced collapse. It was an allegation he was to repeat with some force when asked to attend the September meeting: "Within six months the party will disintegrate unless a fundamental package of measures are done... The party has never had such weak links and low (status) with the masses... This is happening at a time when the militia is disintegrated... we don't have the capacity to defend the revolution."

This was the background against which the central committee faced the question of leadership on 14 September. Citing the fundamental problem as the "quality of

Call-up for a push on detente

Denis Healey, foreign affairs spokesman for Britain's official Labour opposition, and David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, both call for a fresh detente initiative in the wake of the Grenada invasion.

Steel sees a political partnership role for Europe and the Third World in pushing for this goal; Healey argues that the initiative remains with United States allies: "The superpowers do not listen to outsiders," he says. "The Non-Aligned countries should develop a cohesive policy of their own."

Steel argues: "There is a political role for Europe to get the detente process moving again — and not moving in reverse. Reagan talks about the Soviet Union as 'the source of all evil'; so did Mrs Thatcher when she was in Washington. This reverse diplomacy is really disturbing."

"Detente is an area where the Third World has a direct interest. The Non-Aligned countries should take a greater interest in the arms build-up on both sides — if more money goes into the arms race, the Third World will suffer, as there will be less money for the aid the Third World badly needs. Here is a chance for Europe and the Third World to go into partnership."

Steel thought that if the Non-Aligned countries were truly non-aligned, they would have more influence on the Soviet Union.

Commenting on the decision of six

Caribbean states to join the invasion, Steel said: "I would criticise their readiness to go along with the United States... it would appear the invitation was typed out in Washington and sent to the Caribbean, and they were quite easily persuaded. But the reasons given for organising this force — an anxiety to protect the island states — would be credible if they had called for Commonwealth help, and possibly assistance from Britain." Steel deplores the failure of Britain to respond positively when Grenada's Maurice Bishop took power in 1979. "The British government withdrew aid and support, and didn't respond to the Foreign Affairs Committee's calls to renew aid and the British presence. One could argue that the Caribbean prime ministers got off the hook because of the British attitude to Grenada."

Asked what he thought could be done to



Winners and losers: Grenadians eye patrolling Marine

leadership of the central committee provided by Maurice Bishop," Liam James listed the leader's faults: lack of a "Leninist level of organisation and discipline"; lack of "depth in ideological clarity"; and a lack of "brilliance in strategy and tactics". Bishop's leadership may well have been suspect, but few practical solutions were put forward. It

is as if the committee believed that by chanting the ideological *mantra*, all their problems would go away.

The solution was drastic but does not seem mischievous: James proposed a "model of joint leadership, marrying the strengths of comrades Bishop and Coard." Coard would effectively take control of the

party while Bishop concentrated on mass mobilisation.

This does not appear to be a clandestine bid for power by a band of ruthless hardliners, or a conflict of ideology. For example, the plan for a constitutional commission to examine an election system — the first public meetings were due in early November — had the backing of the leadership.

A rift had developed within the party and this affected other significant organs of state. The problem was recognised by the committee. Bishop accepted responsibility for his part, and a diligent effort was being made to overcome the setback. It was disagreement over solutions that led to the fatal split.

Suggestions that Bishop's murder — and it does seem to have been a cold-blooded, if unplanned affair — was the final act in an old personal feud between him and Coard, are difficult to substantiate.

Speculation that the rift may have been caused by Bishop's apparent willingness to come to some sort of accommodation with the US also misses the mark. When Bishop visited Washington in June this year — Reagan refused to see him — it was with the support of the central committee. Indeed Coard, as a member of a sub-committee, helped organise the trip.

Bishop's initial reaction to the proposal for joint leadership was accommodating. He pointed out that he "never had any problem with sharing power, or even a bad attitude to criticism". In fact, he reminded the meeting that he had "worked well with Comrade Coard over the years, from schooldays". It is significant that Bishop was willing to accept his failure in the "correct application of strategy and tactics," a quality he had already been told was the strong point of his deputy, Coard.

But he was unwilling to commit himself formally to the proposal. Bishop could have had no doubt about the committee's firm

ensure that what happened in Grenada was not repeated elsewhere, for example in Nicaragua. Steel said: "We should be willing to, and trying to, encourage links with these countries. Only two foreign ministries of the powerful western states — Canada and West Germany — have done so with Nicaragua. This is almost a repeat of the Grenada situation. After 1979, the EEC and Canada continued links with Grenada, while Britain withdrew. One lesson to be learned is that we should be giving aid, not shutting it off."

Healey rejected the Reagan administration's argument that Nicaragua and Grenada could have been bases for a Soviet threat to the US.

"It would be difficult," he said, "for the Russians, with long lines of communication, to mount a threat in the Caribbean region." But "there is still a danger to Nicaragua (from the US). Possibly, the

failure of the massive US forces to conduct a quick surgical operation (in Grenada), having to drag it on for several days and especially to see that 500 middle-aged Cuban workers were able to hold them up for so long, would give the US second thoughts about mounting an invasion of Nicaragua, which has a much larger population.

"The US has been following a policy of gunboat diplomacy for over 100 years. The US should come to terms with the fact that we are now in the 20th century. Reagan didn't behave any worse than Kennedy — the Bay of Pigs was the same kind of exercise."

Steel noted that Reagan had "exposed" the construction of Grenada's new airport with satellite photographs as if it were a state secret. "The fact is that the airport was for the tourist industry and was originally Canada's idea. Maurice Bishop

was encouraged to go to the United States for aid but he got a dusty response there. He got a much better response from Eastern Europe."

Healey also drew the Third World's attention to an issue it is neglecting: the attack by President Assad of Syria on Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat. "The massacre of the Palestinians is worse than that in Beirut last year. Assad is intervening against an organisation which has the support of most of the Palestinians. There is a need for more pressure on Assad. The problem is to get the Third World to recognise the situation. Shultz has adopted the Kissinger line of an alliance with Israel against the Arab world. The Non-Aligned countries should recognise that a disaster in the Middle East could lead to a third world war."

Janice Turner

Sorting them out

wish to see the joint leadership instituted — the voting was nine for, and none against. He was one of three who abstained, saying he wanted time for "reflection". Bishop had a pre-arranged visit to St Kitts the following day, 17 September, but insisted the central committee meet Bernard Coard in his absence.

The next day the central committee, with Coard present, decided to establish the joint leadership formally and agreed on a timetable to inform the three categories of NJM members, although they were aware of Bishop's desire to restrict the discussion within the central committee.

South does not have access to the minutes of the meeting of 70 or so full members a week later, but, according to a reliable source, Maurice Bishop, after being reprimanded for hinting at a conspiracy against him, finally accepted the notion of joint leadership. Indeed, he made an emotionally charged speech of self-criticism which gained him much respect. With relief the meeting closed to spontaneous singing of

the Internationale. It seemed a crisis had been averted.

Whatever happened in the two weeks between the general meeting and Bishop's return from a trip to Eastern Europe on 7 October is crucial. By this time Bishop's supporters were warning that his life was in danger and feelings were running high. In fact it was Ma Bishop (Bishop's mother) who had gone public alleging a plot to kill the leader.

But right up to the end there seemed to be some chance of reconciliation. On the night before Bishop died, Michael Als, chairman of the People's Popular Movement of Trinidad, had been asked by Coard to mediate. Other leading figures from Caribbean socialist movements were also invited to Grenada for the same reason.

All the time Bishop's leading position within the NJM was slipping, it would have had little or no effect on his support from the public. His overwhelming popularity among the masses is indisputable. Conscious of his popularity, Bishop may have decided to risk

a confrontation with the party.

There is confusion over his movements after he was released from house arrest by a crowd of some 3,000 supporters. The demonstrators went to Fort Rupert, the armoury — in fact the army headquarters. Why not to the marketplace or the hospital which was on the same road as Fort Rupert? If there were ulterior motives, they must be attributed to his supporters. People who saw Bishop at the time say he was in no condition to make any decisions. He had not been eating and had got little sleep while under house arrest.

There are many rumours, but few facts. The use of informers by the US military to single out party members and soldiers in the revolutionary army has meant that those who may know the truth are unwilling to talk. An observer who was in Grenada at the time of the take-over said: "The trouble is no version of what happened — and there are many — is a complete fabrication."

George Alagiah

Times of war

Since the adoption of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 when the United States claimed exclusive rights within Latin America, a lengthy catalogue of intervention in Central America and the Caribbean has accumulated.

1823 Monroe Doctrine establishes US "rights" over Latin America and forbids intervention by foreign powers in the western hemisphere.

1854 US marines destroy port city of Greytown, Nicaragua to avenge detention of US official.

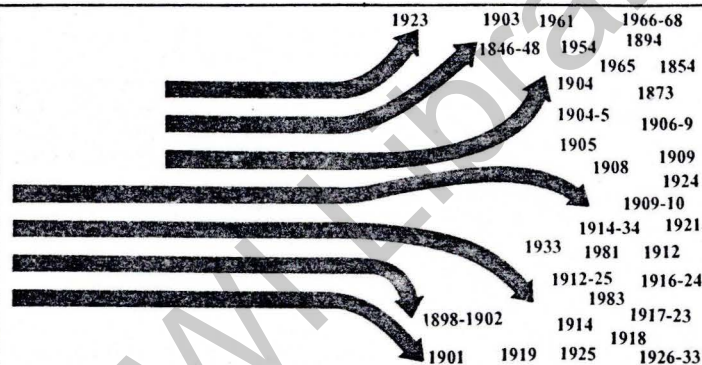
1873 During Panama's struggle for independence, US forces intervene "to protect US lives and property". Similar landings in 1885, 1901, 1902 and 1903.

1894 US troops land in Nicaragua during revolution "to protect US lives and property". Further interventions in 1898 and 1899.

1898-1902 Spanish-American War; Platt Amendment gives US the "right" to intervene militarily in Cuba and establish military bases there.

1901 US acquires Puerto Rico as "spoils" of Spanish-American War.

1903 US establishes military base at Guantanamo, Cuba. It assumes responsibility for maintaining public order in Panama, after acquiring rights to build canal;



interventions in 1908, 1912 and 1918.

1904 US forces land in the Dominican Republic "to protect US interests".

1904-5 Following default on payments to a US company, US assumes collection of customs duties for the Dominican Republic and imposes US dollar as national currency.

1905 US takes over Haiti's customs offices to guarantee debt payments. Marines land in Honduras "to protect US interests".

1906-9 During Cuban civil war, US troops land to restore order. Three-year manipulation of political and economic life.

1908 US marines sent to Panama.

1909 US backs the overthrow of President Zelaya of Nicaragua.

1909-10 Brief military intervention in Honduras "to protect US interests".

1912 Marines return to Cuba "to prevent revolt" and "to protect US lives and property". US troops sent to Honduras and Panama to protect US commercial interests.

1912-25 US occupies Nicaragua.

1914 Brief US military intervention takes place in the Dominican Republic. President Wilson orders navy to bombard and occupy Veracruz, Mexico.

1914-34 US occupies Haiti following political and economic instability and foreign involvement in country.

1916-24 US occupies the Dominican Republic "to maintain order". US military government established.

1917-23 US troops move in "to put down strikes" and "protect US property" in Cuba.

1918 US marines sent to Panama.

1919 US uses threat of invasion to force change of government in

Costa Rica. Marines sent to Honduras.

1921 Naval manoeuvres are staged on both sides of isthmus to dissuade Panama and Costa Rica from going to war over border dispute.

1924 Marines land in Honduras "to protect US interests" during local rebellion.

1925 Marines sent to Panama "to keep order and protect US interests" following strikes and riots.

1926-33 US reoccupies Nicaragua when another civil war breaks out. National Guard created with Anastasio Somoza as commander.

1933 US military pressure on Cuba leads to pro-US Batista assuming power.

1954 Central Intelligence Agency organises rebel force in Guatemala which overthrows government whose economic reforms threaten US interests.

1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by US-backed exiles.

1965 Dominican Republic invaded by 22,000 troops who overthrow progressive government.

1966-68 US Special Forces help Guatemalan army wage anti-insurgency campaign.

1981 US backs anti-government exiles in Nicaragua.

Lisa Nelson

Driving in the wedge

How Caricom's bid for consensus was thwarted by the US

Accounts of the collapse of the Grenadian revolution get increasingly complex as more information is unearthed — but the opposite is true of the chain of events that ended in the landing of some 1,900 United States Marines on the tiny Caribbean island.

What emerges is cynical manipulation by a superpower to put down a regime which, in Reagan's overblown rhetoric, was presented as a direct threat to the security of the US. The alleged breakdown of law and order after the murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop — an act condemned by friends and foes of the revolution alike — was used as a pretext.

According to Washington's version, the US involvement was a response to an invitation from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States on 21 October. This does not square with a statement from Prime Minister Tom Adams of Barbados on 27 October that he had first been approached by the US on 15 October. Later, perhaps after hearing from Washington, he retracted the statement.

Whoever made the initial suggestion, according to the *New York Times* the formal request "was drafted in Washington and conveyed to the Caribbean leaders by special US emissaries".

The Reagan administration justified the invasion on three specific grounds: the need to protect the lives of some 1,000 US citizens on the island; the prevention of further chaos; and the desire to assist in the restoration of law and order and of governmental institutions. Information available to the US at the time suggests that its citizens were not in danger in Grenada and that the Revolutionary Military Council, which had taken power after Bishop's death, was prepared to hand over to a broad-based government. The US seems to have been determined to intervene. It also appears that the OECS was less than honest with its partners in Caricom.

According to US Secretary of State George Shultz, President Reagan made a "tentative decision" to commit US Marines at a meeting with aides between 4pm and 7pm on Sunday 23 October. The decision was partly based on reports sent from two high-ranking US officials who were in Bridgetown, Barbados, most of that day: General George Crist, a senior planner with the joint chiefs of staff, and Frank McNeil,

Reagan's special representative.

The previous day, the Foreign Minister of Barbados, Louis Tullo, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Edward Seaga, and prime ministers of the OECS attended an emergency Caricom meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister George Chambers of Trinidad and Tobago.

According to Chambers, there was agreement in principle that the resolution of the Grenadian situation should not involve "external elements" and that regional initiatives should be based on Caricom as a whole. The meeting agreed to press for the immediate establishment of a broad-based civilian government and acceptance of a Caricom fact-finding mission. Chambers told the leaders he had reason to believe Grenada's military rulers would be willing to negotiate on the basis of these proposals. This view was partly based on discussion with the Commonwealth Secretary General Sir Shridath Ramphal, in London.

There is also evidence that the OECS members would have known — at least by 22 October, when they moved to Trinidad for the Caricom meeting — that the Governor-General of Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon, had been asked by General Hudson Austin, leader of the Revolutionary Military Council, to stay on in office and form a broad-based administration.

The Caricom meeting adjourned early on Sunday. When it reconvened later that morning, Chambers found the situation had changed: "Whatever transpired between the adjournment and the resumption... is not within my knowledge. But certain heads for the first time stated that there was no consensus on the proposals." The six had apparently decided to back the US invasion — but did not communicate the plan to others in Caricom.

The first official notification that Chambers, as chairman of Caricom, received of the invasion came from the US embassy in Port of Spain, several hours after the actual landing of Marines.

It is clear that by late Saturday the OECS — and by implication, the US government, which had representatives in Barbados all Sunday — should have known that an invasion was not necessary and that other justifications would not be sufficient for military intervention.

More and more it begins to look as if the US-led invasion was less a response to Grenadian events in October than a culmination of the Reagan administration's preoccupation with what it sees as the communist threat in its backyard. The current military operations inside the Honduran border with Nicaragua, and the massive August 1981 naval manoeuvres codenamed Ocean Venture, during which an island invasion was rehearsed, are part of that paranoia. In Grenada, the US put theory into practice.

GA

United they may stand

Tentative bridge-building attempts to counter superpower games in the Lebanon

The West, Israel and Syria were the losers at the first round of the Lebanese national reconciliation talks in Geneva. Incredibly, Lebanon emerged the winner, with all factions joining to take a first step towards restoring the country's shattered fortunes by turning its face firmly against the West and declaring that its identity is uncompromisingly Arab.

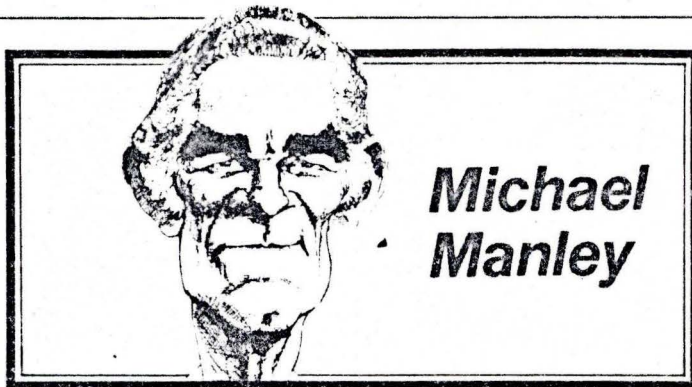
It was this unanimity among Lebanese factions that enabled Lebanon to come out on top. The West, specifically the United States, was the victim of the conference's unanimous decision on its Arab national identity.

While it may seem odd that, after 40 years of independence, Lebanon should need to redefine what it is, it is particularly urgent because, in a way, differing concepts of national identity were the main causes of the civil war and subsequent violence.

In 1943, because of differences between the founding fathers over the new country's role, it was necessary to define that identity. As a compromise between the pro-western Christian communities and the pro-Arab Muslims, it was laid down that Lebanon was an Arab country "with a western aspect".

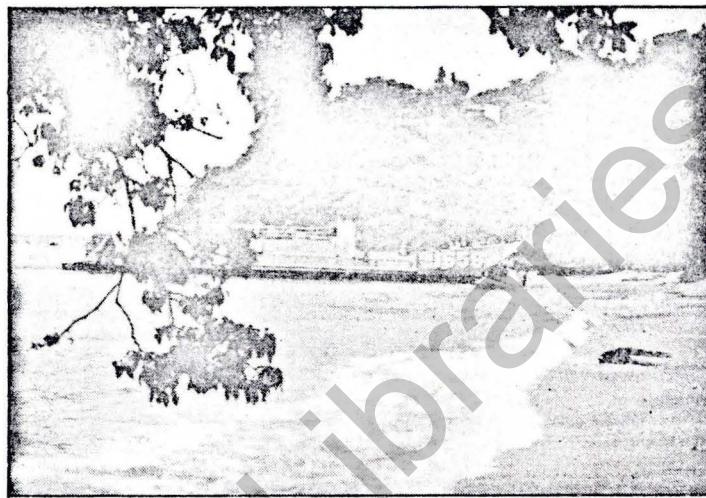
The redefinition at the Geneva meeting — some of whose participants drew up the first definition — was categorical: "Lebanon is an Arab country, a founder member of the Arab League, and is bound by all the obligations of that membership." So Lebanon rejected its "western aspect" — and this from the Arab country that has been most pro-western in every way. For Lebanon, as for most Third World countries, the West unfortunately is now represented by the US, and the US is seen as the ally of Israel, the Arabs' enemy. Until last year, Lebanon as such did not suffer much from the Israeli presence; though it has a common border with Israel, it denied that it was a frontline or confrontation state.

All that ended with the Israeli invasion, when southern Lebanon was ravaged by the sophisticated arms supplied by the US. In physical terms, therefore, the Lebanese suffered because of the US. They also suffered in political and moral terms when the US pressured Lebanon into signing the 17 May Lebanon-Israel troop withdrawal agreement, to which the US and Israel added a subsequent clause saying that



Michael Manley

Flimsy excuses and collective cowardice



Stranger in paradise: US transport at Grenada beach-head

Let us begin by accepting that the invasion of the independent and sovereign state of Grenada by the military forces of the US is popular throughout the smaller islands of the eastern Caribbean and has majority support in Jamaica. Nonetheless it is, in my view, wrong. Furthermore, I believe that it is going to set a precedent which we, the Caribbean people, will regret bitterly one day.

I was among the first to denounce absolutely the detention and subsequent killing of Maurice Bishop. My party was united in calling for the non-recognition and isolation of the ruling military council and for action by Caricom and others, such as selective sanctions, to secure the downfall of the regime. So, when I state my position, I do not speak as an apologist for the events leading up to the invasion.

There is a principle in international relations that is sacred above all others. It is the principle of the sanctity of sovereign territory. It is the principle which provides that foreign forces must never enter another man's territory unless invited by its duly constituted authority to help it defend itself from some external threat. It is further understood that an invasion to save one country's citizens under real threat in another country can be a special circumstance to justify military intervention — provided that it is limited to their rescue.

Therefore, when we go on an emotional joy-ride about US troops defeating the army of Grenada, with its population of 110,000, what we are celebrating is the abrogation of this most fundamental principle.

So let us examine the reasons advanced to justify this act with such shattering implications for the future.

The first problem is that the grounds for the invasion have changed from day to day. So I will take them in turn.

- Restoring democracy: if this is to be the test, we must ask whose version of democracy, decided by whom and imposed by whom? If it is to happen in Grenada, then we must instantly insist that Honduras, Guatemala, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Haiti, South Africa — to name only a few — must be taken on by US force. On the other hand, the Soviet Union does not accept Western democracy as true democracy. Presumably, therefore, the Soviet army must march on Western Europe. Conclusion: the argument is arrant nonsense.

- Response to an invitation under the OECS treaty: the treaty between the seven members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States is clear on two points. First, they pledge to help if a member

faces an external threat to peace and security. Second, this action must be unanimous. Six members say they felt threatened by Grenada, but Grenada is not an external entity, being itself a member of the organisation. And Grenada was not a party to the decision to have itself invaded.

Again, the proposition collapses in nonsense. As to the suggestion that the governor-general, Sir Paul Scoon, called for the invasion, one can only observe that this surfaced very late in the day and certainly does not square with two other facts. One prime minister has already said that he wanted to invade Grenada to free Bishop, and in any event, why did the representative of the Queen of Grenada not send a message to his sovereign indicating his desire for US troops to invade the country?

- The safety of the US students: the principal of the St George's medical school appeared on US television the day before the invasion saying that there was no danger. Two days later, he was again on television saying this time that there had been danger. Needless to say, the invasion had made clear that the danger to the students was only because of the invasion itself and

the proximity of the school to the first target, the new airport.

Another point is that, if the students' safety were Washington's concern, the action would have been limited to that objective.

- The threat posed by the new airport at Point Salines: this is the most threadbare excuse of all. I rest my case on the evidence of the British construction firm which designed the airport and supervised all aspects of its building. It says that there was absolutely no way in which the airport was designed for military purposes. It made a statement that cuts to shreds any suggestion that the airport was anything other than to take the wide-bodied jets that are the weapons of the tourists trade. Interestingly, there are at least three airports in the Caribbean that are bigger than the one on Grenada.

- The fact is that the invasion and conquest of Grenada by US forces was a political action carried out for political reasons in defiance of all international principles and precedents because certain prime ministers saw an opportunity to destroy a political system they did not like, and which was stupid enough to provide them with the opportunity and the pretext.

President Reagan had long sought an excuse to destroy the New Jewel Movement and was only too happy to receive the invitation, accept it, and act.

Two final issues: what else could have been done and what are the implications of what has happened? If Caricom had mobilised a total diplomatic isolation of Grenada, cut off oil supplies, frozen the currency and applied further selective sanctions such as blocking supplies of spares, ammunition and arms, then a basis could have been laid for the mortal weakening of the military council. The council started out facing the massive opposition of the people because of Bishop's killing, and the evidence seems to suggest that it was already frightened and trying to back-track.

I believe, therefore, that this would have been a basis for negotiations for the surrender of power by the military council and the return of civilian rule. No one can say exactly what would have happened in the light of such an approach. What is important, however, is that the Grenadian people would have played an active part in returning their country to civilian rule. It would also have avoided opening the floodgates to the future through the precedent now set.

And what are these implications? The next time the US does not like a government, it can point to these recent events the more readily to justify the interventions it seeks to make. There is a long and bitter history of US intervention going back to the 19th century.

Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba and Mexico have all felt the strong hand of US force on their soil — because the US did not like some regime or some turn of events. Since the Second World War, there has been Guatemala in the 1940s and the Dominican Republic in the 1960s. But never has this intervention happened in the English-speaking Caribbean. At one stroke, we have now added our territories to the list which can be seen as fair game for Washington because of this intemperate, hasty and entirely ideological decision to invite a foreign army to solve our problems.

Some say it was a bold act. But what is bold about getting foreign troops to solve our problems? What is bold about inviting a mighty military nation to knock over one of the tiniest and least developed of countries? It merely seems neo-colonialist cowardice to me. I end with these frightening questions: Who will be next and what will the consequence be next time?