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Grenada Situation Report
As of 1400 hours
20 October 1983

Prime Minister Bishop and three of his cabinet ministers reportedly are dead.

-- Radio Free Grenada last night announced that Bishop and ministers Whiteman, Bain, and Creft died as a result of wounds received during the melee at Fort Rupert.

-- Embassy Bridgetown reports it is not clear if Bishop was even taken to the hospital.

A Revolutionary Military Council has been formed and a Curfew is in effect.

-- Radio Free Grenada last night carried an announcement by Armed Forces Commander Austin stating the formation of a 16-man Revolutionary Military Council, chaired by Austin.

-- Austin said all private and foreign property "will be guaranteed," and warned foreign governments not to interfere.

-- A four-day, 24-hour curfew declared by the Council will last until 1800 on 24 October, and curfew violators will be shot on sight.

-- Essential service workers will received special passes and transporation to and from work.

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Background on The New Jewel Movement

The NJM, founded in 1970 by Maurice Bishop as a black nationalist group, became a political party by 1973. Its leaders were young, middle-class, well-educated Grenadians. Their power base was chiefly among the island's disaffected youth who were particularly hard hit by unemployment which had reached more than 30 percent by 1979. In 1976, the NJM led a three party alliance on a moderate platform to near victory (48.3 percent of the vote) in a hard-fought election that elevated Bishop to Leader of the Oppositon.

Bishop and his colleagues were the most effective opposition to then Prime Minister Eric Gairy, whose erratic leadership, flamboyance, and poor human rights record offended large numbers of his countrymen and virtually all other leaders of the region. While the NJM made considerable gains with conventional political tactics, it also had a long record of violent confrontation with Gairy. Bishop was beaten up by police during a demonstration in 1973 and was arrested three times in 1974 on politically related charges including conspiracy to assassinate Gairy. In January 1974, the police killed Bishop's father apparently without provocation during another demonstration.

After Bishop's electoral defeat in 1976, the NJM adopted an increasingly leftist orientation and showed greater willingness to engage in violent tactics. The other two parties of the electoral alliance had essentially parted company with the NJM well before Bishop and his colleagues launched their successful coup against the Gairy reigme.

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Background Information on Bishop's Visit to Cuba

The Cuban Interest Section in Havana reported that on 7 October Bishop stopped in Havana on a return trip from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. According to Cuban press reports, Fidel Castro hosted a reception for Bishop the evening of 7 October. That same day, the Grenadian delegation reportedly traveled to the Cuban province of Cienfuegos visiting industrial sites. It is not unusual for Grenadian officials to stop in Cuba on their way to and from Europe and the Soviet Union. There is no indication that problems in the Granadian leadership were discussed during this visit.

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Background on Grenada's Security Forces

The primary security forces in Grenada include the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA), Peoples Revolutionary Militia (PRM), and the Grenada Police Service (GPS).

-- All of these forces were under the command of Prime Minister Bishop who also served as Minister of Defense and the Interior.

-- The 1,200-man Army is commanded by General Hudson Austin, and according to recent reporting, most of its officer corps is loyal to former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard.

-- The loyalties of the 2,000 to 4,000 personnel in of the militia or the 300-man Police Service is not known.

The Cubans have strongly supported Grenada's armed forces by providing training, equipment, and assistance in facility construction.

-- An advisory staff of 10 to 12 Cuban officers oversees the Army's basic military training on the island.

-- Small groups of PRA junior officers and NCOs, as well as several hundred militia personnel have received military training and political indoctrination in Cuba.

Most of the Weapons inventory of the PRA and militia is of Soviet origin and was delivered to Grenada from Cuba.

-- Light weapons include AK-47s, mortars, grenade launchers, recoilless rifles, and machineguns.

-- At least three batteries (four guns each) of quad-barrelled ZU-23 antiaircraft guns were delivered by Cuba in late 1982.

-- Some six BTR-60 armored personnel carriers and two BRDM-2 armored scout cars, and up to 100 trucks were also delivered last year.

-- The Coast Guard (under the Grenada Police Service) is equipped with three small British-built patrol boats.

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The Army's headquarters is located at Fort Rupert and its troops garrisoned at several camps in the St. George's area as well as the new Cuban-built military camp at Calvigny.

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