

GRENADA: Marxist Coup

The leaders of the Marxist-oriented New Jewel Movement who seized power in Grenada yesterday are still attempting to consolidate their control. Although much of the 600-man defense force apparently surrendered, there may be holdouts among the police and possibly in the countryside, where deposed Prime Minister Gairy--currently visiting New York--had his strongest support. The NJM probably will adopt a nonaligned policy in its relations with neighboring Caribbean countries and the US.

//Self-proclaimed Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, a 34-year-old London-educated lawyer, heads the NJM, which grew from a fringe group in the early 1970s into the leading opposition in the 1976 elections that Gairy only narrowly won. NJM appeal was heightened by Gairy's often arbitrary and sometimes brutal rule since 1967. The NJM's early stress on radicalism and underground activity gave way, perhaps with Cuban encouragement, to more conventional political action by 1974. We have only fragmentary outline, however, of the recent NJM relationship with Cuba.

. There is some evidence of possible Cuban funding and perhaps sponsorship of military training for a few Grenadians outside the country.

With the exception of Jamaica and Guyana, most Caribbean governments will react very cautiously to developments in Grenada. Although there are no other Marxist parties in the Eastern Caribbean with as much appeal as the NJM, recently independent Dominica faces a growing pro-Cuban group, and leaders of each of the smaller islands are uncomfortably aware of how their small defense forces might easily be overwhelmed. The left-leaning Jamaican administration, on the other hand, reportedly is planning to recognize the Bishop government, and Prime Minister Manley is said to have been elated by the coup.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

FEB 1998

14 MARCH 79

Top Secret