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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

20 April 1979

MEMORANDUM

Grenada: Origins and Implications of the 13 March Coup

The overthrow last month of Prime Minister Eric Gairy was planned and implemented by his strongest domestic opposition, the leftist New Jewel Movement (Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation). Cuba, Jamaica, the USSR, and possibly Guyana had some early knowledge of the coup plans. Cuba reportedly offered to train the revolutionaries beforehand. The People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) will probably implement socialistic reforms at home and follow the lead of Jamaica, Guyana, and Cuba in foreign policy. It will, however, try to cooperate with the US and other western countries in some areas for the sake of tourism, commodity markets, and economic aid. The Grenada coup has weakened the US position in the Caribbean, has provided Cuba with a friendly base to expand its influence in the region, and will embolden action-prone leftist groups on other English-speaking islands--especially Jamaica.

The New Jewel Movement (NJM)

The NJM, founded in 1970 by Maurice Bishop as a black-nationalist group, became a political party in 1972-73. Its leaders are young, middle-class, well educated Grenadians,

*This memorandum was prepared by the Latin America Division, of the Office of Political Analysis. It was requested by the NSC Staffer for Latin America. Information in this memorandum includes all reports received through 19 April.*

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who have formed the most effective counterforce to the heavy emigration of professional and technically skilled youth. Their power base is chiefly among the island's increasingly disaffected youth--Grenada's median age is 15--who have been particularly hard hit by rising unemployment now affecting about 30 percent of the labor force. Bishop and his colleagues, by skillfully exploiting the country's serious political and economic problems, gradually emerged as the most dynamic political force on the island. 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 Opposition.

The NJM was the most effective opposition to the redoubtable Sir Eric Gairy, whose erratic leadership, flamboyance, and poor human rights record offended growing numbers of his countrymen and virtually all other leaders of the region. Gairy, who had dominated the island's politics since 1951, used force and intimidation against his opponents and kept a tight although often inefficient control of government affairs. The courts banned him from politics between 1957 and 1961 for misconduct during an election campaign, and the UK suspended Grenada's constitution in 1962 to remove him a second time for misappropriating government funds. The UK also cut back aid to Grenada in 1974 after Gairy apparently used the money to pay government salaries and again last year after he concluded a controversial security assistance agreement with Chile. In 1975, a judicial commission supported accusations of brutality against Gairy's police.

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 November 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. Early last year police forcibly broke up opposition anti-government protests and in September two NJM supporters were arrested in the US on gun running

charges that eventually led [REDACTED] on a trail to Bishop himself. [REDACTED]

That investigation was probably the immediate catalyst for Bishop, although he may also have been impelled toward a coup by the discouraging political setbacks to the NJM during the previous year. The United People's Party and the Grenada National Party, the other members of the three-party alliance that fared so well in 1976, had all but deserted the NJM because of its increasingly leftist positions. Without support from moderate groups, Bishop would have had great difficulty winning the next election. Moreover, the charges of gun running promised to sideline the NJM before then; according to both Gairy's ex-foreign minister and Bishop, arrests were imminent. Not surprisingly, Bishop has contended political motives and not firm evidence of arms smuggling were the reason for the order to detain him. [REDACTED]

#### The Cuban, Jamaican, and Guyanese Connections

The Cubans have viewed Grenada as the one island in the region where force could be used to attain power. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These officials noted that while Cuba considered armed struggle as a method of last resort for achieving power in the Caribbean, it made an exception in the case of Grenada. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By last fall the NJM had apparently begun to think seriously about overthrowing Gairy. Tentative coup plans were formulated and in November, Unison Whiteman--now Bishop's minister of agriculture--who had visited Cuba with Bishop in May 1977, traveled to Jamaica to meet with Jamaican radical Trevor Munroe. He also met with Prime Minister Manley and D.K. Duncan, a leading radical in the ruling People's National Party. Whiteman later said that a decision was

made in Jamaica--presumably at Cuban and Jamaican urging--to postpone "open confrontation" with Gairy until the NJM was better prepared [REDACTED]

It was also decided--apparently at Munroe's suggestion--to try to arrange for Grenadian youth to receive paramilitary training in Cuba. No Cubans were known to have attended these meetings in Jamaica, but given the fact that officials of Cuba's Americas Department had used Munroe as an intermediary with the New Jewel Movement, it seems certain that they were well aware of the group's plans. [REDACTED]

Soon thereafter, the NJM--using the Grenada-Cuba Friendship Society as a cover--began to recruit young Grenadians for eventual training in Cuba. In January, George Louison--who had attended the World Youth Festival in Havana the previous summer--reportedly said that the Cubans had decided to slow the process of recruitment and to take a direct hand in the selection of Grenadians for training. He implied that up to that point no Grenadians had been sent to Cuba for training. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], on 10 March--three days before the coup--Maurice Bishop sent Louison to Cuba to "muster prior support" for the effort to oust Gairy. [REDACTED]

Soviet officials in Jamaica were probably also informed of the coup plans. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Since the coup, the Cubans have proceeded cautiously, formally recognizing Bishop's government on 14 April--21 days after the US and U.K. and 19 days after Jamaica and Guyana. The Cuban press has noted that the Commonwealth foreign ministers criticized the use of violence to attain power, but it has sought to justify the move by depicting Gairy's regime as a renegade state in the Caribbean. Cuba's party organ, Granma, has pushed the line that Gairy was unique among leaders in the English-speaking Caribbean in his willingness to deal with the South Africans and the Rhodesians, as well as to receive military aid from Pinochet's Chile. [REDACTED]

Since the coup, Bishop has apparently secretly received Cuban and Guyanese military aid. In late March, the Guyanese sent a shipment of small arms and ammunition by sea. The ship, which arrived in Grenada on 9 April, apparently also dropped off 18 military personnel, presumably to advise and train Grenadian forces. Some of the material may have been transshipped from Cuba. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] a Cuban aircraft unloaded an unspecified number of crates of arms and ammunition in Guyana on 4 April. It not until 8 April, the day after he formally requested security assistance from the US, that Bishop announced his intention to seek Cuban help. [REDACTED]

In early April, Havana had established a new communications facility linking Cuba, Jamaica, Guyana and Grenada. Cuban deliveries during the second week of April appear well documented. [REDACTED]

### Problems and Prospects

Bishop's People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) will be attempting to reconcile its leftist principles with the urgent need to improve Grenada's economy. The PRG made initial friendly overtures to the US, reassured moderate groups in Grenada, and tried to make peace with the strict constitutionalists of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Yet it has also bitterly attacked US efforts to discourage closer Cuba-Grenada links, has shown early signs of increased state control of the economy, and has both suspended the constitution and withdrawn from the regional courts system.

Grenadian moderates believe that the responsibilities of power and Bishop's leadership will temper radical influences in the PRG, much as the NJM distanced itself from some of its earlier radical stands as it advanced in the political arena. At least some prominent moderate Grenadians have joined the new government.

Bishop, who is unquestionably the dominant force in the government, is a highly intelligent political realist--even though his sympathies are clearly on the left. He is not likely to take precipitous actions that would scare off foreign investors or jeopardize Grenada's commodity markets in Western and Northern Europe. He has tried hard to reassure North American tourists, whose foreign exchange is now the island's best hope for reducing an \$18.6 million trade deficit. He appears to recognize his need for the private sector in any workable plan for economic recovery. We have no evidence that Cuba or any communist country is prepared to underwrite a socialist transformation of Grenada's economy.

The PRG, however, will probably try to centralize the mixed economy and increase government participation in agriculture, the nation's chief employer. It will encourage foreign investment in agriculture and tourism but largely in joint ventures with the government, which will almost certainly demand majority shares.

Since the suspension of the Constitution on 25 March, there has been little doubt that the PRG will sooner rather than later try to install a one-party state. Bishop has already announced his intention to convene a constitutional assembly. The NJM, along with most younger West Indian intellectuals, argues that the British "Westminster Model" is a foreign imposition irrelevant to the character and needs of Caribbean societies. The leftists believe that the transplanted British system has served vested minority interests and has excluded the masses from the government decision-making process. The PRG, therefore, will likely move to impose its long-heralded three-tiered system of village and parish assemblies dominated by a single national assembly. Bishop may have to tack his course, since he will inevitably face opposition from moderates as he tries to exclude traditional unions and parties from the political process.

In foreign policy, Bishop will follow the lead of Cuba, Jamaica, and Guyana on a "nonaligned" course. He will try to stay on good working terms with the US for the sake of aid and tourism and to avoid domestic and regional problems certain to result from a confrontation with the US. He will also try to make peace with Eastern Caribbean neighbors who are hostile to him because of his unconstitutional seizure of power. He will, however, neither bow to US or regional pressure to ease his ties with Cuba nor accept any "return to constitutionality" that would weaken his de facto control of Grenada.

#### Implications for Cuba, the US, and the Commonwealth Caribbean

Cuba has already achieved its primary objective in Grenada. It bet successfully on the group that most countries of the region saw as a long shot for near-term victory. Havana now has firmly in place an extremely friendly legitimate government in the Eastern Caribbean, where it has long sought to extend its influence. It has another ally in the UN and the OAS and another advocate in regional bodies formerly hostile to the Cuban revolution.

Having achieved this, Cuba will probably keep a low public profile in Grenada. It will offer technical assistance and extend modest offers of trade but will scrupulously avoid giving the impression that Cuba has inordinate influence with the PRG. Privately, however, Cuba and Grenada will strengthen their links and cooperate in propaganda efforts to win over other governments in the Eastern Caribbean. Cuba will also encourage the PRG's belief that the US government is instinctively opposed to its socialist orientation.

The Grenada coup has seriously set back US policy in the Caribbean, even though Washington can probably establish a working relationship with the PRG. Bishop and his colleagues appear to have a love-hate relationship with the US that does not necessarily indicate a dramatic shift in US-Grenadian relations. Their political thinking has been influenced more by their "black-power" and "antiwar" years at North American and British Universities than by their much briefer contact with Cuba. They have widespread familial and political contacts among West Indian communities in North America, where the NJM drew its primary financial support from quarterly fund raisers. They understand and admire many aspects of US society and culture. Their hostility toward the US government is based almost exclusively in their intellectual perception of "US Capitalism"--embodied in powerful multinationals and the CIA--as historically and inherently opposed to socialism. [REDACTED]

A modus vivendi with Grenada, however, will not redress harm done to US-backed efforts to promote regional cooperation or to the US image among Caribbean moderates. The ten CARICOM (Caribbean Community) countries, already weakened by the insular protectionist policies of the larger countries, have found their disunity intensified in the wake of the Grenada coup. Jamaica and Guyana, privately enthusiastic after a "socialist" victory, have shown only token patience with the alarm expressed by the six English-speaking islands that with Grenada have participated since 1967 in the Council of the West Indies Associated States (WIAS). The Council met on 21 March--the day after Jamaica, Guyana and Barbados recognized the PRG--and denounced the coup as a dangerous precedent in the Commonwealth Caribbean. It later withdrew the regional supreme court from Grenada and considered withholding notes issued by the WIAS currency board. [REDACTED]




WIAS has eased its hostility in recent weeks and will apparently seek some accommodation with Bishop. The concern of the other small islands--St. Vincent, St. Kitts-Nevis, Antigua, St. Lucia, Dominica, and Montserrat--is deep-seated, however, since they all have weak security forces and most have growing radical movements. Leaders of the islands, notably Prime Minister John Compton of Saint Lucia and Premiers Vere Bird of Antigua and Milton Cato of Saint Vincent, have expressed extreme displeasure that Western countries have seemingly ignored their fears concerning recognition of Bishop's government. Angered by Grenada's Cuban connection, St. Vincent, Dominica, and Antigua have reportedly backed out of a Caribbean cultural festival in Havana next July. [REDACTED]

Political polarization has also accelerated in Jamaica and the moderates' view of the US has suffered. Following the coup on 13 March, the head of Jamaica's widely respected Private Sector Organization (PSOJ) reportedly stated [REDACTED] that events in Grenada had demonstrated US weakness in the Caribbean and the lack of hope for moderates opposed to increasing Soviet-Cuban influence. Jamaica's opposition leader, who stands a better than even chance of succeeding Manley in the next election required by 1981, told [REDACTED] that "90 percent of his message about ~~COMMUNIST JAINS~~ in Jamaica "does not get through to Washington." The opposition party, the PSOJ, the independent press, and some church leaders reacted to the increasingly tense political environment earlier this month by openly attacking Manley before his 5-day visit to the Soviet Union. [REDACTED]

While moderate groups in Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean have been discouraged, small radical groups will be emboldened, and in Jamaica, Prime Minister Manley's more radical tendencies will be fueled. In the small Eastern islands, a radical advance will probably be checked by increased government vigilance and by an inevitable beefing up of security forces. In Jamaica, however, Manley's government will protect the Marxist Worker's Party of Jamaica and its hardcore communist leader, Trevor Munroe. Munroe, who is the major contact for Cuba and the Soviet Union with West Indian radicals, was linked last year with guerrilla camps raided by police outside Kingston. Manley reportedly covered

up Munroe's involvement and has since had a close political relationship with him. Moreover,



Jamaica--like most West Indian societies--is still a strongly democratic society opposed to extreme solutions to its socio-economic problems. Manley today would probably lose a fair election to the moderate opposition party. In the wake of the Grenada coup, however, it is clear that Manley is more sympathetic to the PNC's concept of democracy than the parliametary system that appears ready to replace him. Whatever the ultimate outcome, Manley's increasingly apparent ideological leanings will accelerate political polarization in Jamaica, decrease chances of economic recovery there, and further lessen chances for workable economic cooperation with the other Commonwealth islands.

