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Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE  
1 October 1982

GRENADA: Cuban-Soviet Outpost in the Eastern Caribbean

Summary

*Grenada has become the focal point of efforts by the Cubans and Soviets to expand their influence in the eastern Caribbean. Until now, Havana has taken the lead in attempting to make the island a showcase of Cuban-aided development, but Moscow has begun to enlarge its presence now that the People's Revolutionary Government has survived for more than three years. All evidence points toward Grenada becoming in the eastern Caribbean what Nicaragua has become in Central America--a revolutionary protege of the communist countries.* [redacted]

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*Cuba, the USSR, and other socialist regimes have increased their assistance to Bishop's government to help prop it up in the face of adverse economic trends. Havana and Moscow are stepping up training and aid to Grenada's armed forces at a level far beyond the legitimate security needs of such a small island. We judge that the principal objectives of the military buildup are:*

- . . .to check any external threats to the Bishop regime and oppose internal insurrection.*
- . . .to establish Grenada as a training site for revolutionary-minded radical groups from neighboring islands.*
- . . .to provide an operational base enabling the Cubans and Soviets to exploit Bishop's government and serve their own interests.* [redacted]

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*This memorandum was prepared for the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs by [redacted] of the Middle America-Caribbean Division, of the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It contains information available through 30 September 1982, and was coordinated with the Office of Soviet Analysis, the Office of Near East and South Asian Analysis, the Office of Global Issues, and the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America. Questions and comments are welcome and should be directed to Chief, Middle America-Caribbean Division, [redacted]*

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Steady Military Buildup

Both the Cubans and the Soviets publicly disclaim any strategic interest in Grenada, but clearly their growing investment suggests a desire to expand their presence. Indeed, Grenadian officials--including Prime Minister Bishop--have alluded openly to a willingness to facilitate Cuban and Soviet military use of the huge new airport being constructed with Havana's help at Point Salines. [REDACTED]

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Soviet involvement with Grenada took a significant stride forward during Bishop's July visit to the USSR. In addition to its modest aid package--and possibly agreement on security assistance--Moscow offered to conduct a feasibility study for a deep water port at Grenville on the east coast of the island. [REDACTED]

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Meanwhile, Cuba is out front in expediting the steady expansion of Grenada's military capabilities. [REDACTED]

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The Airport: Havana's Showplace Project

Cuba has funded almost half of the \$80 million airport project on the southern part of the island--providing construction and technical personnel as well as heavy equipment and materiel. We estimate that the Cuban presence has increased steadily to its current level of about 700, but several hundred of these are construction workers who will soon be returning to Cuba following a normal rotation. About 300 to 400 Cubans are working on the airport runway and the new terminal building.

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The first half of the 3,200 meter airport runway is almost finished and has already been used by Prime Minister Bishop's private aircraft. This 1,600-meter section of runway will be capable of handling Cuban AN-26 transports as well as MIG-17, MIG-21, and MIG-23 fighters. When the airport is completed,

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probably by 1984, it will be able to handle the largest commercial jets and many of the large transports in the Soviet inventory. [redacted]

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Cuba could use Grenada as a staging base for rapid deployment of troops if it decided to intervene on behalf of leftist forces in the region, for example in Suriname or Guyana. Cuban military transports flying to Africa could use the Grenada airport as an alternate refueling base to Cape Verde. [redacted]

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### Radio Free Grenada: Havana's Mouthpiece?

Havana has not neglected the propaganda front. Cuba gave Grenada a new 75 KW medium wave radio transmitter which began operations earlier this year. With Cuban help, studio and transmission facilities are being upgraded and Grenadian personnel are being trained in Cuba. [redacted]

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Technical problems have delayed the station from reaching full power, but it is now becoming audible on neighboring islands. When it reaches full power, we expect the new transmitter to beam propaganda throughout the Lesser Antilles during daytime hours and at night throughout the Caribbean and into south Florida and Venezuela. Prensa Latina, a Cuban press and propaganda agency, has opened a bureau in St. Georges and provides a special English-language press transmission that probably is used for radio broadcasts. [redacted]

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The Soviets will also have their own operational base in Grenada with the establishment of an embassy there last month. Soviet Ambassador Sazhenev has wide experience in the Americas and will take an active role in cultivating Grenadians as well as regional leftists. [redacted]

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Support for Radical Movements

Both Havana and Moscow strongly endorse Grenada's sponsorship of regional meetings to expand links with labor, youth, journalists, and women's groups. Funds, staffing, and equipment needs have been donated by Cuba to facilitate such gatherings. Grenada is preparing to host a conference of anti-imperialist youth and students from the Caribbean in March 1983 which will be sponsored by communist front groups, including the Soviet-dominated World Federation of Democratic Youth. [redacted]

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[redacted] Bishop is worried about a possible move by the regional organization to expel his country when Caribbean heads of state convene in Jamaica during mid-November. Grenada's headlong thrust into the Cuban-Soviet camp has been disconcerting to its democratic neighbors, who are apprehensive about the growing ideological polarization and possible plans by Bishop to export his revolution. [redacted]

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[redacted]

In addition to the Cuban and Soviet presence, the Libyans are becoming more active now that they have an embassy in Grenada. [redacted]

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Looking Ahead

Grenada seems increasingly likely to become a disruptive influence in the eastern Caribbean. Bishop and his small coterie of radicals are firmly in control of the island and have moved solidly to align themselves with the Cubans and Soviets. The short-term strategy of Havana and Moscow apparently is to make

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the smallest investment necessary to prop up Bishop's regime economically and to strengthen his security forces sufficiently to deter internal dissent. Over the longer run, they probably hope to take advantage of the steady economic deterioration in the region and to recruit followers from among the large pool of unemployed youth--many of whom are impatient for change.

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training and arming insurgents, the threat of illegal takeovers would grow--particularly among the weak and fragmented ministates of the eastern Caribbean.

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