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19 October 1983
2200 Hours

DDI TALKING POINTS ON GRENADA

Situation Update

Prime Minister Bishop is apparently again under arrest after having been temporarily freed by civilian supporters yesterday.

--Unconfirmed press reports claim that four people were killed while freeing Bishop, and that he and two other Ministers were wounded.

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-- [redacted] yesterday afternoon that two opposing factions of the military were engaged in active fighting near St. Georges and that the city was in total chaos.

Bishop's apparent rearrest indicates that former Deputy Prime Minister Coard again has the upper hand.

--Popular support for Bishop, however, endangers the radicals' position.

-- [redacted] reported on Tuesday that continuing meetings of the central committee have not yet yielded a solution to the inner-party conflict.

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Regional reaction to the political crisis in Grenada has been one of alarm.

--Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica is attempting to get CARICOM support for a unified response to Grenada once the outcome of the power struggle is evident. Leftist Michael Manley has requested Canadian intervention in Grenada to save Bishop's life.

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--Barbados held an emergency high-level meeting to assess the Grenadian situation and Trinidad and Tobago have put their defense forces on alert.

--If any harm were to befall Bishop, it would have disastrous effects on Grenada's relations with other islands of the eastern Caribbean, which would prefer Bishop to the more radical Coard.

US intervention in the political crisis in Grenada would probably have negative repercussions among the English-speaking Caribbean, who apparently prefer that the US take a wait and see attitude toward the power struggle.

--Moreover, we do not see the US citizens on Grenada endangered by the current leadership crisis.

The View From Havana

In our judgment, the Cuban Government is alarmed by the power struggle in Grenada, its closest Caribbean ally.

--The crisis is unwelcome in Havana because the political instability tarnishes both the Cuban and Grenadian regimes, gives the West a propaganda opportunity, and raises the possibility of US intervention.

The Cubans apparently have decided not to choose sides until a clear winner emerges.

--Both Bishop and Coard have strong ties to the Castro regime.

--The crisis does not yet threaten the continuation of a friendly Marxist regime in Grenada.

Nevertheless, Havana almost certainly is becoming more anxious about the protracted nature of the struggle and the

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prospect of further bloodshed, which makes a compromise solution even more difficult to achieve.

We believe that if the situation is not resolved soon, the Cubans will feel compelled to push for a solution that avoids more bloodshed and preserves a role in the government or ruling party for the charismatic Bishop.

--The Cuban Ambassador reportedly is canvassing leftist Caribbean reaction to the crisis, and Havana is aware of Bishop's popularity among leftists in the region.

If a compromise solution cannot be reached, however, we believe the Cubans would throw their support to Coard's faction, which apparently has the upper hand and the backing of most of the military.

--In that case, Havana presumably would be forced to sacrifice considerable leftist sympathy in the region for the sake of restoring political stability to Grenada.

Havana almost certainly would react to a US military intervention in Grenada with an extensive and virulent propaganda campaign, but Castro would be unlikely to send Cuban troops to oppose such a US action.

--The approximately 600 Cubans currently in Grenada, however, probably would be ordered to join the Grenadian armed forces in resisting a US intervention.

--A small number of Cubans dying in defense of Grenada would give Havana a face-saving low-cost stratagem to conceal their actual unwillingness to try to protect its small ally against US forces.

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Implications of a US Evacuation Effort

The US Government, with the assistance of its allies in the Caribbean, would need a sizeable task force to conduct an evacuation of the estimated 800 to 1,000 US citizens on Grenada.

--Such an evacuation plan would require that an airfield and landing beaches on Grenada be secured in advance of the operation, which almost certainly be interpreted as preparations for an invasion.

--Most of the US citizens on Grenada are students at the US medical school adjacent to the new Point Salines Airport on the southern coast.

Grenadian Army and militia forces, possibly with the assistance of Cuban personnel on the island, would probably react forcibly to US air or naval operations involved in the evacuation.

--There are an estimated 400 to 600 Cuban construction workers at the airport site, most with at least some type of previous military training or experience, in addition to less than a dozen Cuban military advisors.

--The 1,200-man Grenadian Army is garrisoned at several camps in the St. Georges area, and at the Calivigny military camp east of the new airport.

--Some 2,000 to 4,000 members of Grenada's militia could also be brought into action in an emergency.

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Grenada's Army and Militia have been trained by the Cubans and are equipped with a variety of Soviet weapons, including artillery, light antiaircraft guns, and armored vehicles.

--There are at least three batteries of quad-barreled ZU-23 antiaircraft guns on the island, probably located in the St. Georges area and at the Calivigny camp.

--Some six BTR-60 armored personnel carriers and two BRDM-2 armored scout cars, and a number of trucks have been seen in Grenadian Army garrisons.

--The Coast Guard is equipped with three small British-built patrol boats.

There are two useable airfields on Grenada, the new facility at Point Salines, and Pearls Airfield near Grenville on the east coast.

--Most of the 9,000-foot runway at the Point Salines airport is paved with four layers of asphalt, but numerous oil drums and other obstacles have been placed along its length.

--The smaller Pearls airfield is approximately 5,000 feet long, however, it is far removed from the locations of US citizens on the island.

--In an emergency, antiaircraft and light artillery units could quickly be deployed to these airfields.

Last April, the Grenadian Armed Forces and militia conducted a major defensive exercise (Defense of the Homeland), the scenario of which involved a reaction to an air and naval invasion by US forces.

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--Thousands of militia reportedly participated in the exercise throughout the island, repelling mock landings on the beaches countering paradrops, and defending airfields.

Political Consequences of US Military Involvement

An uninvited US intervention in the Commonwealth Caribbean would have cascading negative consequences.

--It would reverse Cuban embarrassment over the spectacle of public squabbling among Grenada's revolutionaries.

--Cuba has lionized Maurice Bishop.

--Cuban media have not informed the Cuban public about the problems now in train in Grenada.

As things now stand, Cuba cannot intervene except as mediator in without incurring the enmity of some faction.

--Caribbean governments friendly to the US would find it politically impossible to support a US intervention.

--Radicals throughout the Caribbean islands, who now have only inconsequential support, would have an effective rallying cause.

--The island states, generally tranquil, would become polarized.

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Additional Talking Points on Grenada (Provided by the OPSCTR)

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

- Radio Free Grenada last night announced that Bishop and ministers Whitman, Bain, and Creft had died during firing 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.

- 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.
- The Council has full legislative and executive powers, and has dissolved the People's Revolutionary Government and dismissed all members of the present cabinet.
- Austin said all private and foreign property "will be guaranteed," and warned foreign governments not to interfere.

Curfew is in effect.

- Four-day, 24-hour curfew declared by the Council will last until 1800 on 24 October.
- Curfew violators will be shot on sight.
- Essential service workers will receive special passes and transportation to and from work.

Cuban connection is alleged, but unconfirmed.

- [redacted] arms shipments for Coard's forces are being unloaded from boats at night and are believed to have Cuban sponsorship. No further details provided.

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