

Prelude to an Intervention: Grenada 1983

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Abstract. This article examines the demise of the Grenadian People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) in the summer of 1983 and the internal power struggle that destroyed the PRG in October that year, culminating in the execution of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. A detailed analysis of events and interactions between Grenada, Barbados and the United States in the week prior to the crisis period of 19–25 October is provided. I conclude that this pre-crisis period established the foundations for, and direction of, subsequent decision-making and explains why a military intervention solution was chosen and subsequently occurred only five days after Bishop's death.

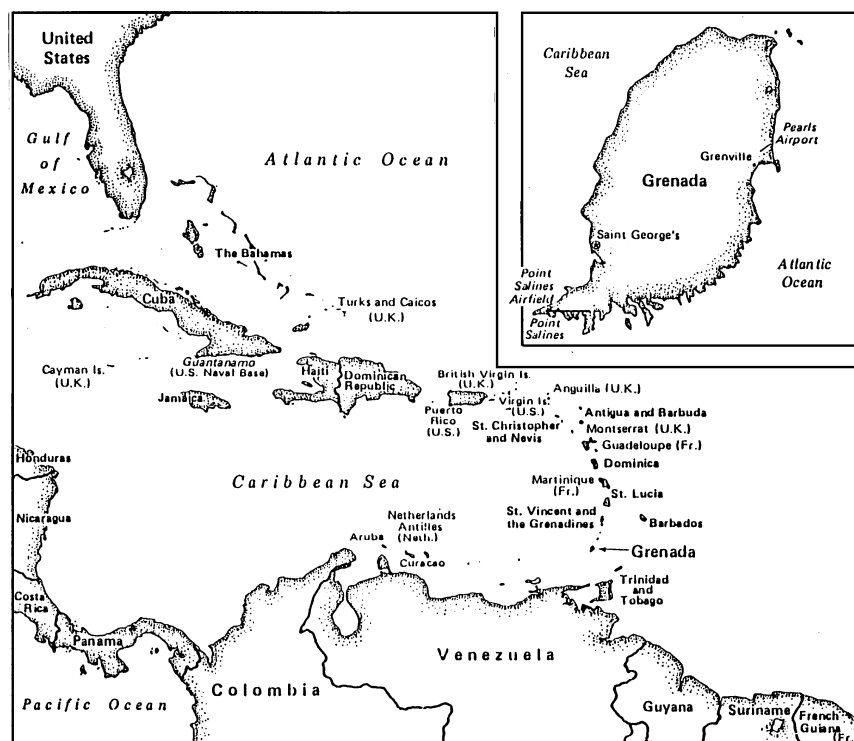
The United States has a long tradition of interventionism in the Caribbean basin. During the first three decades of this century the United States intervened in Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Justifications for these actions remained fairly consistent: humanitarianism, economic interests, national security, treaty obligations, the protection of nationals and property and the promotion of democracy. The advent of the Cold War produced a sense of Soviet threat to the Hemisphere and led the United States to intervene covertly in Guatemala in 1954 to combat a perceived Communist threat. The 1959 Cuban revolution caused Washington to adopt a general policy of 'no more Cubas' toward the region and when the prospect of 'another Cuba' arose in the Dominican Republic in 1965 President Johnson despatched 23,000 troops to the country. In 1983 the United States again intervened, this time in Grenada. This article develops new information about the decision-making surrounding the joint United States–Caribbean intervention in Grenada (Map 1), an episode which has not been the focus of as much attention, to help explain the US decision to act.

At 9:07 a.m. on 25 October 1983 President Reagan announced that 'Early this morning, forces from six Caribbean democracies and the United States began a landing or landings on the island of Grenada in the Eastern Caribbean'.¹ He provided three reasons for this military intervention: to protect citizens, including almost 1,000 of US

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¹ 'President's Remarks, 25 October 1983', *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 83 (Dec. 1983), p. 67.

nationality, in Grenada; to forestall further chaos; and to restore law and order. Existing studies of the intervention have tended to concentrate on the Reagan administration's justifications for intervening, the lawfulness of the action, analysis of the military operation, the significance of the episode for US foreign policy and the impact on the Eastern Caribbean region.² These works have mainly focused on events during 19–25 October in seeking to explain the decision to use force. This was undoubtedly the central period in the crisis for several reasons: the execution of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop; cabinet-level



Map 1. Grenada and the Caribbean. Source: 'Grenada: Collective Action by the Caribbean Peace Force', *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 83 (December 1983), p. 79.

² Amongst the most useful book-length studies are: Mark Adkin, *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada* (London, 1989); Fitzroy Ambursley and James Dunkerley, *Grenada: Whose Freedom?* (London, 1984); Robert J. Beck, *The Grenada Invasion: Politics, Law, and Foreign Policy Decisionmaking* (Boulder, 1993); Scott Davidson, *Grenada: A Study in Politics and the Limits of International Law* (Aldershot, 1987); Gordon K. Lewis, *Grenada: The Jewel Despoiled* (Baltimore, 1987); Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada: Revolution, Invasion and Aftermath* (London, 1984); Anthony Payne, Paul Sutton and Tony Thorndike, *Grenada: Revolution and Invasion* (London, 1984); Kai Schoenhals and Richard Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada: The New Jewel Movement, the United States, and the Caribbean* (Boulder, 1985); Tony Thorndike, *Grenada: Politics, Economics and Society* (London, 1985).

meetings in Washington; and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States' (OECS)³ invitation to the United States to participate in a military intervention.

However, an important aspect of the evolution of the decision to use force has been largely overlooked. The 13–19 October period can be considered as the prelude to the 19–25 October crisis period described above. During this earlier period several important events occurred which effectively established the foundations for, and direction of, subsequent decision-making and help to explain why a military solution was reached: Bishop's arrest; the State Department's Restricted Inter-Agency Group's (RIG) advocacy of an evacuation operation; the Joint Chiefs of Staff's (JCS) review of evacuation operations; a United States–Caribbean plan to rescue Bishop from house arrest; individual informal requests for help from OECS leaders; and Bishop's death.

Any examination of the Grenada intervention requires a review of United States–Grenadian relations prior to October 1983. On 13 March 1979 Grenada's New Jewel Movement (NJM) party overthrew the corrupt and repressive government of Sir Eric Gairy, a move widely popular amongst Grenadians, and established the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) led by Maurice Bishop. Caught by surprise, Washington knew next to nothing about the NJM and acted in consultation with the British and Eastern Caribbean nations in deciding to recognise the PRG. Concern grew when Bishop suspended the constitution and parliament, arrested political opponents, received Cuban arms shipments, imposed press restrictions and postponed promised elections indefinitely. Grenada's fast-growing relations with Cuba particularly worried Washington and the US ambassador for the region, Frank Ortiz, who was based in Barbados, was instructed to inform Bishop that 'we would view with displeasure any tendency on the part of Grenada to develop closer ties with Cuba'.⁴ Bishop's reply came three days later on 13 April in a radio broadcast where he firmly castigated the United States: 'No country has the right to tell us what to do or how to run our country or who to be friendly with... We are not in anybody's backyard, and we are definitely not for sale'.⁵

Washington's optimism that a cooperative relationship was possible soon dissipated and relations steadily deteriorated; a 'distancing' policy was adopted, increasing aid to Grenada's neighbours and pressuring

³ The OECS was established in 1981 and consisted of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

⁴ Robert Pastor, 'Does the United States Push Revolutions to Cuba? The Case of Grenada', *Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1986), p. 9.

⁵ Bruce Marcus and Michael Taber (eds.), *Maurice Bishop Speaks* (New York, 1983), p. 31.

regional organisations, such as the Caribbean Development Bank, to exclude Grenada from their programmes. In response Bishop repeatedly accused the United States of destabilisation and maintained a constant barrage of anti-US rhetoric.

President Reagan entered office determined to restore US credibility and increase military capability after the perceived malaise of the Carter years. Reagan described the Soviet Union as ‘the focus of evil in the modern world’⁶ and promised that the Caribbean Basin, in particular Central America, would be the place where the United States would draw the line against communist expansionism. Conceptualised as part of a ‘red triangle’ along with Cuba and Nicaragua, a harder line towards Grenada was adopted: an ambassador was not accredited and the PRG’s nominee to the United States was rejected; the new Cuban-built airport project underway at Point Salines was perceived as a Soviet–Cuban airbase rather than a tourist facility as the PRG insisted; economic pressure was exerted on international financial institutions to isolate Grenada; Reagan’s Caribbean Basin Initiative, a sort of mini-Marshall plan, deliberately excluded Grenada; and annual military manoeuvres in the region were used to intimidate the PRG. This policy was accompanied by harsh presidential rhetoric; talking of Grenada, Reagan warned ‘that country now bears the Soviet and Cuban trademark, which means that it will attempt to spread the virus amongst its neighbours’.⁷

In June 1983 Bishop visited Washington, possibly hoping to normalise relations, although the emphasis of the trip was on contact with the public, media and Congress. He met with National Security Advisor William Clark and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam, although nothing concrete ensued from the meeting. Between June and October 1983 the situation remained unchanged; the United States made it clear that for relations to improve there would have to be a cessation of anti-US propaganda, a restoration of democracy, elections, an improvement in human rights and genuine non-alignment.⁸ However, the PRG’s time and effort was now consumed by its own internal crisis.

By the summer of 1983 the tension in United States–Grenadian relations had decreased. Simultaneously, however, the PRG’s internal problems grew increasingly insurmountable: a faltering economy, waning popular support and an internecine Party power struggle culminated in the implosion of the PRG in October 1983 and its replacement by a

⁶ Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York, 1990), p. 316.

⁷ ‘Remarks at Bridgetown, Barbados, April 8 1982’, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, vol. 18 (19 April 1982), p. 463.

⁸ US Congress. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. *United States Policy Toward Grenada* (Washington, D.C., 1982), p. 31.

Revolutionary Military Council (RMC), which was then overthrown by a multilateral United States–Eastern Caribbean military force. I will trace the decline of the PRG and the subsequent arrest of Bishop and his death on 19 October 1983, and the United States and Caribbean reaction to these events, which laid the foundations for a military intervention.

Despite Bishop's Washington meeting with US officials in June 1983 no substantive change in United States–Grenadian relations materialised. Indeed, it seemed as if the United States discounted Bishop's visit as a propaganda exercise rather than a serious effort at improving relations. According to one senior Jamaican leader, even after June a US official had encouraged Jamaica and other Caribbean nations to 'isolate Grenada as a communist outpost and to consider taking military action against the Bishop regime'.⁹

The United States also continued its policy of economic isolation. In August 1983 Grenada secured a three-year Extended Agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) worth US\$14.7 million. Only \$9.7 million of this would be available for public use with the rest being spent on IMF-identified problem areas of the economy such as banking and the private sector.¹⁰ As Smith concludes, the PRG's

recourse to the IMF on the scale it did in mid-1983 – an institution [the IMF] notorious for dictating and subverting the economic policy and strategy of progressive regimes – ...is clear evidence of the severity of the crisis which gripped the Grenadian economy.¹¹

Apparently, the US State Department was willing to support the Grenadian request, but the US Treasury failed to agree.¹² Although the United States did therefore oppose the application, the IMF ignored their objections anyway. These developments obscured the division within the PRG that would soon tear the government apart.

An early indication that all was not well within the PRG came in October 1982 when Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, the chief political theoretician of the party, had resigned from the Politburo (PB) and Central Committee (CC). Coard felt that his authority as Chairman of the Organising Committee had been undermined and stated that he was 'tired and sick of being the only hatchetman and critique'. He concluded

⁹ Patrick E. Tyler, 'The Making of an Invasion: Chronology of the Planning', *Washington Post*, 30 Oct. 1983, p. A14.

¹⁰ Courtney Smith, 'The Development Strategy of the People's Revolutionary Government: The political economy of economic transformation in Grenada, 1979–1983', unpubl. PhD diss., University of Hull, 1988, p. 528.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

¹² *Grenada Documents Microfiche Collection* (GDCM), no. 002306. The vast quantity of PRG documents captured by US forces in Grenada are available for public use on about 11,000 microfiches in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

that he was the main fetter on the development of the CC because everyone was depending on him for everything especially in the area of the economy.¹³ In response a CC meeting identified ‘petty bourgeois’ tendencies in the party and suggested a more select membership¹⁴ and that ‘the party must be placed on a firm Leninist footing’.¹⁵ Coard also cited accusations against him of undermining Bishop’s leadership and a belief that if the stricter adherence to Leninism that he felt necessary was implemented it would cause ‘personality clashes’ with Bishop.¹⁶

By the fourth year of the revolution the populace had grown disillusioned with the PRG. The economic downturn meant the government struggled to meet Grenadians’ increased socio-economic expectations and the Marxist–Leninist dogmatism of the PRG had little in common with the masses and alienated the small middle-class sector. The PRG also criticised the churches as subversive in a strongly religious society. The PRG’s mass organisations gradually lost support and a combination of the dislike of regimentation and poor pay led to the demoralisation of many army and militia members.

In March 1983 a report to the CC concluded that the government was ‘close to losing its links with the masses’.¹⁷ The decision to restrict the size of party membership resulted in administrative overload as overworked officials suffered mental and physical exhaustion. Inefficiency at all levels, a lack of communication and physical isolation, all served to reduce contact with the public.¹⁸ The external pressure placed on the PRG by the United States had contributed to the militarisation of Grenada and the subsequent increased intrusion of the army – in particular – and the militia into everyday life.

One typical explanation of the demise of Bishop is that it was the result of a carefully planned conspiracy by a radical faction of the PRG led by the ambitious and committed Leninist Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard who plotted to remove the more moderate Bishop. Accordingly, Coard used his position to appoint his Organisation for Revolutionary

¹³ *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection* (Washington, D.C., 1984), document 112, ‘Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Committee NJM, 14–16 September, 1983’, p. 43.

¹⁴ There were never more than about 70 full members of the NJM as most of the 300 individuals were ‘candidate members’ who were still receiving political education and lacked full voting rights. As Ambursley and Dunkerly comment, ‘since the NJM was not just a left-wing party but one which governed a country, its low membership in a society of [85,000] people is remarkable. It confirms that the party continued to repudiate easy populism and membership for its own sake, and that it adhered rigidly to the concept of a ‘vanguard organisation’. Ambursley and Dunkerley, *Grenada*, p. 58.

¹⁵ Brian Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions and Revolutionary Theory* (London, 1993), p. 173.

¹⁶ Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, ‘Leninism in Grenada’, *Problems of Communism*, vol. XXXIII, (July–Aug. 1984), p. 16.

¹⁷ Payne et al., *Grenada*, p. 111.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Education and Liberation (OREL) disciples into positions of power and then resigned to disguise his intentions. Finally, in late 1983 the Coard faction manufactured a crisis to introduce the proposal of joint leadership and when Bishop expressed opposition they arrested him to clear the way for Coard's return.¹⁹ Before examining the series of self-critical CC meetings that prefaced the PRG's demise, it is necessary to consider the other reasons for the events that occurred.

That the CC were divided into Bishop and Coard supporters is indisputable, but the struggle that evolved was more of a classic power struggle involving personality and leadership differences rather than ideological ones; Bishop and Coard were very contrasting characters.

Maurice Bishop was the public face of the PRG: 'tall, handsome, popular, an inspired and inspiring public speaker, a man who had come to his leadership position in a spontaneous, natural fashion...who received the accolades and the recognition'.²⁰ As Marable states, 'Bishop was the charismatic, symbolic link between the PRG, the NJM and the Grenadian masses'.²¹ Bishop was a 'pragmatic' and 'populist' politician and as his secret September 1982 Line of March speech revealed he was also clearly committed to Marxist–Leninism. However, Bishop's attitude to the Marxist–Leninist doctrine has been described as 'ambiguous and reverential'.²² Indeed, as Feuer points out, 'his speeches contain little of the rhetoric or class analysis usually associated with Marxist–Leninism; there [was] more emphasis on the youth, women and small farmers than the working-class'.²³ Finally, a factor that is important to remember, Bishop's political style was one of consensus and accommodation; Heine concludes that Bishop 'was overaccommodating as a leader. He didn't want to offend people, and therefore his own beliefs and positions were often compromised'.²⁴ For example, when Coard made the decision to close the *Torchlight* newspaper in 1979 when Bishop was abroad, and without consulting him, Bishop made no objection when he returned, despite his reservations about such a measure.

¹⁹ Kai Schoenhals, 'The Road to Fort Rupert: The Revolution's Final Crisis', Paper prepared for a conference on 'Democracy, Development and Collective Security in the Eastern Caribbean: The Lessons of Grenada', sponsored by the Caribbean Institute and Study Center for Latin America (CISCLA) of Inter American University of Puerto Rico, San German, Puerto Rico, 17–19 Oct. 1985, p. 1.

²⁰ Jorge Heine, 'The Hero and the Apparatchik: Charismatic Leadership, Political Management, and Crisis in Revolutionary Grenada', in Jorge Heine (ed.), *A Revolution Aborted: The Lessons of Grenada* (Pittsburgh, 1990), p. 241.

²¹ Manning Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics: From Kwame Nkrumah to the Grenada Revolution* (London, 1987), p. 225.

²² Heine, 'The Hero and the Apparatchik', p. 221.

²³ Carl Feuer, 'Was Bishop a Social Democrat?', *Caribbean Review*, vol. XII, no. 4 (1983), p. 39.

²⁴ Heine, 'The Hero and the Apparatchik', p. 244.

Bernard Coard was the private face of the PRG. His forte was long-term planning and managerial strategy and he was responsible for the PRG's political economy policies. Coard was a dogmatic, ideology-oriented Marxist–Leninist who favoured a pro-Soviet hard-line policy. He was the man behind the party's organisation and tactics and 'from his positions on the Organizing Committee, the Politburo, and the CC, he kept trying to build a highly centralised, hierarchical, elitist party structure in accordance with his own strict interpretation of Leninist doctrine'.²⁵ It was this situation, combined with his former OREL associates' support, that 'enabled him to assign loyalists to strategic positions throughout the party, mass organizations, and government ministries'.²⁶ According to some authors this process was all part of a masterplan to remove Bishop from power.

As far as the working relationship between Bishop and Coard was concerned 'Maurice generally bowed to Bernard's tactical and ideological leadership with Bernard in turn accepting his position of chief ideologue/tactician while ceding the kudos of popularity and later national leadership to Maurice'.²⁷ Bishop respected Coard's understanding of the 'science' of Marxist–Leninism and trusted his judgment. Coard accepted that Bishop epitomised the revolution for Grenadians, but in private he criticised Bishop's leadership style; before his resignation from the PB and CC in October 1982 he criticised the 'dead-weight' leaders on the CC. After heavy criticism by the Coard faction, several pro-Bishop members were dismissed: Kendrick Radix and Vincent Noel forcibly and Jacqueline Creft after resigning.²⁸

Disregarding the theory of a multi-stage gradualistic plan by Coard to overthrow Bishop, there were obvious problems within the party. Most authors concur that the crisis which destroyed the PRG arose over the Coard faction's disappointment at the rate of social and economic transformation, the persistence of 'petty bourgeois' tendencies in the NJM and the difficulties encountered in establishing a Marxist–Leninist party structure and control system.²⁹ As Ambursley and Dunkerley suggest, the division within the PRG 'was not essentially about ideology, but it did centre on political tactics and party discipline, which inevitably helped to draw out and sharpen incipient differences of styles, approach and strategy'.³⁰ At a series of CC meetings in July, August and September 1983 the power struggle reached its violent *dénouement*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

²⁶ CIA Report, 19 December 1983, 'A First Look at Mechanisms of Control and Foreign Involvement', *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalog*, vol. XIV, no. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1988), document no. 2444, p. A1.

²⁷ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 171.

²⁸ Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, p. 253.

²⁹ Payne et al., *Grenada*, p. 106. ³⁰ Ambursley and Dunkerley, *Grenada*, p. 55.

In July 1983 the CC convened its first ever Plenary Session. Here ideological, political and organisational weaknesses were identified:

The continued failure of the Party to transform itself ideologically and organizationally and to exercise firm leadership along a Leninist path in the face of the acute rise in the complexities and difficulties facing the Revolution on all fronts.³¹

Concern was also expressed over the ‘emergence of deep petty bourgeois manifestations and influences in the party which has led to two ideological traits’.³² Bishop’s name was not mentioned, but at subsequent meetings he would be strongly denounced for his petit bourgeois tendencies.

The CC complained that mass organisation activity had stagnated, workers attendance at classes was low and inconsistent, militia numbers had fallen, anti-Communist activity was rising as was Church activity; in fact the Report warned ‘how dangerously close the Party came to losing links with the masses’.³³ Rather than trying to improve external relations with the masses the CC concluded that increased political and ideological training was required, more careful selection of political cadres and stronger leadership.³⁴ These criticisms would resurface at subsequent meetings as the crisis developed.

The self-critical tones continued at an Emergency Meeting of the CC on 26 August 1983. In addition to concern about the neglect of the militia and low morale amongst the People’s Revolutionary Army (PRA), criticism now focused on the composition and function of the CC. Selwyn Strachan warned that ‘sections of the party have begun to rebel against the higher organs of the party... This silent rebellion will turn into open rebellion and if we do not address it now it will be resolved in a petty bourgeois way’.³⁵ Prophetically, Liam James cautioned that ‘we are seeing the beginning of the disintegration of the party’.³⁶ In summarising the meeting Bishop agreed with James’s diagnosis and recommended greater CC self-criticism, work committees and study groups to improve CC members’ performance and, ludicrously, that members should read a history of the Soviet Communist Party.³⁷ At the next meeting of the CC it would be Bishop and his supporters who became the target of criticism.

An Extraordinary Meeting of the CC took place 14–16 September. The meeting started ominously for Bishop when his agenda was rejected as ‘lacking in focus’ and was replaced by the radicals’ agenda consisting of

³¹ *Grenada Documents*, document 110, ‘Central Committee Report on First Plenary Session, 13–19 July 1983’, p. 1. ³² *Ibid.*, p. 1. ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁵ *Grenada Documents*, document 111, ‘Minutes of Emergency Meeting of N.J.M. Central Committee Dated 26 August 1983’, p. 4. ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

an analysis of the present state of the party and revolution, an analysis of the CC and its main problems, and discussion of the way forward.³⁸ Ewart Layne began proceedings by stating that the revolution was in more danger than ever, the population displayed ‘dispiritiveness and dissatisfaction’; he warned that:

the party is crumbling, all mass organizations are to the ground, organs of people’s democracy are about to collapse. The internal state of the party is very dread. There is wide protest against the higher organs, prestige has fallen in the eyes of the party members and the masses. The CC has proven its inability to give leadership to the process e.g. this time the CC cannot determine the stage the revolution is at.³⁹

The participants felt that the CC was not providing adequate leadership and that the revolution lacked direction. Additionally it was felt that more attention had to be paid to the people if the revolution was to survive. At the end of the first day Bishop concluded that there was a deep crisis caused by the weaknesses in the functioning of the CC and that this contributed to the low morale of the masses.⁴⁰

On the second day Bishop was the target of direct criticism. Liam James led off by criticising the ‘levels of disorganisation, low ideological level and failure to put the party on a firm ML [Marxist–Leninist] footing’ and opined that ‘the most fundamental problem is the quality of leadership of the Central Committee and the party provided by Cde. Maurice Bishop’.⁴¹ James acknowledged Bishop’s talents as a charismatic leader who had gained national and international respect for the revolution, but suggested that he lacked the qualities to advance the revolution, namely: ‘a Leninist level of organisation and discipline, greater depth in ideological clarity [and] brilliance in strategy and tactics.’⁴² Other members of the Coard faction then joined in; Phyllis Coard, Bernard’s wife, commented that:

the Cde. Leader has not taken the responsibility, not given the necessary guidance; even in areas where he is directly in charge, the guidance is not adequate. He is disorganised very often, and avoids responsibilities for dealing with critical areas of work.⁴³

In response the pro-Bishop George Louison said that Bishop’s leadership was ‘not the only problem’ and Unison Whiteman, whilst accepting that Bishop had his faults, said that the CC were not exactly blameless. However, Bishop conceded that ‘it is correct as the maximum leader to take the full responsibilities’ and that he needed time to think about the situation.⁴⁴ The stage had been set for what some authors would argue

³⁸ *Grenada Documents*, document 112, p. 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

was the final step in Coard's elaborate plan to marginalise Bishop and seize power himself.

Having soundly criticised Bishop's leadership, James, seconded by Layne and Leon Cornwall, proposed a Joint Leadership plan: Bishop would be responsible for work with the masses, propaganda, the organs of popular democracy, militia mobilisation and regional/international affairs whilst Coard would be responsible for Party organisation work, the Organisation Committee, Party organisation and development and strategy and tactics.⁴⁵ It would seem that the majority of the CC thought joint leadership was the most appropriate solution to the situation. There was general agreement that Coard's return to the CC and PB would be welcome and Bishop's and Coard's abilities did complement one another. As Meeks concludes, 'joint leadership was not, as some have implied, a bolt out of the blue. It was simply the formal interpretation of Coard and Bishop's pre-1979 relationship'.⁴⁶ Bishop did not initially oppose powersharing although he felt it was a vote of 'no confidence'; his concern was what Coard's view of this arrangement was, the implementation of it and that joint leadership would project an image of a revolution undergoing a power struggle and near collapse.⁴⁷ Again Bishop asked for time to consider the proposal and suggested that the CC should talk to Coard whilst he (Bishop) was in St. Kitts attending their Independence Day ceremony. The meeting closed with a vote on the formalisation of James' proposal which was passed by nine votes for, one against and three abstentions.

On 17 September the CC met with Coard to discuss joint leadership. Interestingly, none of those who had questioned the proposal were present. Coard had actually met with Bishop before he left for St. Kitts and agreed that the situation was grim and he believed that the Party would disintegrate in six months unless a 'fundamental package of measures are done'.⁴⁸ Coard was initially reluctant to return to the CC and the PB and emphasised that the implementation of joint leadership must satisfy Bishop.

On 25 September there was an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Full Members of the Party. A CC report was distributed that explained that joint leadership was:

an attempt to bring a creative and scientific solution to the leadership question in our concrete circumstances and most fundamentally...it is the formal recognition of the leadership of our party for the first ten years... up to one year ago.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 175.

⁴⁷ *Grenada Documents*, document 112, p. 29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴⁹ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 151.

Bishop's failure to attend was interpreted as 'contempt to the C.C. decision and democratic centralism'.⁵⁰ Coard felt his presence without Bishop would be inappropriate so he did not attend either; eventually the members voted to force both to attend. It appears that Bishop was having second thoughts, saying that 'I am suspicious that Comrades have concluded that the party must be transformed into a Marxist–Leninist party and I am the wrong person to be leader.'⁵¹ Charges of 'vacillation' and 'individualism' were levelled against him. Despite his reservations Bishop's only response was accommodating – 'I sincerely accept the criticism and will fulfil the decision in practice'.⁵² Bishop and Coard then embraced and it seemed that the crisis had been averted.

On 27 September Bishop and two of his main supporters, Unison Whiteman and George Louison, unwisely left Grenada to visit Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Moscow, East Germany and Cuba. As acting party leader and Prime Minister in Bishop's absence, Coard was able to consolidate his position. It appears that during this trip Bishop, probably encouraged by Whiteman and Louison, had second thoughts about joint leadership. In Budapest Bishop told his bodyguard, Cletus St. Paul, that the crisis was a 'power struggle' and that 'no state had joint leadership'.⁵³ In Cuba, Bishop told Castro that he had 'given little attention to the militia. I've given little attention to the work of the party. When I return I shall give more attention to the work of the party and mass organizations'.⁵⁴ It is unknown whether Bishop discussed the power struggle with Castro and, if not, how much Castro knew of the situation but, according to one official, whilst in Cuba Bishop was told to be on his guard when he returned home.⁵⁵ The CC learnt of Bishop's change of mind when St. Paul phoned them from Cuba and hinted that 'blood will flow'.⁵⁶ The CC accused Bishop of discussing his problems with Castro and interpreted this latest development as a plot to eliminate the radicals.

Bishop was now convinced that joint leadership was a plot to undermine his authority. When he arrived back only one member of the PB, a casually dressed Selwyn Strachan, was there to meet him. Bishop told Strachan that he wanted the joint leadership issue to be put back on the agenda and that he now favoured 'collective' rather than joint leadership.⁵⁷ Bishop failed to attend a CC Emergency Session on 10

⁵⁰ *Grenada Documents*, document 113, 'Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of Full Members, September 25 1983', p. 10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵² 'Extraordinary General Meeting 9/25/83', in Paul Seabury and Walter A. McDougall (eds.), *The Grenada Papers* (San Francisco, 1984), p. 314.

⁵³ Payne et al., *Grenada*, p. 128.

⁵⁴ John Walton Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree: Cuba and the Grenada Revolution* (New York, 1993), p. 211.

⁵⁵ Interview with John Kelly, London, Feb. 15 1995.

⁵⁶ Payne et al., *Grenada*, p. 129.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

October and was only visited by CC members Hudson Austin and Ewart Layne during this time. In a conversation with Vincent Noel on 11 October, Noel mentioned that CC member Chalkie Ventour had spoken of an ‘Afghan solution’ if Bishop continued to vacillate; Bishop had also heard of such talk and replied that ‘what was at stake was much more than whether he had petit bourgeois qualities or weaknesses’.⁵⁸

On 12 October the PB met in what was to prove to be the beginning of the end for Bishop. Prior to the meeting Bishop visited the Cuban embassy and told an astonished ambassador Julien Torres Rizo of the division within the CC and that he feared for his life, but believed he could still resolve the crisis.⁵⁹

Bishop had realised that he either had to accept the CC’s decision or get the support of the masses; hence Cletus St. Paul was instructed to circulate a rumour that Coard was planning to assassinate Bishop. In response the pro-Bishop militia members had tried to arm and mobilise the army. Chief of Staff Einstein Louison tried to rally support for Bishop in the PRA. At the meeting Bishop’s challenge to the joint leadership decision received short shrift as he was out-voted by nine to three; James made it clear that ‘we have to be cold-blooded and cast all emotions aside, we have to be determined. MB [Maurice Bishop] is mainly responsible for the crisis in the party.’⁶⁰ Bishop, George Louison and Fitzroy Bain were then accused of ‘one-manism’, ‘cultism’ and ‘spreading rumours as a precondition for murdering the CC and chasing the party off the streets’.⁶¹

Unknown to Bishop, the Coard faction had assembled key PRA figures at 1 a.m. that morning and informed them that Bishop had rebelled and that ‘they were to defend the working-class as a whole and not the life of any individual leaders’.⁶² At the meeting the PRA issued a statement supporting joint leadership: ‘Never will we allow cultism, egoism, the unreasonable and unprincipled desires of one man or a minority to be imposed on our Party’.⁶³ With his power undermined and the PRA supporting his removal, Bishop’s fate was sealed.

At a meeting of all NJM members, about 300, on 13 October at 10 p.m., Bishop was denounced as having ‘disgraced the party’ and was ‘without

⁵⁸ ‘Letter from Noel to Central Committee, 10/17/83’, Seabury and McDougall, *The Grenada Papers*, p. 338. ⁵⁹ Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree*, p. 213.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State and Department of Defence, *Grenada: A Preliminary Report* (Washington D.C., Dec. 16, 1983), p. 34. Referred to hereafter as DoS/DoD, *Grenada*.

⁶¹ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention*, p. 73.

⁶² Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, p. 258.

⁶³ ‘Resolution of People’s Army, 10/12/83’, in Seabury and McDougall, *The Grenada Papers*, p. 325.

redemption'.⁶⁴ He denied spreading assassination rumours but when Errol George, a member of Bishop's security personnel, repeated the charges Bishop refused to deny George's claims, an action that was interpreted by the attendants as an admission of guilt. In an atmosphere that Noel described as 'a horrendous display of militarism, hatred and emotional vilification',⁶⁵ an isolated and confused Bishop was a sitting duck and what happened next was a formality. On the pretext of a threat to the Coards and other CC members, the CC voted to place Bishop under house arrest. He was put on Radio Free Grenada (RFG) to dismiss the assassination rumour and on the morning of Friday 14 October was informed by Austin and Strachan that he had been expelled from the party.

Even before news of Bishop's arrest reached Washington, the power struggle in Grenada had attracted attention. The US embassy in Barbados had been monitoring the situation and as Kenneth Kurze, the Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs in Bridgetown, commented, 'rumors that the radicals led by Coard were discontented and planning something (at the very least, pressure on Bishop to conform) had been circulating for weeks'.⁶⁶ Amongst the first to pick up on this in Washington was the staunch right-wing anti-Communist Constantine Menges, the President's National Security Assistant for Latin American Affairs.⁶⁷ Menges was concerned about the possible danger to US citizens, predominantly the 600 or so medical students, on the island. He later recalled that:

in crises there is opportunity, and I believed that this emergency just might present an excellent chance to restore democracy to Grenada while assuring the safety of our citizens. I immediately asked all the foreign policy agencies to provide their latest facts on Grenada. I also sought up-to-date information on any activities by Cuban or Soviet-bloc secret police or military units that might be sent to help one or the other communist faction. Further, I suggested that there be an immediate increase in efforts to detect any movement of Cuban or other hostile military forces toward Grenada.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Beck, *The Grenada Invasion*, p. 14.

⁶⁵ 'Letter From Noel', in Seabury and McDougall, *The Grenada Papers*, p. 338.

⁶⁶ Beck, *The Grenada Invasion*, p. 116.

⁶⁷ Menges had joined the NSC only two weeks earlier from the CIA where he had been the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America. During his two-year stay at the CIA his ideological fervour had caused three Senators to write a protest letter to CIA Director William Casey after a Menges briefing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 'turned into a harangue against Havana...denouncing Communists and attributing the woes of Central America to Moscow and Marxism'. Bob Woodward, *VEIL: The Wars of the CIA 1981-1987* (New York, 1987), p. 189. Casey eventually decided Menges had outgrown his usefulness at the CIA where he was causing friction between Casey and his Acting Director John McMahon and so 'shipped' him off to the NSC. Woodward, *VEIL*, p. 257.

⁶⁸ Constantine Menges, *Inside the National Security Council: The True Story of the Making and Unmaking of Reagan's Foreign Policy* (New York, 1988), p. 60.

Subsequently, at a 7.30 a.m. National Security Council (NSC) meeting on Thursday 13 October, Menges gave a succinct summary of the situation in Grenada. After the meeting he drafted an ambitious – even presumptuous, considering Bishop had not yet been arrested – one-page plan for ‘the protection of our U.S. citizens and the restoration of democracy on Grenada’. It suggested action by an international, legal, collective security force that would include democratic Caribbean countries.⁶⁹

Later that day the State Department’s RIG met, chaired by the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Langhorne Motley. Grenada was not originally on the schedule, but this was amended to discuss the Bishop–Coard split and the possibility of further unrest and the threat this posed to US citizens on the island.⁷⁰ Thus the NSC and RIG had both paid attention to Grenada before Bishop was arrested late on 13 October.

Also that Friday President Reagan’s second National Security Advisor (NSA) William Clark announced his resignation to accept the position of Secretary of the Interior Department.⁷¹ The fight to replace Clark was to divert the attention of top-level officials for several days. Reagan had curtailed the role of the NSA and his NSC staff, removing their cabinet status and placing them under the direct control of the President’s Counsellor Edwin Meese.⁷² Two White House factions emerged in the struggle to find a new NSA, divided ‘not so much by ideology as by personality and a sense of who was better serving the interests of the President’.⁷³ The Deaver–Baker–Shultz group advocated Baker as the new NSA; in opposition to this a Clark–Weinberger–Meese–Casey⁷⁴ group argued that Baker lacked the necessary experience. However, the conservatives’ candidate, Jeane Kirkpatrick,⁷⁵ was unacceptable to the pragmatists, with Shultz even threatening to resign if she was appointed.

Reagan eventually decided over the weekend of 15–16 October that he could not appoint Baker because of fierce opposition which he felt would

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁰ Interview with Langhorne Motley, Washington D.C., Aug. 25 1994.

⁷¹ White House Chief of Staff James Baker and Presidential Assistant Michael Deaver had long wanted Clark removed and when James Watt was fired from the interior Department they saw their opportunity and suggested to Reagan that Clark was the logical successor. The dutiful Clark met with Reagan and Deaver and when presented with the proposal had no objections if that was what the President wanted. Allan Gerson, *The Kirkpatrick Mission: Diplomacy Without Apology: America at the United Nations 1981–1985* (New York, 1991), p. 218.

⁷² Kevin Mulcahy, ‘The Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser: Foreign Policymaking in the Carter and Reagan Administrations’, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. XVI, no. 2 (1986), p. 291. ⁷³ Gerson, *The Kirkpatrick Mission*, p. 218.

⁷⁴ Casper Weinberger was the Secretary of Defence and William Casey was the Director of Central Intelligence.

⁷⁵ Jeane Kirkpatrick was the US ambassador to the United Nations at the time.

cause ‘friction among the cabinet and the White House staff’.⁷⁶ The result was that Robert McFarlane, a former senior military staff aide on the NSC and at the time Clark’s deputy, was appointed. In Cannon’s words McFarlane was ‘everyone’s distant second choice...the compromise candidate’.⁷⁷ McFarlane envisaged the NSA as an ‘honest broker’ and the role of the NSC was ‘not to dominate the policy making process. Instead it must perform the much more difficult task of policy facilitation and coordination.’⁷⁸ McFarlane’s newness and preoccupation with Lebanon, where he advised Reagan to hold the line when the NSC favoured withdrawal, meant that Grenada did not receive cabinet-level attention until Thursday 20 October. Another important factor was that McFarlane initially lacked close access to Reagan and therefore ended up siding with Shultz on many issues.

Returning to the latest developments in Grenada, Washington learnt of Bishop’s arrest from its embassy in Barbados. The embassy had had no one on Grenada at the time of the arrest or any intelligence assets there and so learnt of events from the British Deputy High Commissioner David Montgomery. Montgomery, most likely informed by the British representative on Grenada John Kelly, had contacted the embassy late on Thursday 13 October to report ‘rumblings from Grenada indicating that Coard [is] about to throw Bishop out and declare a Marxist state’.⁷⁹ Early on Friday 14 October Montgomery confirmed that ‘Coard [had been] all but successful in his manoeuvre’.⁸⁰ This was corroborated by Grenadians phoning Barbados.

In the Caribbean, Barbadian Prime Minister Tom Adams heard of Bishop’s arrest on Friday 14 October from a ‘friendly diplomatic source’, most likely the British. He described it as ‘an act so extreme as to imply some measure of imminent violence and disorder’.⁸¹ Dominican Prime Minister Eugenia Charles did not initially share Adams’s concern, believing that ‘at that time I didn’t feel it was my business to even think of interfering because if the people of the country want their leader kept under control, it’s their business, not mine’.⁸² Irrespective of Charles’s indifference other Eastern Caribbean leaders concluded that ‘whatever

⁷⁶ Cannon, *President Reagan*, p. 434.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

⁷⁸ Robert C. McFarlane with Richard Saunders and Thomas C. Shull, ‘The National Security Council: Organization for Policy Making’, in R. Gordon Hoxie (ed.), *The Presidency and National Security Policy* (New York, 1984), p. 262.

⁷⁹ Milan Bish’s notes.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ ‘Full Text of Speech by the Prime Minister of Barbados the Hon. Mr. Tom Adams Explaining his Reasons for Taking Part in the Invasion of Grenada’, in *Documents on the Invasion of Grenada, Caribbean Monthly Bulletin*, Oct. 1983, Supplement No. 1, Item XI, p. 35.

⁸² Janet Higbie, *Eugenia: The Caribbean’s Iron Lady* (London, 1993), p. 223.

our differences in the past, Mr. Bishop deserved the support of Caribbean governments in the circumstances'.⁸³ Adams contacted the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the US embassy in Barbados, Ludlow Flower, and suggested that 'we' (Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean and the United States) had to act. According to Flower, Adams was not proposing intervention at this stage but more a 'united front'.⁸⁴

The same day in Washington RIG convened again specifically to discuss Grenada. Led by Motley the group, sensitive to the possibility of a hostage situation and the inescapable analogy with the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979–81, reviewed standard evacuation procedures. There exists four 'layers of active participation for protecting lives':⁸⁵ the host government is reminded of its obligation to protect the welfare of foreign nationals; if the host is unable to guarantee this, then they are requested to assist in the removal of nationals from the danger area; if the host is unable or unwilling to do this, the United States will do it as long as the host pledges non-interference; and finally a forced evacuation when the host is unable or unwilling to promise non-interference.⁸⁶ The last of these is usually referred to as a non-permissive evacuation operation (NEO). Additionally, the Assistant to the Chairman of the JCS, Vice-Admiral Arthur S. Moreau, a RIG member, was instructed to tell the JCS to review their contingency plans for an evacuation operation. In turn the JCS contacted the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT) Admiral Wesley McDonald at CINCLANT headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, and instructed him to 'investigate the possibility of conducting U.S. Naval presence and possible non-combatant evacuation operations if the need to evacuate American citizens from the island arose'.⁸⁷

Concurrently, Menges showed his plan to RIG member Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North to assess the military requirements and to the NSC's senior intelligence director Kenneth deGraffenreid to survey the available intelligence.⁸⁸ Menges explained that it was only a 'personal idea' and that it should be kept secret. Both men expressed their scepticism that it would be adopted.

⁸³ 'Full Text of Speech by the Prime Minister of Barbados', in *Documents on the Invasion*, p. 35. ⁸⁴ Interview with Ludlow Flower, Washington D.C., 27 Oct. 1994.

⁸⁵ Interview with Motley.

⁸⁶ Stephen Edward Flynn, 'Grenada as a "Reactive" and a "Proactive" Crisis: New Models of Crisis Decisionmaking', unpubl. PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988, p. 106.

⁸⁷ John Quigley, 'The United States Invasion of Grenada: Stranger than Fiction', *University of Miami Inter-American Law Review*, vol. 18 (Winter 1986–1987), p. 338. Grenada fell into Commander-in-Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT) boundaries which were dominated by the Navy. Donn-Erik Marshall, 'Urgent Fury: The U.S. Military Intervention in Grenada', unpubl. M.A. diss., University of Virginia, 1989, p. 32.

⁸⁸ Menges, *Inside the National Security Council*, p. 62.

Washington had interpreted Bishop's arrest as the result of a power struggle between Bishop and Coard factions, but even by 14 October it was clear that Bishop's arrest would not be the end of the story. Word of the arrest had spread around the island and when the Minister of Mobilisation Selwyn Strachan, a henchman of Coard's, appeared at the offices of the *Free West Indian* newspaper to announce Bishop's removal and replacement by Coard, he was shouted down and chased off the premises. RFG officially broadcast this development at 3.30 p.m. to an unsettled and stunned populace. Perhaps not anticipating the hostile reaction of the people, Coard instructed RFG to announce his resignation at 4 p.m. to 'put a stop to the vicious rumor that he has been attempting to replace Comrade Maurice Bishop as Prime Minister'.⁸⁹ RFG also stated that all PRA reservists should report for duty the next morning at Fort Rupert.

On Saturday 15 October in Barbados US ambassador Milan Bish approached the Barbadian Permanent Secretary of Defence and Security with the offer of a transport plane 'to cover both a [voluntary] release of Bishop' or 'Bishop's forcible freeing by a raid being contemplated by several Caribbean states'.⁹⁰ The origins of the plan are not clear; Kurze revealed that at that time the embassy 'had a visitor from Washington... from State/INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research] or CIA who in one of many "what might U.S. do" sessions tossed [the rescue of Bishop] out as an idea'.⁹¹ According to one embassy official the hope was that Bishop's removal would prevent further violence and encourage stabilisation in Grenada.⁹² Planning for the rescue proceeded, but events would soon make it redundant.

In St. George's Kendrick Radix organised 300 people in the market square and told them that Coard was 'obsessed with power' and if they wanted Bishop free they should 'seek out Coard'.⁹³ Radix was arrested soon after and ended up in Richmond Hill prison. On RFG Leon Cornwall condemned Bishop for spreading rumours and underlined that

⁸⁹ Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, p. 259. This announcement directly contradicted the broadcast of a mere 30 minutes before.

⁹⁰ Beck, *The Grenada Invasion*, p. 96. One of the authors of the plan, Major Mark Adkin, reveals that the rescue operation 'assumed a hostile reception and was based on a surprise coup de main operation. The first phase would occur during darkness, with the troops arriving by helicopter. Key targets were Bishop's house, the governor-general's residence, Pearls and Salines airfields, the radio station, and a series of blocking or ambush positions to the north and south of St. George's'. Mark Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 92.

⁹¹ Beck, *The Grenada Invasion*, p. 118. Bish believed it to be a CIA plan. Interview with Milan Bish, Grand Island, Sept. 21 1994.

⁹² Interview with Flower.

⁹³ Payne et al., *Grenada*, p. 132.

‘until now Maurice Bishop has led the NJM and the PRG, but no man is above the party’⁹⁴ and that the PRA ‘would not tolerate any disruption of peace and calm on the island’.⁹⁵

The Coard faction only informed the Cuban and Soviet ambassadors of the crisis after Bishop had been arrested. Ambassador Rizo’s unawareness can be attributed to the Coard faction’s secretiveness and anticipation of Cuban opposition to their actions.⁹⁶ Rizo offered to meet with the CC to de-escalate the crisis, but was turned down. On 15 October Castro sent a frank letter to the CC saying that ‘the supposed notion that on passing through our country Bishop had informed me of the problems inside the Party is a miserable piece of slander’ and that ‘everything which happened was... a surprise, and disagreeable’.⁹⁷ He also made it clear that Cuba would ‘pay strictest attention to the principle of not interfering in the slightest in the internal affairs of Grenada’.⁹⁸

In Washington and the Eastern Caribbean there were suspicions that the Soviets were somehow involved in Coard’s takeover with Cuba having been in the dark about developments, although such speculation was never a significant issue for decision-makers.⁹⁹ However, the Cuban response was watched closely by the US embassy who reported that the Cubans appeared to be ‘avoiding taking sides at this point. They may be trying to mediate the dispute to insure the factional infighting does not break out into a divisive civil war... a situation which would endanger their position in Grenada’.¹⁰⁰ For the United States the concern was the possibility of Cuban involvement, which would tip the balance in favour of whichever faction they backed.

Over the next three days (15–17 October) serious negotiations took place between Coard and Strachan and the pro-Bishop George Louison, who was arrested on Sunday 16 October but allowed out to talk, and Unison Whiteman, who had returned that day from a United Nations trip, to find a solution to the crisis. The four met for several hours on each day; Louison reports that Coard was buoyant during the talks, believing that it was possible to remove Bishop because the CC was popular with the people and that: ‘once it was sold as a party decision and demonstrated that Maurice was resistant, they thought the masses of the people would say, “Well look, you cannot have somebody resisting the majority in that

⁹⁴ Milan Bish’s notes.

⁹⁵ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention*, p. 75.

⁹⁶ Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree*, p. 213.

⁹⁷ Seabury and McDougall, *The Grenada Papers*, p. 327. ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁹⁹ Interview with Craig Johnstone, Washington D.C., Sept. 1 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Milan Bish, Confidential Telegram to Secretary of State, ‘Subject: Grenada Current Situation’, n.d. [Oct. 15 1983?], p. 1.

way””.¹⁰¹ Louison believed that the Joint Leadership proposal was folly and that the party and CC had been discredited and told Coard that it was imperative Bishop be released or it could lead to a civil war as Grenadians were growing increasingly restive. Coard was dismissive of the threat: ‘Well, the people can march, they can demonstrate, and we won’t stop them. But they’ll get tired...and life will return to normal. And we will continue the revolutionary process on a more Marxist, more Leninist footing’.¹⁰² The final meeting ended with Coard promising to convey Louison and Whiteman’s views to the CC and to produce a final concrete proposal by the next morning.

At 12.04 p.m. on Sunday 16 October General Hudson Austin, head of the PRA, indicating the growing dominance of the military in the crisis, went on RFG to provide the fullest account of the situation yet. He reaffirmed collective leadership as a party principle and explained that:

Maurice Bishop has deeply resented this collective leadership, and has taken the position that no action should be taken to which he is opposed. At the same time, he has become increasingly hostile to criticism and increasingly suspicious that other members of the leadership of the party may be seeking to seize power from him.¹⁰³

Austin went on to deny rumours of a power struggle, ‘the struggle of Comrade Bishop has been the struggle of one man to exercise unlimited power. And that our party cannot and will not permit’.¹⁰⁴ Acknowledging that people were confused about what was happening Austin informed them that Bishop was at home and safe; he did not, however, mention he was under arrest, and that the CC was in full control and that this was not a military takeover as rumours had suggested. Finally, he stressed the need to ‘maintain unity in order to ensure that imperialism does not take advantage of this moment of difficulty’.¹⁰⁵ A note of insecurity was evident in this last statement. Meanwhile, a disbelieving and increasingly angry population were not in the mood to listen.

RIG met again for two hours on Monday 17 October to review all the available information on Grenada. There was a general awareness of President Reagan’s ‘frequent reminder that there must never be “another Teheran” – a hostage situation involving U.S. citizens’.¹⁰⁶ Reagan’s

¹⁰¹ Bernard Diederich, ‘Interviewing George Louison: A PRG Minister Discusses the Killings’, *Caribbean Review*, vol. XII, no. 4 (Dec. 1984), p. 17.

¹⁰² Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, p. 259.

¹⁰³ ‘Statement Broadcast by General Hudson Austin on Behalf of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement, 16th October 1983, at approximately 12.04 p.m., on Radio Free Grenada’, *Documents on the Invasion of Revolution*, Item IV, p. 5. ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9. ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ralph Bennett, ‘Grenada: Anatomy of a “Go” Decision’, *Reader’s Digest* (Feb. 1984), p. 72.

election success had been strongly influenced by Carter's mishandling of the hostage crisis. In considering the situation in Grenada, Motley was driven by the Iran analogy and knew that Reagan would not tolerate a hostage situation for any period of time.¹⁰⁷ Motley, supported by the Undersecretary for Political Affairs Lawrence Eagleburger, was concerned about the safety of US citizens and argued that serious consideration of an NEO was necessary. However, Vice-Admiral Moreau was unwilling to initiate planning yet and the JCS were not convinced that all non-military options had been examined or that the quality of intelligence was inadequate.¹⁰⁸ Fundamentally, the JCS was unenthusiastic and 'preferred to await specific high-level authorization before considering a military operation'.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile Menges was still promoting his plan. He discussed it with a Defence Department official, probably Undersecretary for Policy Fred Ikle, and explained that action was necessary to protect US citizens, help Grenadians and stop the threat of Communism in the region and because it would have a positive effect in Central America and the Caribbean, encouraging allies and demoralising communists.¹¹⁰ Menges was told abruptly that 'this plan has no chance whatsoever in this administration. McFarlane doesn't like you. He thinks you're too Reaganite... This is a waste of time. Take my advice. Don't do anything about Grenada'.¹¹¹

In Barbados, Adams had decided it was time to discuss the situation with ambassador Bish face-to-face. Adams met with Bish and Flower on Monday 17 October, having conferred with some of his fellow heads of state in the Eastern Caribbean, and suggested that the situation in Grenada provided the United States with a golden opportunity to remove an unpopular Marxist-Leninist regime and reduce Soviet and Cuban influence in the region.¹¹² In response to this tacit request for US involvement Bish could only repeat the offer of a plane and promise to relay Adams' message to Washington. Bish actually disagreed with Adams at this stage, primarily because Grenada was part of the Commonwealth.¹¹³ That same day the United States also received another request for help, this time from Eugenia Charles; she believed that Bishop had returned from Eastern Europe wanting a more moderate socialism for Grenada and

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Motley. Shultz echoes this feeling in his memoir: 'He [Reagan] would not stand still while American hostages were held for 444 days. In fact, he probably wouldn't stand still for a week'. George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York, 1993), p. 328.

¹⁰⁸ Beck, *The Grenada Invasion*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁹ Don Oberdorfer, 'Reagan Sought to End Cuban Intervention', *Washington Post*, 6 Nov. 1983, p. A21.

¹¹⁰ Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 63.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64. Menges was even told that if he continued with his plan it could cost him his position on the NSC.

¹¹² Interview with Bish.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

that now the Marxist hard-liners had made their move the United States should deal severely with them.¹¹⁴ Charles spoke with Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Charles Gillespie who relayed her oral request to Shultz.

One of Washington's main fears was that Cuba would become involved. An embassy telegram to Washington on Friday 15 October highlighted this:

With both the political and military leadership divided, and the general feeling that the rank and file in the PRA as well as the population at large would favour Bishop over Coard, Coard might well have to use the Cubans to help him take control. This of course would create a whole new ballgame.¹¹⁵

Essentially it was felt that whereas 'Coard would probably need the Cubans to enforce a takeover... Bishop would probably not'.¹¹⁶ The prediction was given some substance later that day when the embassy learnt from the Canadians that Coard had indeed approached the Cubans for support, but that they had been non-committal.¹¹⁷ It seems that the embassy at least felt that Bishop was the key to the present crisis and that what happened to him would be pivotal.¹¹⁸ In Washington President Reagan's Principal Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes had told reporters that:

The situation in Grenada is fluid at this point and is unclear. It is unclear who is in charge. The military seems to be exerting an increasing amount of power... foreign journalists continue to be banned from the island and news reports are sketchy and incomplete.¹¹⁹

In order to remedy this problem and to check on US citizens the embassy decided to send two officials, Kurze and Third Secretary Linda Flohr, to Grenada.¹²⁰

Thus, by Monday 17 October the decision-making process had changed up a gear, McFarlane had briefed Reagan on the situation and persuaded him of the need to order the go ahead with planning of a NEO. Henceforth, 'planning took place in an interagency forum with representatives of all relevant agencies participating on a daily basis. The

¹¹⁴ Milan Bish's notes.

¹¹⁵ Milan Bish, confidential telegram to Secretary of State, 'Subject: Grenada Unrest: Political Solution Talks Apparently Going On: Military Divided Between Coard and Bishop', 151602Z, Oct. 1983, Bridgetown 06249, p. 1. All State Department telegrams cited are from the Grenada collection at the National Security Archives in Washington, D.C. unless otherwise noted.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Milan Bish's notes.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ 'Press Briefing by Larry Speakes, 9.21 A.M., 17 October 1983', *The White House: Office of the Press Secretary*, no. 876/10-17, Container 33, Ronald Reagan Library.

¹²⁰ On Monday 17 October two Barbadian military personnel. Alvin Quintyne and Marita Browne, arrived in Grenada undercover to assess the situation. They returned to Barbados the next day. Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 92.

President and Vice-President were kept personally informed of all developments'.¹²¹ Washington was also aware by this time the Eastern Caribbean leaders were clearly in agreement about the need for military action and that they viewed US participation as essential.

In Grenada torrential rains kept the people off the streets as the CC met for what would prove to be the final time. Various options for dealing with Bishop were mooted: court martial, jail, continued house arrest, exile in Cuba and even a military solution.¹²² As O'Shaughnessy notes, 'it was clear to the Coard faction, as it was to their opponents, that the majority in the Central Committee would use force if necessary to impose their will'.¹²³ The meeting concluded with a six-point proposal that would be presented to Bishop: the party was committed to a Marxist–Leninist strategy and Bishop would not impede it, Bishop would assume responsibility for the crisis, he would accept the principles of democratic centralism, remain an ordinary member of the NJM and on the PB as a consultant, accept the supremacy of the party over the state and his Commander-in-Chief post would be abolished.¹²⁴ Reading more like an ultimatum than a proposal, it was apparent that the CC had determined not to change its course.

On the morning of Tuesday 18 October the NSC met and Menges decided to present his plan to McFarlane; to Menges's surprise the NSA simply replied 'Well, ..., that's okay'.¹²⁵ Menges then met with the US ambassador to the Organisation of American States (OAS) William Middendorf to probe likely OAS reactions to a military operation. Middendorf had served with previous Republican administrations and was a loyal Reagan supporter and told Menges that 'if it could be done, this would be a great step for freedom' but again cautioned that 'I wouldn't get my hopes up'.¹²⁶ Menges also spoke to a foreign service officer at the State Department who informed him that not much had been done there despite Bish's cables, but that Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga was due to meet with the OECS leaders.¹²⁷ In fact, the same day Shultz authorised the establishment of a Grenada Task Force under Motley which as Shultz reflected 'put into place a round-the-clock watch and ... got us all mentally and administratively ready as the problem became more grave'.¹²⁸ Shultz now replied to Charles's request of the previous day by asking for a formal evaluation of the situation by the OECS. According to Shultz this 'attended to her request and showed her

¹²¹ Langhorne A. Motley, 'The Decision to Assist Grenada', *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 84 (March 1984), p. 70.

¹²² Diederich, 'Interviewing George Louison', p. 17.

¹²³ O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada*, p. 129.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹²⁵ Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 64.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹²⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 326.

that we were responsive and alert, and, second, it set the stage for the United States to act in a manner consistent with our national interests and with international law.¹²⁹

In a move that was coincidental and fortuitous an 11-ship US Navy Task Force¹³⁰ left Norfolk, Virginia, en route to the Mediterranean where they were to relieve the US 24th Marine Amphibious Unit in the multinational peacekeeping force in Lebanon. Simultaneously, the military crisis action team at Norfolk began to examine various possible courses of action.¹³¹

At the embassy in Bridgetown a diplomatic note was sent to Grenada asking for assurances about the safety of US citizens and informing them of plans to send Kurze and Flohr to the island.¹³² Grenada's reply later that day stated that: 'the interests of U.S. citizens are in no way threatened by the present situation in Grenada which the Ministry [of External Affairs] hastens to point out is a purely internal matter'.¹³³ The response did little to allay US concern and noticeably did not mention the proposed visit by the US officials; as Motley commented, 'the answer contained no assurances, no concrete measures to safeguard foreign residents, just a bland assertion and a blunt slamming of the door'.¹³⁴ As will become apparent, by Tuesday 18 October in Grenada it was doubtful that those in control, to whatever degree, were in any position to make such assurances. The British provided Washington with much of the intelligence on the situation in Grenada throughout the crisis and the US embassy in London reported on Tuesday that the situation on the island was 'too murky to call' but that sources there were 'convinced Coard and...PRA hardliners will prevail' and that the 'key outstanding questions are whether Bishop will agree to phase out quietly, [the] extent of Cuban involvement, and how other European Caribbean commonwealth nations will react'.¹³⁵ Back in Barbados final preparations were made for Kurze and Flohr to travel to Grenada the following morning.

In Grenada it was the eve of the Revolution's ultimate destruction and negotiations continued; this time Rupert Roopnarine of the Working

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 326. The Grenada Task Force's function was to handle public/congressional/press enquiries and to monitor developments, provide guidance and implement policy. Telephone interview with State Department official, 9 June 1995.

¹³⁰ The Naval Task Force included the Navy's Amphibious Squadron Four (PhibRon 4) and the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit (22d MAU). Ronald Spector, *U.S. Marines in Grenada* (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 1. At the same time the *USS Independent* left the naval base at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Bennett, 'Anatomy', p. 73.

¹³¹ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 117.

¹³² Milan Bish's notes.

¹³³ Motley, 'The Decision to Assist Grenada', p. 71.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹³⁵ Author unknown, confidential telegram from AmEmbassy London to Secretary of State, 'Subject: Grenada: [excised] Bishop's "Slow Toppling"', 181511Z, Oct. 1983, London 22273, p. 1.

Peoples Alliance of Guyana and Michael Als of the Trinidad and Tobago People's Popular Movement had volunteered to mediate. Als met with Bishop on the morning of Tuesday 18 October and proposed that Bishop should remain Prime Minister, address Grenada, on lines agreed with the CC, and call for calm and announce that a settlement was in sight and, finally, that he should meet with Coard to hammer out their differences and perhaps see if Cuba would mediate.¹³⁶ Bishop provisionally agreed, but wanted to consult with Louison and Whiteman before drafting the address.

When Louison phoned Coard to see if the CC had formulated a final proposal as promised the day before he was simply told that the CC was still meeting and that he should call later. After this occurred several times, finally with Coard telling Louison that he should try again the next afternoon, he concluded that the CC were stalling and so Louison and four other pro-Bishop Ministers, Unison Whiteman (External Affairs), Jacqueline Creft (Education), Norris Bain (Housing) and Lynden Ramdhanny (Tourism) resigned their posts in protest and to mobilise the masses.¹³⁷ Whiteman managed to speak to radio reporters from Barbados, Trinidad, Martinique and Radio Antilles, based in Montserrat and receivable in Grenada, and told them that:

Comrade Coard, who is now running Grenada, has refused to engage in serious talks to resolve the crisis...it became clear to us that they did not want a settlement and seemed determined to use force and provoke violence to achieve their objective.¹³⁸

The masses now began to make their presence felt; approximately 500 people rallied in Grenville, Gouyave and Sauteurs. Students marched on Pearls airport and forced it to close for several hours and schools and factories closed as the people took to the streets chanting 'No Bishop, no revo!'¹³⁹

Four members of the CC, Austin, Layne, James and Tan Bartholomew, visited Bishop that evening to deliver their final six-point compromise proposal. Bishop promised he would respond by the next morning but, again, wanted to talk with Louison, Whiteman and ambassador Rizo first. According to Thorndike the CC were willing to impose temporary martial law if this final effort failed.¹⁴⁰

At 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday 19 October embassy officials Kurze and Flohr left Barbados on a Barbadian government Aero Services flight

¹³⁶ Payne et al., *Grenada*, p. 132.

¹³⁷ Diederich, 'Interviewing George Louison', p. 18. Louison was arrested soon after at 6.00 p.m. Only Unison Whiteman, Fitzroy Bain and Norris Bain remained free by this stage.

¹³⁸ DoS/DoD, *Grenada*, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, p. 259.

¹⁴⁰ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 159.

bound for Grenada. The purpose of their trip was to make an ‘on-the-ground assessment’ of the situation in Grenada and ‘check on the Medical School people.’¹⁴¹ Halfway through the flight the pilot informed the passengers that he had been refused landing permission at Pearls, which was closed around 10 a.m., and that he was returning to Barbados. Unknown to Kurze and Flohr, Bishop’s rescue by his supporters was underway but both diplomats realised that the failure to reach Grenada meant that “something must be cooking” on the island’.¹⁴²

In Barbados there was an important development. From 9.30 a.m. until 11.00 a.m. ambassador Bish met with Adams who began by requesting US assistance in rescuing Bishop, his family and 70 political prisoners.¹⁴³ He argued persuasively that this was a unique opportunity and would produce a favourable world reaction, especially among developing countries, with the United States being seen in a different light: ‘promoting human rights on behalf of a popular leftist dictator, and this would be in dramatic contrast to the conventional wisdom that the US supports only conservative, right-wing regimes’.¹⁴⁴ He pointed out what a ‘powerful symbolic asset to the West Bishop would be in exile, especially if he were assisted out by the US’.¹⁴⁵ Adams assumed that Bishop was under close arrest and that he could not talk alone but believed he would welcome rescue, even if it was by the United States.¹⁴⁶ The hawkish Prime Minister contended that a rescue would be less problematic than an occupation and was ‘feasible, necessary and desirable’;¹⁴⁷ to reinforce his point he asked hypothetically ‘Would the United States consider invading Grenada? If

¹⁴¹ Motley, ‘The Decision to Assist Grenada’, p. 71. Until Kurze and Flohr finally reached Grenada on Saturday 22 October the United States had relied on second-hand reports from Grenadians, the Barbadian government and the British representative on the island. Another source of information was the Vice Chancellor of St. George’s University Medical School Geoffrey Bourne: ‘in the early days of the revolution... [he] regularly reported to the White House and State Department through his son Peter, President Carter’s drug advisor. During the Reagan administration Bourne remained in close contact with the US embassy in Barbados.’ Mitchel A. Leventhal, ‘Entrepreneurship and Nation Building: Proprietary Medical Schools and Development in the Caribbean, 1976–1990’, unpubl. PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995, p. 283. This combination of resources must have provided Washington with a more than adequate picture of the situation in Grenada.

¹⁴² Kenneth Kurze letter to the author, dated Aug. 20 1995. Motley interpreted it as a negative signal. Interview with Motley.

¹⁴³ Adams had apparently heard rumours a few weeks before that there was a serious threat to the prisoners lives. In a conversation with St. Vincent’s Prime Minister Milton Cato. Cato had questioned the propriety of rescuing Bishop while ignoring ‘many other political prisoners in Grenada, put there by Bishop’s government.’ Tyler, ‘The Making of an Invasion: Chronology of the Planning’, *Washington Post*, 30 Oct. 1983, p. A14.

¹⁴⁴ Milan Bish’s notes.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Adams was willing to offer Bishop asylum as well and had in fact done so long ago.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

not, we will do so without you'. Adams knew this was unlikely, and probably militarily impossible, but such talk persuaded Bish of his candour. Bish enquired as to exactly how far Barbados would support a rescue, likely Barbadian public opinion and regional support. Adams was unequivocal; he offered his country as a staging post, use of the Barbadian Defence Force if necessary and assured Bish that only Guyana, Belize and Antigua "carried a torch" for Grenada.¹⁴⁸ He went on to outline a possible military takeover by a multinational United States, Eastern Caribbean and Venezuelan force, perhaps under the umbrella of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM),¹⁴⁹ which would establish an interim government and lead to free and democratic elections, even with Bishop as a candidate.¹⁵⁰ Adams stressed that this was only a scenario and not a conclusive plan. A diplomatic-political solution was also discussed whereby the OECS might pressure Coard and the PRA to free Bishop and restore order with the option of sanctions if necessary. Barbados and Jamaica could 'chime in forcefully' to reinforce the OECS efforts.

Adams was clearly hoping to convince the United States of the severity of the situation, the Eastern Caribbean's unanimity, the need for external help and the potential benefits Bishop's rescue could yield whilst simultaneously probing Washington's receptiveness to the idea of a more extensive operation. Adams had already conferred with the British High Commissioner Giles Bullard, who was sceptical, and he expected a similar response from the Canadians later that day. In an emergency meeting of the Barbados cabinet it was agreed to 'proceed with a rescue plan, in collaboration with Eastern Caribbean countries and larger non-Caribbean countries with the resources necessary to carry out such an intricate operation'.¹⁵¹

After Adams left, Bish sent a telegram to Washington reporting that Adams would like to see US involvement in an intervention or the OECS would act alone; Bish also sent a 'back channel' note to the CIA. RIG met that Wednesday afternoon in response to the unconfirmed reports from Barbados of Bishop's death.¹⁵² RIG, including JCS and CIA representatives, discussed 'alternate ways of conducting a "quick in and out" military rescue of US citizens' with or without Grenadian

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ CARICOM was established in 1973 as a primarily economic entity. Its members include Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago.

¹⁵⁰ Milan Bish's notes.

¹⁵¹ 'Full Text of Speech by the Prime Minister of Barbados,' in *Documents on the Invasion*, p. 36.

¹⁵² The State Department was in close contact with the embassy in Barbados throughout the day via cable and telephone.

government permission.¹⁵³ Existing concerns about the safety of US citizens grew as the situation in Grenada seemed to be deteriorating rapidly; reliable information was scarce as US diplomats had not managed to reach Grenada that morning and RFG had gone off the air. Military preparations advanced as the Pentagon provided a preliminary list of military resources available for an NEO, possibly hoping to demonstrate that they had insufficient military forces in place.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the JCS issued CINCLANT with a warning order to contemplate the ‘possibility of the evacuation of Americans under both benign and hostile conditions’.¹⁵⁵ McDonald and his staff made a number of plans for an NEO using Navy and Marines Corps units only, but elsewhere the Joint Special Operations Command, the military’s special operations unit, was also working on an evacuation plan; these plans subsequently merged and involved other actors.¹⁵⁶

In Grenada tragedy loomed. As previously mentioned, Bishop had promised to reply to the CC’s proposal by Wednesday 19 October, but only after consulting with Whiteman, Louison and Rizo. Whiteman was on the streets whipping up support among the masses and Coard was not about to let Rizo talk to Bishop, possibly fearing that Bishop would request Cuban assistance; consequently only Louison, who was already under house arrest, was taken to see Bishop at 7.30 a.m. that morning. The two were allowed to talk over breakfast for 90 minutes and came up with a two-point reply to put to the CC:

there would be a formal negotiating committee set up which would start to meet on that day and secondly that he (Bishop) be released from house arrest and that a statement be put on the radio from him pointing out that he was no longer under house arrest and that negotiations were in process.¹⁵⁷

The growing public demonstrations of the previous few days reached their zenith on Wednesday morning; by 9.00 a.m. about 15,000 people, from a population of 85,000, had assembled in St. George’s market square as shops, offices and schools closed. At 9 a.m. about 3–4,000 of the crowd, mainly schoolchildren, led by Whiteman, Noel, Fitzroy Bain and

¹⁵³ Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 66. The Chairman of the JCS General John Vessey forced Motley to design a quick in and out operation before he would consider action. Interview with Motley.

¹⁵⁴ The JCS emphasised that intelligence on Grenada was limited, human intelligence practically non-existent and intelligence on the Cuban presence inconsistent. They argued that the heavily overstretched logistics system would be an impediment to anything more than a limited military operation. Marshall, ‘Urgent Fury’, p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ James Herbert Anderson, ‘National Decisionmaking and Quick-Strike Interventions During the 1980’s: A Comparative Analysis of Operations Urgent Fury, El Dorado Canyon and Just Cause’, unpubl. PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1993, p. 76.

¹⁵⁶ Marshall, ‘Urgent Fury’, p. 32.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with George Louison by Hugh O’Shaughnessy, transcript, n.d., p. 22.

prominent businessmen marched towards Bishop's house where he was being held.

While the crowds advanced on Bishop's house the CC met at Coard's house.¹⁵⁸ At 10 a.m. Coard supporter Major Leon Cornwall had been sent to the Cuban workers compound near Point Salines to inform them not to participate in the pro-Bishop demonstrations that had been planned for that morning.¹⁵⁹ Coard's house was adjacent to Bishop's and the crowds had to pass it to reach Bishop's; the CC witnessed the crowd chanting 'We want Maurice, we want Maurice!' and 'B for Bishop and betterment; C for Coard and communism'.¹⁶⁰ Recognising their vulnerability Layne reinforced the PRA guard at Bishop's house to 100 and sent for three armoured personnel carriers (APC) which were brought over by Basil Gahagan. Coard feared that the crowd could turn on him and told Layne to contact Bishop and tell him to calm the crowd and recommence yesterday's talks.¹⁶¹ However, Layne and Austin's efforts proved futile as the crowd was simply too large and too aroused to listen. Gahagan decided to order the APCs to fire into the air as the masses attempted to open the gates to Bishop's house; seeing that the soldiers were shooting in the air, the people believed they would not fire on them and pushed forward. The PRA officer in charge, Iman Abdullah, ordered his men to withdraw and by 10.35 a.m. Bishop and Creft, who had been found tied to their beds in their underwear, were brought out.¹⁶² Bishop appeared weak and disoriented, he had had little sleep and had allegedly not eaten for fear of being poisoned.

What happened next has been interpreted by some as a fatal mistake that cost Bishop and his companions their lives. After vacillating between a car or truck for the trip into town to address the huge crowd waiting in the market square, Bishop decided to divert to Fort Rupert, the PRA's headquarters, on the promontory overlooking St. George's. In fact this was a practical move: medical treatment could be obtained from the hospital which was adjacent to the Fort. Bishop wanted to use the Fort's army transmitter to address the people, there were firearms there and it was a defensible position.¹⁶³ Fort Rupert's daily security was the responsibility of Lester Redhead who commanded the platoon stationed there. The Coard group had believed that Fort Rupert was in danger before Bishop reached it at around 1 p.m. and had decided it should be barricaded and defended with tear gas if necessary; Redhead was sent to

¹⁵⁸ Present at the meeting were the Coards, Hudson Austin, Ewart Layne, Leon Cornwall, Colville McBarnette, Liam James, Selwyn Strachan, Ian St. Bernard, Chalkie Ventour and later Lester Redhead. Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁹ Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree*, p. 216.

¹⁶⁰ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 159.

¹⁶¹ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 51.

¹⁶² Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 159.

¹⁶³ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 53.

Grand Anse police station, but there was no gas there and so he had to go to the St. George's station instead and by the time he returned Bishop was in control of the Fort.¹⁶⁴

Several hundred Grenadians followed Bishop up the steep and narrow road to Fort Rupert, shouting 'We get we leader, fuck Coard'.¹⁶⁵ With no physical obstacles and the PRA soldiers uncertain what to do the crowd swept into the Fort unopposed. The Fort consisted of a main lower square connected to an upper square by steps and a tunnel. Bishop's group took up place in the operations room on the upper floor of the communications building in the lower square. Bishop ordered that the Fort's soldiers should be disarmed and their weapons given to the base commandant Chris Stroude. Bishop then summoned Stroude to tell him that Coard and his accomplices must submit to the will of the masses; negotiations must begin now in the operations room; Coard, Layne and Cornwall must be arrested and jailed; the PRA should lay down their arms and that the armoury keys must be handed over so that arms could be distributed to defend the Fort.¹⁶⁶ Soon afterwards Bishop announced that Einstein Louison had replaced Austin as head of the PRA; Louison arrived at the Fort sometime between 12 and 1 p.m., having been freed from house arrest, and was told to organise the defence of the Fort.¹⁶⁷ Arms were distributed to members of the militia present.

Despite his weak condition it seems Bishop had a strategy; he instructed two telephone engineers to hook up a line to the radio transmitter. Peter Thomas, an immigration officer present, was sent to the Cable and Wireless offices, accompanied by two telephone employees with militia training, with a list of numbers to get disconnected, especially the lines to Coard's house and Fort Frederick to prevent Coard organising a counterattack.¹⁶⁸ Bishop sent his Press Secretary Don Rojas to Cable and Wireless and told him to tell the world that the Prime Minister had been freed, that Cuba had not been involved and that all nations, organisations and individuals should organise effective opposition to US intervention.¹⁶⁹ When Bishop had been freed earlier in the day, he had sent someone to the Cuban embassy to seek support and in response ambassador Rizo sent a messenger to Fort Rupert to offer aid to Bishop.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58. Unfortunately the telephone link at the old water works was overlooked and this allowed Coard to keep in touch with Stroude at Fort Rupert.

¹⁶⁹ Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree*, p. 216.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 216. It is uncertain what the offer contained. In a 1985 interview Castro insisted that 'I would never, under any circumstances, have authorized the Cuban personnel to have become involved. Of that you can be sure. Our answer would have been "no". But there wasn't even time to answer. There was no need to answer'. Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree*, p. 217.

Having seen the masses free Bishop and sweep him off to Fort Rupert, the increasingly worried CC retreated to Fort Frederick. Layne phoned Abdullah and told him to report in and then left at 11 a.m. for the PRA base at Calivigny to call up reinforcements, returning at noon with a squad of 25 soldiers.¹⁷¹ The CC attempted to contact Bishop, but he refused to speak with them; Whiteman told them bluntly, ‘No negotiations; is manners for all you’.¹⁷² Stroude had been keeping the CC informed of the developments at Fort Rupert:

The civilian members of the committee seemed paralysed: to the PRA leaders, the military and political position was intolerable and untenable. They concluded from the information they had received that orders had been given by Bishop to eliminate them, that the Central Committee was to be arrested and an armed assault mounted on Fort Frederick.¹⁷³

As Adkin comments:

Up to this moment, no decision had been taken to kill Bishop... Negotiations, firing in the air, the use of tear gas – everything short of shooting to kill had been considered or tried. But now it was a simple matter of Bishop’s life or theirs. If Bishop triumphed... they were all dead men.¹⁷⁴

Consequently Austin was told that it was necessary to recapture Fort Rupert and establish military rule for a short period. Austin was not convinced, but he could not offer a feasible alternative.¹⁷⁵ This decision was taken around 12.30 p.m.: the three APCs and the platoon of soldiers from Calivigny would storm Fort Rupert, their headquarters, and Bishop and his supporters would be killed in the fighting.¹⁷⁶

The three APCs and the squad of soldiers, numbering 35 in total, arrived at Fort Rupert at 1 p.m. The people in the Fort had seen that the PRA had not fired on them earlier that morning and at first thought that the new arrivals had come to support Bishop. As one eye-witness who had been in the operations room with Bishop recalled: ‘With the whole country coming down to town to support Maurice, you wouldn’t think that it would enter anybody’s head to try and take power in the face of all that because you’d be fighting the whole nation’.¹⁷⁷ Tragically this was not the case; the pro-Coard soldiers, led by Officer-Cadet Conrad Mayers, did not hesitate when he gave the order to ‘Concentrate fire on the

¹⁷¹ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 60.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁷³ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 160.

¹⁷⁴ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 61.

¹⁷⁵ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 161.

¹⁷⁶ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 63. Thorndike says that the alleged plan was to ‘take Fort Rupert with the minimum of force and to storm the communications building and, if possible, capture Bishop and his allies.’ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 161.

¹⁷⁷ Marable, *African and Caribbean Politics*, p. 261.

fort'.¹⁷⁸ They opened fire with machine guns, grenades and rocket shells. Although the operations room was hit by a rocket, Bishop and many others with him survived the first onslaught. Dumbfounded, Bishop could only utter 'My God, My God, they have turned the guns against the people'.¹⁷⁹ There was some return fire and Mayers was fatally wounded. About 30–40 Bishop supporters were killed, either shot or by jumping off the Fort walls to escape, a drop of 50–90 feet, and over 100 were injured. After the initial burst of shooting had finished 'there was a discussion among Maurice and some of the fellows to the effect that what we had to do was go out and say we surrender, that anything else would be suicide'.¹⁸⁰ Bishop then led the group out to meet his fate.

As the last remnants of the crowd were let go Bishop, Creft, the Bains, Whiteman and Brat Bullen were marched to the upper square by Lester Redhead and Abdullah to join two others, Evelyn Maitland and Keith Hayling, who were also condemned. Abdullah consulted with Stroude in the communications room, who remained in touch with the CC.¹⁸¹ The eight prisoners were lined up against the west wall of the square. Abdullah then told them that 'this is an order from the Central Committee, that you shall be executed by fire. It is not my order, it is the Central Committee's'.¹⁸² The firing squad, composed of Redhead, Abdullah and three other soldiers, then carried out its orders. Thus by about 1.20 p.m. Bishop and his companions were dead; a white flare was fired to signal to the CC that orders had been carried out.

By 3 p.m. it was decided that a 16-member Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) would be formed with its headquarters at Fort Frederick.¹⁸³ Coard had placed himself in 'protective custody'¹⁸⁴ and was not an official member of the RMC, but it is generally assumed that he was pulling the strings.¹⁸⁵ The RMC was officially headed by General Hudson

¹⁷⁸ Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 68.

¹⁷⁹ Lewis, *Grenada*, p. 57.

¹⁸⁰ Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 161.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 162. Adkin says Redhead, Abdullah and Stroude actually went to Fort Frederick to report to Coard who was not pleased. The Coards, Austin, Layne, James, Strachan, Cornwall, Ventour, McBarnette, Bartholomew and St. Bernard then voted unanimously to execute the eight detainees. This chronology places the executions at 2.00 p.m. Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, p. 74.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 77. Although the PRG was disbanded and the Cabinet dismissed, the 16-member RMC contained five former ministers. It was headed by Austin with James and Layne as joint vice-chairmen. The other members were Cornwall, Stroude, Tan Bartholomew, Keith Roberts, Basil Gahaghan, Redhead, Huey Romain, Ashley Foulkes, Rudolph Ogilvey, Abdullah, Kenrick Fraser and Raeburn Nelson. O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 325.

¹⁸⁵ Coard had kept a low profile since resigning on Friday 14 October and after the massacre the CIA were uncertain if he was still alive. 'Grenada Chronology, 7–25 October', *Declassified Documents Quarterly Catalog*, vol. XIV, no. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1988), document no. 2449, p. 3.

Austin; this was a tactical choice as Austin was popular with the PRA, of senior rank, and until switching to the Coard camp had been viewed as a Bishop supporter.¹⁸⁶ In reality Austin was a figurehead, the real power lying with Coard, Layne, Cornwall and the others.

A list of potential pro-Bishop opposition figures was compiled and a statement to be read on RFG was composed. Also, a communiqué was sent to the PRA to explain the day's events and remind them where their true allegiances lay:

Today our People's Revolutionary Army has gained victory over the right opportunists and reactionary forces which attacked the Headquarters of our Ministry of Defence. These anti-worker elements using the working people as a shield entered Fort Rupert.¹⁸⁷

It concluded by saying 'all patriots and revolutionaries will never forget this day when counter-revolution, the friends of imperialism were crushed'.¹⁸⁸ At 5.30 p.m. RFG returned to the air to request all nurses and Salvation Army personnel to report to the hospital and to announce that Austin would speak at 8.30 p.m.

Austin finally went on air at 10 p.m. to present the RMC's version of the day's events. Having recounted Bishop's freeing and the storming of Fort Rupert, emphasising that the PRA had been ordered only to fire in the air, Austin continued:

They declared their intention to arrest and wipe out the entire General Committee and the senior members of the Party and the entire leadership of the Armed Forces as well as to smash the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

At that point the Revolutionary Armed Forces sent a company of soldiers to reestablish control of Fort Rupert. Maurice Bishop and his group fired on the soldiers killing two members of the PRA...

The Revolutionary Armed Forces were forced to storm the fort, and in the process the following persons were killed: Maurice Bishop, Unison Whiteman, Vince Noel, Jacqueline Creft, Norris Bain and Fitzroy Bain among others.¹⁸⁹

The earlier formation of the RMC was announced, stating that it had full executive and legislative powers. Austin then warned that:

Let it be clearly understood that the Revolutionary Armed Forces will govern with absolute strictness. Anyone who seeks to demonstrate or disturb the peace

¹⁸⁶ Indeed, Austin had been an early member of the NJM, led the March 1979 attack on the True Blue barracks and was appointed head of the PRA in 1981. Timothy O'Leary and Denise Cabrera, 'Austin had close ties to Grenada's Bishop', *Washington Times*, 21 Oct. 1983, p. A12.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁹ 'Statement by General Hustin Austin on Behalf of the Revolutionary Military Council on October 20, 1983', *Documents on the Invasion of Grenada*, Item V, p. 11.

will be shot. An all day and all night curfew will be established for the next four days... Anyone violating this curfew will be shot on sight.¹⁹⁰

News of the massacre had spread and Grenadians had no reason to doubt this.

The curfew allowed the RMC to impose some sort of control and to clear up the mess at Fort Rupert as well as round-up potential opponents and imprison them at Richmond Hill. Amongst Grenadians fear gradually turned to anger, 'for them, it was a simple, straightforward matter that an assault against Bishop... had become an assault against themselves and therefore against the revolution as they understood it'.¹⁹¹ For the moment the curfew repressed any thoughts of action against the RMC.

The US embassy in Bridgetown had been kept abreast of the dramatic developments in Grenada. Soon after hearing that Bishop had been freed they learnt that he had been recaptured and, in an unconfirmed report, shot. On Barbados Prime Minister Adams asked his Cabinet to permit him to demand Bishop's release and asked Prime Minister Charles to do likewise as head of the OECS.¹⁹² The unrest on Grenada led ambassador Bish and his DCM to send a cable to Washington:

There appears to be imminent danger to U.S. citizens resident on Grenada due to the current deteriorating situation, which includes reports of rioting, personnel casualties (possibly deaths), automatic weapons being discharged, Soviet-built armored personnel carriers in the Grenadian streets, and some loss of water and electricity on the island... [American Embassy] Bridgetown recommends that the United States should now be prepared to conduct an emergency evacuation of U.S. citizens residing in Grenada... We are not yet prepared to recommend an evacuation be initiated. Repeat, not yet. But we strongly counsel that all preparations be effected in order to deploy immediately as required... It has already come to our attention... that the Venezuelans have already initiated action for evacuation of dependants in Grenada because of violence.¹⁹³

Although Bish was not ready to recommend evacuation he sensibly 'urged all preparations be immediately taken' as the embassy reviewed contingency plans and identified assets.¹⁹⁴

Sometime that afternoon Austin called the embassy to express his concerns about invasion rumours and to reassure the ambassador that the students were safe. Bish was tough on him and made it clear to Austin that he would be held personally responsible if the students were harmed.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12. ¹⁹¹ Lewis, *Grenada*, p. 62. ¹⁹² Milan Bish's notes.

¹⁹³ Milan Bish, secret telegram to Secretary of State, 'Subject: Planning for Possible Emergency Evacuation of Amcits - Grenada', 192356Z, Oct. 1983, Bridgetown 06387, in Leventhal, 'Entrepreneurship and Nation Building', p. 289.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Milan Bish.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Regional radio had reported Manley's call for 'some kind of intervention'. Milan Bish's notes.

During Wednesday afternoon Charles Gillespie arrived in Barbados to help Bish and Flower.¹⁹⁶ He was met at the airport by Flower who told him of Bishop's death. Gillespie had already spoken with Charles and was due to meet with St. Lucian Prime Minister John Compton the next day. He met with Adams that night and was told that a revolutionary takeover would pose serious difficulties for the other islands and that concern was high.¹⁹⁷ Meanwhile Bish hosted a formal dinner party; at about 8 p.m. the embassy's Defence Attaché, Lawrence Reiman, interrupted to inform Bish that Bishop's death had been confirmed. Bish phoned Adams who corroborated this and then joined Gillespie to draft a cable to despatch to Washington.¹⁹⁸

That evening in Washington Motley briefed Shultz on the situation. Bish's 'imminent danger' cable had been received and the two were aware of the unconfirmed reports of Bishop's death.¹⁹⁹ RIG had already decided that an NEO at least was necessary. Shultz 'had to be convinced' that military planning was required, but Motley eventually got his agreement.²⁰⁰ Plans were made for the Cabinet-level Crisis Pre-Planning Group to convene the next day, Thursday 20 October, as the momentum for a military operation gathered.

In retrospect it is obvious that by July 1983 the PRG was in crisis; the economy was faltering, the Point Salines airport project was consuming most of the available money, the PRA and militia were demoralised, relations with the United States remained cool and, most significantly,

¹⁹⁶ Gillespie had been in the region by coincidence on a familiarisation tour with Vice-President George Bush although Motley had suggested he be sent to the embassy to help Bish and Flower. Beck, *The Grenada Invasion*, p. 102. Shultz confirms this in his memoir: 'Gillespie went to Barbados to ride herd on Ambassador Bish in the embassy there and was poised to go on to Grenada.' Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 333. When the United States established an embassy in Grenada shortly after the intervention Gillespie became the first ambassador there.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Charles Gillespie, Washington D.C., Nov. 27 1995.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Bish.

¹⁹⁹ The zealous Menges wasted no time and spent the evening writing three one-page overviews for the Cabinet-level meeting the next day: 'First was a short, factual summary of what had happened. Second, I put together, from information I had gathered over the previous few days, a summary of the reactions from the Caribbean governments, Trade Unions, democratic political parties and religious groups – all of which denounced the bloodshed and urged action to prevent more deaths. Third, I described on one page the prodemocracy leadership and institutions that could provide the basis for the restoration of democracy.' Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 68. Furthermore, Menges recounts that he met with McFarlane and Poindexter and urged them to convene a Crisis Pre-Planning Group meeting and that they agreed to this. However, most people interviewed said that whilst Menges was a big proponent of action his input actually counted for very little. For example Menges had not been told about the RIG meeting on Wednesday 19 October. As Motley recalled, during the crisis period 'no one said "here's Menges" invasion plan.' Interview with Motley.

²⁰⁰ Oberdorfer, 'Reagan Sought', p. A12.

connections with the masses lessened. At the 13 July 1983 First Plenary of the CC it was reported that:

Over the year under review our Party has demonstrated many weaknesses... ideologically, politically and organizationally. At the same time, the emergence of deep petty bourgeois manifestations and influence in the Party has led to two ideological trends.²⁰¹

There was no disagreement amongst the CC that the Party was in trouble, but there was not a consensus that the joint leadership proposal put forward in September was the solution. Differences between Bishop and Coard undeniably existed: 'on one level [it] was one of personalities: the spontaneous and charismatic Bishop against the calculating and ascetic Coard' and 'on another level, the NJM power struggle was ideological and political. Coard and his supporters were impatient with the pace of social transformation'.²⁰² A post-operation December 1983 US report concluded that:

It was becoming increasingly clear that Bishop, ever confident of his appeal to the Grenadian people and his international stature, had paid insufficient attention to the inner workings of the party. He thus found himself in a position of embodying the Grenadian revolution for most of those on the island who continued to sympathize with the New Jewel Movement, but at the same time commanded a dwindling base of support within the upper echelon of the party.²⁰³

This situation led to accusations of 'cultism' and 'onemanism' from his opponents.

The argument that Bishop's demise was the result of a long-term operation masterminded by Coard may seem plausible, especially given the extent and personal nature of the criticism of Bishop at the CC meetings, but as Meeks points out the 'inability to escape from a deeply-entrenched cumulative and available ideological context of Leninism and hierarchy and not the chimera of conspiracy was the critical element in the denouement of the revolution'.²⁰⁴

The joint leadership plan was considered by the majority of the CC to be the best solution to their problems, but in reality it would have eventually reduced Bishop's role to that of a figurehead; Bishop realised this and found it simply unacceptable. His reneging on the acceptance of the powersharing arrangement and his efforts to circulate rumours of plans to assassinate him infuriated the CC and resulted in the irreversible move of placing Bishop under house arrest.

²⁰¹ *Grenada Documents*, document 110, p. 1.

²⁰² Valenta and Valenta, 'Leninism in Grenada', p. 16.

²⁰³ CIA Report, 'A First Look', p. A-3.

²⁰⁴ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 178.

Even as the demonstrations increased, the CC ignored the people. The discussions with Louison and Whiteman to find a solution were futile; the final proposal put to Bishop on 18 October suggested that he accept full responsibility for the crisis and not oppose their commitment to a Marxist–Leninist strategy. Essentially, ‘there was no indication that the committee was prepared to settle the crisis on any terms other than its own’.²⁰⁵ Added to Bishop’s intransigence, it did not seem that any agreeable solution would be found. Coard dismissed the protestations of the populace, but it was at this point that ‘people power’ took over and started the train of events that would destroy the revolution and lead the United States–Caribbean forces to intervene.²⁰⁶

The PRG’s determination to adhere strictly to Leninist dogma, something totally alien and inappropriate to the region, and the presence of two dominant personalities like Bishop and Coard, neither of whom were ultimately content to play second fiddle to the other, meant that the power struggle was unlikely to be resolved peacefully.

Although the Coard faction had triumphed, the presence of approximately 600 US students on Grenada and the potential for another hostage situation combined with the OECS request for US participation in a military operation ensured that the RMC’s reign was a short one. However, even if there had been no students present the RMC’s future looked bleak.

US participation in a military intervention based solely on an OECS request was unlikely, but Washington would almost certainly have supported a Caribbean initiative for a political solution which would have meant the removal of the RMC and nothing less. Added to this pressure, CARICOM imposed severe sanctions on Grenada.

In the past Grenada had relied on its good relations with Cuba for economic and political support, but after Bishop’s death this relationship was in doubt. The RMC were more pro-Soviet and felt that the ‘deep personal friendship between Fidel and Maurice...caused the Cuban leadership to take a *personal* and not a *class* approach to the developments in Grenada’.²⁰⁷ Castro made his feelings clear in no uncertain terms on Thursday 20 October: ‘No doctrine, no principle or proclaimed revolutionary position and no internal division can justify atrocious acts

²⁰⁵ Ambursley and Dunkerley, *Grenada*, p. 74.

²⁰⁶ In April 1986 the trial of 18 former PRG/RMC and PRA officials finally commenced. In December 1986 14 of the defendants were found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang although this was commuted to life imprisonment in 1991. The RMC’s account of events can be found in the testimony of several key figures including Bernard Coard. For further details see *The side you haven’t heard: Maurice Bishop murder trial – testimony by the defendants and analysis by the NJM and other Grenadians*, 2 vols. (New York, 1987).

²⁰⁷ Cotman, *The Gorrion Tree*, p. 219.

such as the physical elimination of Bishop'; relations with the RMC would have to 'undergo a profound and serious analysis'.²⁰⁸ In a 1985 interview Castro asserted that the RMC 'could not have endured. We wouldn't have offered any support to that government after it murdered Bishop and fired on the people'.²⁰⁹

Finally and most importantly the RMC was detested by Grenadians and continued RMC rule would have been repressive and reliant on retaining the allegiance of the PRA to enforce policy.

If Bishop had managed to thwart the Coard faction, it is unlikely that he could have 'saved' the revolution as it was. The PRG had come apart at the seams and although widespread public support might have enabled Bishop to hold the government together for a brief period, Bishop's and Grenada's future would have most likely depended on political reorientation away from socialism, such as Michael Manley did prior to winning the 1989 elections in Jamaica.

The Eastern Caribbean leaders were unsettled by Bishop's arrest and with US collusion a plan to rescue Bishop was underway by 15 October. By the time Adams met with ambassador Bish on the morning of Wednesday 19 October and requested US involvement in a military operation, he was echoing the sentiments of his Eastern Caribbean colleagues.

In Washington the State Department's RIG had been meeting daily and by Wednesday had decided that an NEO was desirable. An analogy with the Iran hostage crisis influenced this decision; Iran was a recent and prominent event and additionally a failure, which all combined to make it a very available analogy. Although RIG were aware of Adams's suggestion that this was a perfect opportunity to remove a Marxist-Leninist government and reduce Soviet and Cuban presence in the region, it appears that the situation was predominantly defined as a potential hostage situation. This perception is what set in motion the decision-making process that concluded in intervention. After the experience of Iran, the US government was hypersensitive to any possibility of another such crisis. Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam highlighted such feelings when he later said that 'sometimes action is necessary to keep a bad situation from getting worse. This was such a time...'.²¹⁰ RIG certainly reflected such pre-emptive thinking; the office of the JCS were

²⁰⁸ 'Statement by the Cuban party and Revolutionary Government on the Imperialist Intervention of Grenada', in Nora Madan (ed.), *Statements by CUBA on the events in GRENADA*, (La Habana, 1983), p. 4.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 217. The Point Salines airport would have been completed though.

²¹⁰ US Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *The Situation in Grenada* (Washington D.C., 1983), p. 4.

contacted as early as 14 October because a NEO 'required the use of military assets and the securing of military targets on Grenada'.²¹¹

Prior to Bishop's death the military were reluctant to consider action and it was only on Wednesday 19 October that the JCS agreed to examine the resources available. Memories of Vietnam and Iran made the JCS more cautious than their civilian counterparts and it was only when Grenada was discussed at cabinet-level from Thursday 20 October onwards that the military began to believe an operation was conceivable.²¹² Once the JCS accepted that there was an operation, they argued that an evacuation would require the seizure of the island rather than any 'surgical' strikes.²¹³ This was a prime example of the military's post-Vietnam doctrine of using overwhelming force to ensure quick victories.

By the end of Wednesday 19 October Bishop and six of his colleagues were dead and Grenada was under a shoot-on-sight curfew and little intelligence was available on the situation. Although the RIG favoured military action before news of Bishop's death was received, the final decision would lie with President Reagan and the National Security Planning Group.

²¹¹ Motley, 'The Decision to Assist Grenada', p. 70.

²¹² In the post-Vietnam era military caution has become a familiar trend, especially when the question of committing troops is raised. As Petraeus observes, 'the view of military leaders as aggressive and influential presidential advisers on the use of force has been more the premise of political debate than the conclusion of rigorous analysis'. David H. Petraeus, 'Military Influence and the Post-Vietnam Use of Force', *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1989), p. 490. ²¹³ Interview with Motley.