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DURING THE long months of editing and production work that followed completion of this book, in August 1983, two events occurred that seem to bear on the theme. The first was the U.S.-led invasion of Grenada in October 1983, and the second was the military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Nigeria in January 1984.

This book has tried to show that much of what we hear about such episodes when they happen is illusion, and that the truth doesn't begin to seep out until months and usually years later; summing up so soon, then, presents a problem. Important facts almost certainly remain secret. Still, some comments may be in order.

Over the weekend of October 21–24, 1983, the United States secretly negotiated a pact with the governments of six tiny Caribbean island-nations. On Tuesday, October 25, they all—which is to say mainly the United States—invaded an even tinier Caribbean island-nation, Grenada. The result was unique in the recent history of American intervention: our troops were genuinely welcomed by the local citizens, and, even more amazing, we won. If all foreign intervention turned out the way the Grenadan invasion appears to have turned out, the policy would be tough to argue against, even on moral grounds. So it is important to emphasize that Grenada *was* unique, and to understand *why* it was unique. This is especially so because even now it's clear that the American people were broadly misled by their government

about Grenada, in ways that might create the false impression that the Grenadan experience is transferrable to other situations.

Some necessary background: For five years after it gained independence from England in 1974, Grenada was run by a man named Eric Gairy, an autocrat, witchcraft practitioner, and flying-saucer buff, who was commonly thought to be crazy (in the clinical sense). His government was overthrown in 1979, in a coup costing one life, by Maurice Bishop, leader of the long-standing opposition. Bishop espoused socialism and was a close personal friend of Fidel Castro. Bishop's group governed until the third week of October 1983, when, over several days, it was overthrown by a group ultimately led by General Hudson Austin, in fighting that apparently cost about 17 dead and 50 wounded. (These figures originated with the Austin government, but were roughly verified—"plus or minus ten or fifteen"—by the staff of the American medical school in Grenada based on hospital checks. During the U.S. invasion, Washington said hundreds had been killed in the coup against Bishop, but in its official printed chronology the U.S. later slashed that to a hedged estimate of "50 casualties.") Finally, the last week of October, at a cost of 88 dead and 533 wounded (U.S. Defense Department figures), we succeeded in overthrowing the Austin government.

The most important point here is that the government that the U.S. forces overthrew was not the one most Americans *thought* they overthrew. For nearly three years, ever since the Reagan administration took office in January 1981, the American public had been hearing nasty things about a *different* Grenadan government, the one that took over in 1979 and was run by Maurice Bishop.

The Reagan team, as it took office in 1981, was determined to take an aggressive stance toward Cuba and its friends, and win a quick victory that Reagan thought would change the course of foreign relations. Targeting Grenada as an enemy, the administration immediately found a way to stall Bishop's development program. The U.S. reversed the Carter administration's approval of an International Monetary Fund loan that was in the works for Grenada. We effectively vetoed the loan, apparently believing that if we "got tough," the "other side" would give up socialism.

Bishop had wanted the loan to allow construction of a new airport that Grenada badly needed if it was to attract tourists.\* The Reagan administration contended from the beginning that the airport was designed mainly for military use, part of a Soviet-Cuban plot to make Grenada a staging base for spreading revolution throughout Latin America. The airport was to be ap-

\*Technically, as has already been explained, IMF money can't be used for development projects, and the U.S. can't veto a loan; but money is a fungible commodity and the U.S. is the cornerstone of the IMF, so what is stated here is what, in effect, happened, and I have taken shortcuts to keep it simple. In fact, Grenada got a loan, but the U.S. drastically reduced the amount and the terms, curtailing its usefulness.

proximately the same size as the tourist airports on neighboring islands—smaller than some—and was to replace a badly outmoded mountain airstrip on Grenada that can't accommodate modern passenger jets, and that is nearly an hour's rough ride from town and the beaches.

With Western money restricted, construction on the new airport proceeded slowly. Bishop's friend Castro provided about 700 skilled construction workers and equipment. Most of the construction crew, like most Cubans, had military training; Cubans abroad had been attacked too often for Castro to send out workers unprepared to defend themselves. But as events ultimately showed, these workers were on Grenada primarily to build an airport, not to fight. The airport was scheduled to open in the spring of 1984, three years after IMF financing had been denied.

Reagan continued to argue that Grenada wanted its new airport only to serve as a Soviet military base, but there are several reasons to doubt this. First, it is hard to understand how, if the Soviets really thought a Grenadan air facility was militarily important, they could not have built even one runway on Grenada in less than three years. Twenty years ago, Khrushchev showed that the Soviets could construct a whole nuclear missile base in Cuba in a matter of a few weeks. The sleepy pace of Grenadan airport construction seems strong evidence that the Reagan administration was wrong in its projections.

Second, the spot picked for the airport is right in view of prime tourist areas and actually next to housing for an American medical school. From a map, it is hard to see how such an airport would offer the Soviets a significant strategic advantage over more clandestine bases that are already available on Cuba. After the U.S. invasion, President Reagan went on television with stories of warehouses on Grenada packed "almost to the ceiling" with modern terrorist weapons; in fact, when journalists and other independent observers were finally allowed on the island to examine the evidence, the warehouses were found to be only half full, and many of the weapons antiquated; in type and amount, the arsenal was quite consistent with the claim that it was there for the defense of Grenada (a task for which it was obviously inadequate).\*

There is a third and better reason to doubt the U.S. assertion that Grenada needed an airport only to serve as a Soviet military base: when the U.S. took over Grenada, we announced plans to complete the airport ourselves.

The most critical point, though, is that the Bishop government that had supposedly laid these deadly plans with the Cubans and Soviets was no longer in power when the U.S. invaded. Washington tried to present the replacement Austin government as just another Cuban stooge regime, a continuation and perhaps a hardening of the Bishop government. But it just

\*For a good account of discrepancies between the administration's original statements and what reporters actually saw when they were allowed onto the island, see Stuart Taylor Jr.'s account in the *New York Times*, November 6, 1983.

wasn't so. Bishop had been a very popular man in Grenada—even the official U.S. history of the affair concedes that. Like leaders everywhere, he saw his popularity wane somewhat after a few years in office, as he failed to accomplish miracles. In response, he stifled outspoken opposition, and jailed scores of people for political reasons. Nevertheless, there was speculation that Bishop might allow elections as he had promised in 1984, because, in the judgment of many, he probably would have won.

In contrast, few Grenadans appeared to be in favor of the bloody and hard-to-explain events that removed Bishop from office during the third week of October 1983. While Bishop was traveling in Eastern Europe and Cuba, some members of his cabinet, led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, who by all accounts was not liked very much, plotted Bishop's overthrow. Their reasons have not yet been satisfactorily explained. On the night of October 13–14, shortly after his return to Grenada, Bishop was put under house arrest and Coard was announced as his replacement. Bishop's allies in the cabinet, including his common-law wife, education minister Jacqueline Creft, who was pregnant with his child, resigned and some were arrested.

Popular protests broke out, culminating in a large crowd that marched to Bishop's house on Wednesday, October 19, and freed him and Creft. The crowd, with Bishop, then marched to the fort and police headquarters in the center of town, and took it over. But reinforcements from the People's Revolutionary Army appeared, and fired into the crowd, causing them to panic and run. Bishop, Creft, and several who were loyal to them were trapped in the fort and killed, apparently by quick execution after capture.

Army chief General Hudson Austin, a boyhood friend of Bishop's, took charge of the government from Coard, and declared on radio a four-day round-the-clock curfew, during which anyone on the streets was to be shot on sight. Understandably, fear and confusion gripped the island. Since Grenada has only 110,000 residents, almost everyone knew someone who had been at the fort during the panic. As word of the shooting spread, people knew only that their leaders had been murdered inexplicably, and that strangers had taken over the government threatening to shoot anyone seen outside his home. Scrawled messages of "No Bish-No Revo" appeared around the island, indicating feelings that were pro-Bishop, but anti-Coard and anti-Austin.

In other words, if the Yankees had invaded two weeks earlier, when the heroic if controversial Bishop had been in power—if we had attacked the government our president had been criticizing all these years—we never would have received the warm popular welcome we did. Possibly, because the island is so small, we still might have prevailed, but not so quickly or so comfortably or with so few casualties. We were overthrowing not Bishop, but Bishop's enemies, the people who had *killed* Bishop and terrorized the island.

Why did Coard take this unpopular action and make of himself a convenient target for the U.S.? Washington's explanation was that he did so at

the behest of the Cubans. Castro allegedly thought Bishop, with his possible plans for an election, was too soft. But Reagan's own envoys in the Caribbean didn't believe that—in fact, as will be explained in a moment, they believed exactly the opposite, that Cuba vehemently *opposed* Coard's coup. And Cuba pretty clearly *did* oppose it. Castro consistently reacted in shock and anger to each new blow Bishop suffered, issuing long and plaintive press releases on behalf of his friend. Castro appeared to be out of contact with the new government, and when it was formed, he began withdrawing personnel from Grenada. There seems no reason to believe he was bluffing, or that his regard for Bishop was not genuine.

The intriguing thing about the Coard coup, as one sees it from the facts now available, is that the only outsiders who stood to benefit from overthrowing Bishop were not the Cubans or Russians, but the policymakers in Washington. With U.S. military efforts in Central America and Lebanon in real trouble, and the president planning to run for reelection, the U.S. governing team needed a victory to justify its whole foreign policy attitude. Is it possible that Washington, acting perhaps through some *agent provocateur*, catalyzed the October coup on Grenada, paving the way for our intervention? Could Coard himself, who was quickly captured by the U.S. but not made available for public questioning, have been in U.S. pay? There is no evidence for saying so, except for the circumstances cited here, and the fact that such a scheme would have been no more exotic than others we have tried in the Congo, in Vietnam, in Iran, in Guatemala, in Cuba itself, and in other places. All the stranger, then, is the presence of one-time CIA operative and international *bête noire* Frank Terpil on Grenada right up to the time of the coup, when he returned to his haunts in the Middle East.

We can only hope that in years to come, some logical explanation will be forthcoming for why Bernard Coard did what he did.

Getting back to provable fact, what kind of government was General Austin running on Grenada at the time of the U.S. intervention, and what were its intentions? This is important, because the primary justification Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz gave for the invasion was that the lives of Americans, mainly the 700 or so medical students on the island, were being threatened. Only secondarily was the invasion's purpose to restore our idea of democracy to Grenada.

To try to evaluate the threat to Americans, I talked in New York to Geoffrey Bourne, the vice-chancellor of the medical school and its highest-ranking representative on Grenada throughout the coup and invasion. Then I went to Barbados for long and detailed interviews with three of the four main U.S. diplomats who were on Grenada just before and during the invasion. I also talked there with a high-ranking official of our embassy on Barbados, which covers Grenada and a few other islands too small to rate a U.S. diplomatic station; this official had helped relay communications



between the Caribbean and Washington during the crisis. (He insisted on speaking for the embassy, rather than in his own name.)

These points emerged:

1. *Austin's revolutionary military council was extremely solicitous of the welfare of the students.* Dr. Bourne recalls that the morning after Bishop's murder and all the shooting, two armed security men came to his house. He remembers thinking at first that his visitors were going to arrest him. But instead, he says, "they wanted to know if the students had enough food and water for a four-day, twenty-four-hour curfew. That was the only reason they came. I told them that the True Blue campus [one of two the school had on Grenada] had water for only one night. And they had water trucks down there within a couple of hours."

Before long, Austin himself drove up to Bourne's house. On the first day after taking over the government, Austin chose to make goodwill calls, first on the British governor general, and second on Bourne, the resident chief of the medical school. The next day, Bourne says, Austin's government "released the curfew on one of our drivers" so he could get supplies for the school. Bourne was also granted a pass and a police escort, so he could travel about at will despite the curfew.

Throughout the curfew period, Austin and other high-ranking army officers repeatedly inquired about the welfare of the students, promising their safety and saying they could leave if they wanted.

2. *Austin worked to initiate friendly contact with the U.S. government.* That first morning, looking worn and talking apologetically, Austin told Bourne he had ordered the troops not to shoot at anyone the day before. He complained that his own daughter now wouldn't speak to him, and urged Bourne to invite U.S. diplomats to the island from the embassy in Barbados. For symbolic reasons, Reagan's ambassador, Milan Bish, had refused to present his credentials to Grenada, but several lower-ranking emissaries sometimes visited the island. Amazingly, though, the embassy hadn't sent any envoys to Grenada throughout the week of trouble because, in the words of the embassy official, their "schedules couldn't be worked out" and they "couldn't get away." Two diplomats, Kenneth Kurze and Linda Flohr, did try to fly in on a commercial flight Thursday, October 20, but the flight was canceled due to the establishment of the round-the-clock curfew that morning. On Austin's invitation, they chartered a plane and were admitted Saturday, October 22.

They met with Leon Cornwall, probably second-in-command to General Austin; the U.S. diplomats had been ordered by the embassy not to meet with Austin so as not to imply diplomatic recognition of the new government. Cornwall repeatedly offered assurances of the students' safety. When Bourne, who attended the meeting at Cornwall's request, suggested a two-week school holiday allowing everyone to go home and "come back when things settled down," Cornwall said, "it wasn't a bad idea."

3. *The Austin government repeatedly pledged that it would authorize transportation to get the students out, and while this may have been a bluff, the U.S. never tried to put it to the test.* Ironically, the main hang-up was over the inadequacy of the Grenadan airport that Reagan had previously insisted was perfectly adequate. Cornwall had stated from the beginning that chartered civilian planes would be allowed in, as many as necessary, to evacuate whoever wanted to go. But since the largest craft that could land on the abbreviated airstrip was capable of carrying only forty-six persons, U.S. officials argued that an evacuation by this means would take too long to assure proper security. They also noted that the road to the airport was long and difficult.

The U.S. suggested instead an evacuation by U.S. battleship, to be loaded by marine landing craft from Grenada's main harbor. Cornwall rejected that idea as tantamount to allowing a military occupation of his country, but agreed in principle to an alternative U.S. suggestion to bring a Cunard cruise ship into port and load it up. This suggestion, never reduced by the U.S. to a specific plan, was still on the table when the invasion occurred.

Bourne recalls Austin's calling him privately that Sunday, October 23, upset that the Americans insisted on evacuating all the students. Bourne had been telling Austin up to that point that only about 10 to 15 percent of the students had told the school that they wanted to leave. As Bourne recalls it now, "Twice each day I would go meet with the students at the two campuses and brief them as to what was happening and get their reactions, which in general were pretty controlled. A very small number were a bit inclined to get hysterical, raise their voices a bit. What I was doing was advising them myself that I felt it was pretty safe. We had been through one revolution, in '79."

4. *U.S. diplomats meeting with students on the island in the few days before the invasion repeatedly encouraged the students to demand evacuation, even when most students had already indicated their preference to stay in Grenada.* The public was told that our envoys merely offered neutral consultation. Envoy James Budeit acknowledges that when the first U.S. diplomats left for Grenada Saturday, October 22, no more than 15 percent of the students had indicated they wanted to leave, but that the Americans felt "there might be a snowballing effect if somebody actually came out there."

Budeit also says that at his first meeting with students, on Sunday night, October 23, "one student asked me point-blank, 'What would you tell your own son if he were down here?' I said I'd tell him to get the hell out." Even that night, though, he says, "they had not made up their own minds." The next morning, just eighteen hours before the invasion began, Budeit says, he and Flohr told the students, "You've got to make up your own minds. We're not going to stick around here forever."

That afternoon he visited homes of married students who lived near the

radio station in town, warning them that it would be dangerous to stay there because in the event of a coup, the radio station would probably be a scene of action. He says he and a colleague "scared the hell out of those people," then went back to campus, where he later saw some of the wives he had talked to. "They were weeping, crying," he recalls. "I stayed the hell away from them. I had done my bit, and gotten them out of there."

Bourne remembers another factor, that on Sunday night there were "rumors from outside radio, mostly Caribbean stations, that the Caricom [neighboring] countries were going to invade Grenada. That stirred up the students quite a bit. They were scared, and that jumped the number who wanted to leave to over 50 percent" by Monday, Bourne says. Thus it may have been the invasion itself, and the salesmanship of the U.S. diplomats, that set off student panic—not any action of the Austin government. Budeit himself says, "I expected that some of the students were going to get killed."

Kenneth Kurze says there was never any doubt in his mind that a Grenadan-arranged evacuation wouldn't work anyway. "I felt going over to Grenada, and I felt coming back, that you could not have an orderly evacuation of large numbers of foreigners in a situation controlled by the military council, given their shakiness and the large chance of violence. Therefore, if you're going to do this, you have to secure control of a certain area." In other words, invade. "This was a group that killed their own people, their former leader. They were desperate. They would have done anything," Kurze says.

5. *Austin made a radio speech announcing a political program built around Western capital and private property.* Dr. Bourne says he found the program "very encouraging." Kurze heard the same speech, and recalls thinking that "it was bullshit, farcical, really. They were stalling for time."

6. *On Sunday, October 23, the day before the invasion was finally authorized, Washington received alarming reports from its emissaries on Grenada, but these reports were groundless and inaccurate.* For one thing, a plane carrying envoys Budeit and Gary Chafin was denied permission to land because of a communications foul-up. They were coming with Austin's approval to replace Kurze, whose mother had just died. The U.S. embassy telexed Bourne's office after their plane had been waved off and forced to land at a nearby island. Bourne, tracking down the problem, found that Austin's secretary was using a two-year-old telephone directory and had dialed the wrong number to alert airport personnel to admit the U.S. plane despite the curfew that shut down normal airport operations. Bourne says he supplied the right telephone number and the problem was rectified.

"I must admit to you that we were doubled up with laughter during this period," Bourne says. "It was just a bunch of people inexperienced at running that kind of operation and unable to make command decisions."

It wasn't so funny, though, when the embassy got a misleading account of it all from Budeit, a consular officer and former Navy man who had come to Barbados fresh out of the National War College, and who, before that,



had been assigned to help direct the military evacuation of civilians from Beirut. Budeit and Chafin reported to the embassy by phone late Sunday afternoon from the airport in Grenada that they had been shot at while attempting to land—this on the word of someone their private pilot introduced them to in the control tower; none of them had heard or seen shooting. Budeit and Chafin also reported that they were being held at the airport by armed soldiers and that Kurze, the man they were to relieve, was mysteriously missing.

That, they now concede, was not true, although they say they were genuinely afraid because of the circumstances. It eventually turned out that Kurze was two-and-a-half hours late reaching the airport because a Britisher who was flying out with him had wanted to go home and pack first. The delay had been no one's fault but theirs. And Budeit and Chafin say, on reflection, that they could have left the airport for town any time they wanted, and in fact that the soldiers encouraged them to do so, but that they waited at the airport out of fear. Budeit says that if Kurze "hadn't come out, I wasn't going in."

The opinions of the senior embassy official who was relaying this information to Washington are still dominated by the scary tenor of that erroneous Sunday phone call. Nearly two months later, he cited it as evidence that the word of the Austin government couldn't be relied on. Apparently, he was never told or had forgotten that the whole problem was one of misunderstanding, not duplicity.

7. *The U.S. embassy on Barbados relayed to Washington a much more negative picture than our representatives on Grenada recall supplying.* The senior embassy official says that the message he got from Kurze and Budeit, and relayed to Washington, was that Cornwall would allow nothing but scheduled transport out of Grenada. Since all scheduled air service had been halted by the airline operating in the region, which was owned by the governments of Barbados and other neighboring islands that were boycotting Grenada, this appeared to leave no hope of exit for the students. The embassy official says Kurze and Budeit told him Cornwall had specifically rejected the idea of charter aircraft or a charter cruise liner; yet the diplomats who went to Grenada say Cornwall specifically *proposed* the charter aircraft, and Budeit says Cornwall okayed in principle the cruise liner. (Chafin remembers Cornwall skirting the cruise-liner issue noncommittally, with a joke about not wanting the students to get seasick, and that no one pressed him on it.)

The embassy official also maintains, contrary to all other accounts, that the Austin government "did not show any particular concern for the students. We did that. They were responding to our repeated requests for assurances. They did not, then or ever, offer *unsolicited* [his inflection] assurances on our people."

8. *The U.S. diplomats cold-shouldered friendly gestures by the Austin government.* When Cornwall greeted Budeit at the main hotel in town after

his arrival, and apologized for the mix-up at the airport, Budeit says, "I told him to wait while I get checked into the hotel." Then over beer in the lobby bar, Cornwall tried to tell the Americans of Austin's plans to form a civilian government and revise the constitution. "But," says Budeit, "I told him I wasn't there to talk about that. I just wanted to arrange for the Americans to get out." When Cornwall then tried to address that question, Budeit told him to put an offer in writing, and then "told him I've got to go eat, and left."

Chafin recalls a stunning offer from Cornwall that same evening. "He [Cornwall] said, 'We were planning to set up a civilian cabinet, and we would entertain suggestions as to the make-up of the cabinet.'" In other words, Cornwall was inviting U.S. suggestions on which Grenadans should be included in the new government! "We thought maybe this was just a ploy," Chafin says, "but maybe it was the opportunity to make a real breakthrough." Later, though, Chafin recalls, Cornwall went to a lengthy meeting of the military council and returned, "tired, eyes bloodshot, flexibility gone. He said they were going to maintain relations with Cuba and the Soviet Union. They were still debating the civilian cabinet. He said he needed to go home and get some sleep."

Late Monday afternoon, with the invasion already set, Budeit says envoy Linda Flohr told him to go meet Cornwall, as scheduled, at the foreign ministry. "He's going to be a little bit pissed because we don't have a response for him [an exact U.S. evacuation proposal]," Budeit recalls being told. "I said, I don't know why he'd be pissed. We never promised him anything."

The meeting itself seems strange. Budeit recalls that at about 4 P.M., he, Cornwall, and a secretary were the only ones in the foreign ministry building, and it was raining. "The roof was leaking and it [the rainwater] was running down my leg, and I pretended it wasn't happening. I don't know why he didn't say, 'Why don't you just move over?'"

Budeit says he explained that there was no reply for Cornwall because the Grenadans' message had taken a long time to be relayed to President Reagan. "He said, 'What can I tell the RMC [Revolutionary Military Council]?' I said, 'You can tell them to wait for a reply.' He said, 'Can you tell me, really confidentially, what do you advise me to do?' I said, 'I can't advise you anything. Wait for the response.'" A few hours later, the troops landed.

Budeit remembers that at the end of the meeting, Cornwall invited him to go together to the Sugar Mill, a local disco. Budeit declined. "I had to protect myself with my own government," he says. "I can't go to discos together. Our president called them a gang of leftist thugs, although Cornwall seemed a nice enough guy, and might not have murdered anybody. What he was trying to indicate was, 'We could be influenced along the way. There's no need to shake us up.'" Cornwall was being conciliatory, Budeit agrees.

Summing up, he recalls that Cornwall "kept asking for advice. I considered this a ploy to find out what we were doing." On the other hand, he says,

Cornwall's offers may have been genuine. "They may really have been over their heads and not knowing what they were doing. They couldn't go anymore to the Cubans for advice, so they went to the other side [the U.S.] for advice." Apparently no one took time to find out.

Budeit says he had no briefing or specific instructions before coming to Grenada, but "was basically winging it." He says he didn't know an invasion was coming until he got back to the hotel Monday night and, in a phone conversation with the embassy, caught a veiled reference to military aircraft.

9. *The U.S. diplomats on the scene, quite contrary to blaming Cuba for the October coup as Reagan and Shultz did, believed Castro was so angry at Coard and Austin that the Cubans might be planning a counter coup, which might endanger the students.* "The Cubans had already expressed their upset with the shooting of Bishop," Budeit observes. "They might have staged their own coup and put in somebody more to their liking, a Cuban-sponsored coup. After all, if you can't support the RMC [Revolutionary Military Council], you've got to put somebody in there you *can* support."

This, he says, is what made him urge the students to leave, despite the desire of both the school and the RMC to have them stay. "It was obvious the school wanted them to stay right there and continue to operate, and the RMC wanted them to stay right there and continue to operate," he acknowledges. But the military council's promises of protection had to be discounted, Budeit says, because Austin's men "weren't that firmly in control."

10. *Contrary to reports from Washington that Cuba was about to send reinforcements to Grenada, and that the marines got there "just in time," witnesses on the island saw Cubans packing up and going aboard homeward-bound ships in the days before the invasion.* Medical students said trucks had come in the middle of the night to the homes of Cuban technicians, to load up furniture and families.

11. *Throughout the invasion, Austin's troops had countless opportunities to harm or take hostage both American students and American diplomats; they never did.* Bourne recalls that a few hours before the invasion, Austin, evidently aware something was afoot, stopped by to say, "Thank you for your cooperation, and I won't forget it." Says Bourne, "I interpreted that to mean that the students would be safe even if there would be an invasion. I think he meant that the PRA [People's Revolutionary Army] would not harm the students. So far as I know, no one connected with the PRA ever fired at the students or anybody connected with the school." In fact, once during the invasion, PRA soldiers inadvertently burst in on a house where six medical students were living; they apologized, and left, saying they were going off "to fight the imperialists," Bourne says.

Budeit remembers eating breakfast in the hotel dining room with other guests during the invasion (they did their own cooking), and that the dining room was open to the road where truckloads of RMC soldiers would pass. Even though Cornwall knew exactly where the Americans were, no one paid

them any attention. Nights, Budeit says, they spent raiding the hotel wine cellar.

THERE is, to say the least, strong reason to question the Reagan-Shultz explanation for Grenada. The diplomacy preceding the invasion doesn't show an overriding concern for the students' safety. The U.S. may not have landed on the island for the reasons given. On the other hand, the government of Hudson Austin represented almost no one. It would be hard to find very many Grenadans other than Austin himself who weren't better off after the invasion. Austin might (or might not) have proved able to set a right course if given time. But Reagan had found his lucky moment in history and exploited it. For three years he had sought that quick victory to reverse American fortunes. It finally came. But by the time it came, and small as it was, so much else had been lost around the globe that it still couldn't bring the administration even.

The U.S. had shown its "might" by defeating what may have been the weakest excuse for a government the world has seen in years. The message Washington sent may have reached the voters, but the rest of the world seemed to ignore it. Certainly it missed Castro. In fact, our bearded antagonist attributed the fall of Grenadan "progressivism" not to the U.S. army, but to the Austin-Coard coup. Castro did reduce the exposure of a few Cubans in a place called Surinam, but that apparently had no effect at all on what passes for a government there. The Sandinistas in Nicaragua continued to hand out automatic weapons to farmers, not a sign they doubted the loyalty of the Nicaraguan populace should Reagan get more ambitious with our GI's. The Moslem majority in Lebanon somehow did not seem cowed. The Russians continued to kill Afghans and snub disarmament talks.

Meanwhile, U.S. diplomats set about planning an election on Grenada, but ran into a problem. Eric Gairy, the witchcraft practitioner whom Bishop threw out in 1979, wanted to run for office again. And some diplomats conceded he seemed the favorite, principally because he was the only leading politician on the island who was not killed or imprisoned.

*Plus ça change...*

Still, even a bad policy can have favorable results in a particular and bizarre set of circumstances. The only really bad thing that can come out of the Grenadan invasion—besides the loss of life and limb—would be for such good fortune to be mistaken for good policy.

Of course, we may yet learn that there is much more to Grenada than has so far been made public.

AGAINST all the to-do over Grenada, the coup in Nigeria—far more important in the world scheme of things—got scant attention in the U.S. The primary reason we didn't feel compelled to learn much about what happened in Nigeria is that it seemed unlikely to make any great difference to us.

Again, we had stayed out of another country's internal affairs, so the new ruler, like the old one, wants to do business with us. There was even speculation he would lower the price of the oil we buy.

But democracy has been set back another few years, maybe another generation, in Africa. And while we don't know yet exactly what happened, the instant talk was that the democracy fell because of IMF problems. With the price of oil down, Nigeria couldn't comfortably meet the vast foreign debt payments assembled when the price of oil was up. Back then, the Western banks had wanted to lend money to Nigeria. Now the government needed to borrow money to pay the banks off. The IMF insisted that the country cut back its imports, raise prices for local goods and generally impose austerity on its citizens to meet these foreign obligations. The politicians were about to cave in to the Westerners' demands. So some soldiers thought they could do better. Democracy itself has not yet acquired value in Africa commensurate with price stability and well-stocked marketplaces.

You can search your atlas a long time, but you still won't find many places where the IMF and that American army of hard-selling bank vice-presidents have furthered the cause of political and market freedom.