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The "McNeil Mission" and the Decision to Invade Grenada

Robert J. Beck

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, will be to go to Barbados.

Assistant Secretary Motley to Ambassador McNeil
Sunday morning, 23 October 1983

Since the invasion of Grenada in October 1983 numerous scholars have explored the military, legal, and geopolitical dimensions of Operation "Urgent Fury."¹ Even so, at least two fundamental questions regarding the circumstances of American participation in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States' "collective action" have yet to be answered satisfactorily. First, what was the nature of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States' (OECs) written request for American military support? Was it genuinely an eastern Caribbean product, or was it rather one of the Reagan administration?² Second, what was the origin of Sir Paul Scoon's appeal for assistance? Was the Grenadian Governor-General's solicitation merely a "fabrication concocted between the OECs and Washington to calm the post-invasion diplomatic storm?"³ Was it "ghost-written in Washington?"⁴ Or was Scoon's request, its timing and circumstances "shrouded in mystery,"⁵ nevertheless an authentic one?

While these two basic questions "will probably not be resolved conclusively until the United States diplomatic files are opened" in the twenty-first century,⁶ they may nevertheless be addressed now with some confidence. In order to do so, this essay examines an almost unknown but central episode in the Reagan administration's Grenada decision-making process: the special diplomatic mission of Ambassador Francis J. McNeil to Bridgetown,

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Barbados.⁷ Drawing upon extensive interviews and recently published memoirs, it first sets out the context within which McNeil's clandestine mission was undertaken. It next traces the actions of this special emissary of the President from Saturday afternoon, 22 October, through Tuesday morning, 25 October 1983. Finally, it evaluates the Reagan administration's invasion decision in light of the facts revealed by this reconstruction of McNeil's mission.

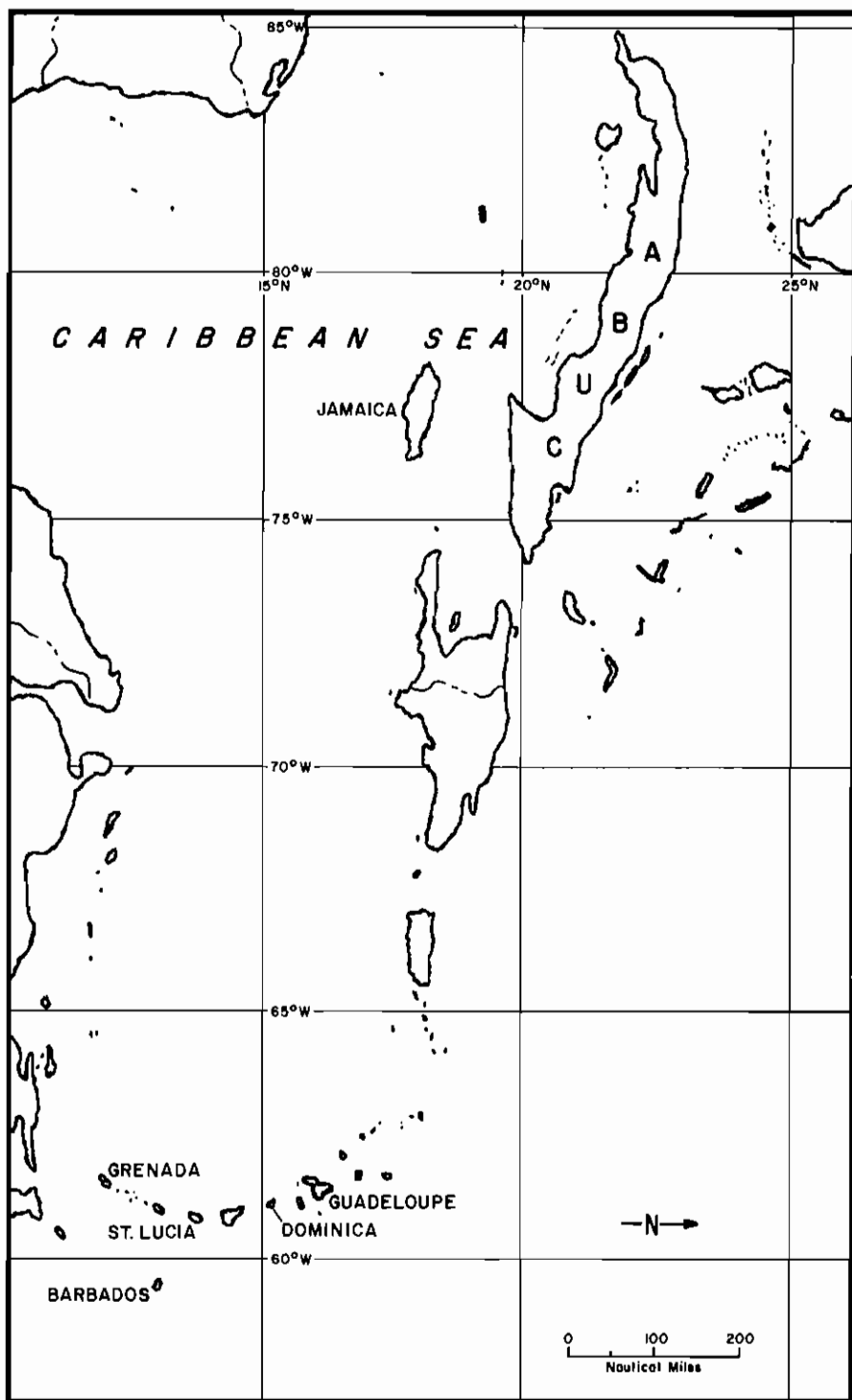
The Context of the McNeil Mission

The story of the McNeil mission begins on Saturday morning, 22 October 1983. By then, a number of related events had set the Administration on a course toward President Ronald Reagan's ultimate decision to launch "Urgent Fury."⁸ On 19 October Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, seven of his colleagues, and scores of Grenadian citizens had perished at the hands of the People's Revolutionary Army. Since that "Bloody Wednesday," Grenada's population of one hundred and ten thousand had remained under a menacing shoot-on-sight curfew which had been imposed by General Hudson Austin and his Revolutionary Military Council (RMC).

Elsewhere in the eastern Caribbean, government leaders had been growing increasingly restive since 14 October when they had learned that Bishop, a relatively moderate Marxist-Leninist, had been placed under house arrest by his hardline opponents within the People's Revolutionary Government.⁹ Even in the days immediately prior to Bishop's brutal murder, two prime ministers, Tom Adams of Barbados and Eugenia Charles of Dominica, had informally indicated to American officials their great interest in a military operation.¹⁰ And on Friday evening, 21 October, in a closed-door meeting in Bridgetown, the OECS had formally decided to request the assistance of the United States.¹¹

Back in Washington, the Reagan administration had been contemplating for some time how it should respond. Since Thursday, 13 October, the Restricted Interagency Group chaired by Assistant Secretary of State Langhorne Motley had been closely monitoring the Grenada situation and considering whether a "non-combatant evacuation operation" might become necessary.¹² On Thursday, 20 October, the Special Situations Group, the President's top crisis management team chaired by Vice President George Bush, had urged that steps be taken to enable a military operation.¹³ And on that recommendation Reagan had, that same Thursday evening, ordered U.S. naval forces to be diverted toward Grenada and operational planning to proceed.¹⁴

Despite all that had transpired in Washington and the Caribbean since 13 October, however, it was uncertain by early Saturday morning, 22 October, that the United States would undertake a military operation. To be sure, a number of Administration officials and Caribbean leaders strongly supported



Jerry Lamothé

immediate American action. And admittedly, significant steps had already been taken to facilitate such action. Nevertheless, President Reagan, who was now in Georgia on a scheduled golf weekend with several of his top advisers, had thus far made no final decision.

The Genesis of the McNeil Mission

At 9:00 AM on Saturday morning, the Special Situations Group was reconvened by George Bush.¹⁵ To conceal any appearance of unusual activity, the second "Grenada" meeting to be chaired by the Vice President was held in Room 208 of the Old Executive Office Building, the new Crisis Management Center.¹⁶ Present were John Poindexter, Oliver North and Constantine Menges from the National Security Council; John McMahan and Duane Clarridge from the Central Intelligence Agency; Lawrence Eagleburger and Langhorne Motley from the State Department; Caspar Weinberger and Fred Iklé from Defense; and General John Vessey, JCS Chairman.¹⁷ On the golf course at Augusta, Reagan and George Shultz would confer with Washington via a secure mobile telephone.¹⁸ As the President and his Secretary of State played golf, Robert McFarlane, Reagan's National Security Adviser of less than a week, stood nearby to monitor the situation.¹⁹

As was customary, the meeting began with an overview and update.²⁰ Then, the State Department opened the two and a half hour discussion by addressing the political aspects of the prospective American action. On Friday night, Eagleburger and Motley reported, the OECS had officially requested U.S. military assistance. Ambassador Milan D. Bish and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles A. Gillespie had both been on hand at Dover Convention Centre to receive the oral invitation.²¹ Thus far, however, the OECS had not issued a formal *written* request.

State noted that Barbados and Jamaica, non-members of the OECS, had agreed to provide forces for a joint military operation,²² although this information was probably not surprising in light of the cables that had been received from the U.S. embassy in Bridgetown over the past week. It is likely that State also discussed the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) conference which would be held Saturday evening in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.²³ Here, an international organization larger, older, and better recognized than the OECS—though not a regional security organization—might decide to request American assistance.²⁴

Next, the Special Situations Group turned its attention to the military aspects of a Grenada operation.²⁵ Despite intelligence limitations, there was a general consensus on the number and abilities of Grenadian and Cuban forces.²⁶ Weinberger and Vessey nevertheless wanted to learn more about the weapons the Grenadian military possessed, their willingness to fight, and the willingness of the Cubans.²⁷ Ultimately, it was decided that as the first

American troops landed on Grenada, U.S. ambassadors would inform the governments of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other "hostile" states that their "captured noncombat personnel would be treated correctly and repatriated as quickly as possible."²⁸

A detailed hour-by-hour action plan was then distributed to the meeting participants.²⁹ This time-line chart, which reflected the influence of the State Department, was an elaborate checklist of actions to be taken by the United States in the days leading up to and including "D-day."³⁰ While the meeting participants discussed the plan's various provisions in Washington, the President joined them by secure phone from Augusta. Reportedly, he participated for about five minutes.³¹ If the United States were to go beyond a simple rescue mission to a full-fledged invasion of Grenada, there would surely be risks involved.³² One White House staff member warned that there would be "a lot of harsh political reaction" to an American strike on a small island nation. Reagan reportedly replied, "I know that. I accept that."³³ Carefully weighing the risks of a military action, the group determined that Tuesday morning, 25 October, would be the earliest practical date for a full-scale landing. An earlier invasion date simply could not ensure a rapid, low-casualty operation. If it became necessary to save Americans, however, the military could mount a commando airdrop more quickly.³⁴

In the course of deliberations over the scope of the contemplated American action, Vice President Bush asked Reagan about the mission's "three-fold objective." According to a draft National Security Decision Directive, the American operation would seek: to ensure the safety of American citizens; to restore democratic government to Grenada; and to eliminate current and future Cuban intervention on the island.³⁵ Certainly, a relatively strong case could be made for a short mission to rescue American citizens. But should the United States take the bold step of launching a full-scale invasion, thereby restoring democratic government and driving out the Cubans? Reagan reportedly replied, "Well, if we've got to go there, we might as well do all that needs to be done."³⁶

As the meeting continued, the War Powers Resolution was briefly discussed. The legislation did not appear to pose any serious difficulties, however. With any luck, the Grenada mission would be completed long before Congress could question the action's conformity with the resolution. After more deliberation, the meeting ended, at 11:30 AM. By now, there was a full consensus.³⁷ In the course of Saturday morning's meeting on Grenada, a number of significant decisions were made. Most importantly, the President made the preliminary determination to accept the invitation of the OECS and to intervene in Grenada.³⁸ The hawkish view of the White House and State Department had prevailed.³⁹

Reagan's decision, which has been aptly described as a "seventy-five percent" commitment to invade,⁴⁰ implied three others. First, military

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planning must be completed quickly and with absolute secrecy. Thus, the Joint Chiefs were instructed to proceed with invasion planning on the basis of a "go order."⁴¹

Second, especially in light of press reports that a Grenada invasion was imminent, efforts had to be made to maintain the contemplated operation's secrecy. Thus, Shultz and Reagan would remain at Augusta and continue their golf weekend.⁴² Moreover, an elaborate plan was hatched to postpone Secretary Shultz's departure for El Salvador and Brazil that had been scheduled for Monday morning.⁴³ Meanwhile, those who had been making inquiries from the British embassy would be assured that American deployments were confined to providing for the security of American citizens, that America was proceeding "with extreme caution," and that London would be notified of any change in the plan.⁴⁴ Finally, Administration spokesmen would not be informed of the President's decision, thus allowing them to deny that any invasion was being contemplated.⁴⁵

Third, steps must be taken to assess the position on Grenada and to clarify OECS cooperation. Accordingly, American diplomats would be dispatched to Grenada from Barbados. Moreover, at Assistant Secretary Motley's suggestion, Marine Major General George B. Crist and Frank McNeil would be sent to Barbados to liaise over support troops for an invasion and to probe the OECS invitation. General Crist, "a man with stars on his shoulders," would help signal to the Caribbean leadership Washington's serious intent and, in the event that the military option was taken, "make sure the [Caribbean] flags" were brought into Grenada early.⁴⁶ McNeil, a respected diplomat and former ambassador to Costa Rica, would make certain that the Caribbean leaders had in fact a common position and would secure from them a formal written invitation. It would not do for the United States to invade and subsequently discover that the Caribbean leaders had had a change of heart.

McNeil Is Summoned

William Montgomery, Lawrence Eagleburger's executive assistant, spent a good part of his busy Saturday afternoon attempting to contact Frank McNeil in Boston. The Tufts University ambassador-in-residence was finally reached around 1:30 or 2:00 PM on a non-secure telephone line. McNeil was then told only that he was immediately needed and that he should bring tropical clothing.⁴⁷ Since his automobile had already been packed for a planned trip to Washington, McNeil declined an offer to be flown to the capital; instead, he drove through the night, receiving a speeding ticket while crossing New Jersey. When the bearded diplomat finally reached Washington with his family about 2:30 or 3:00 AM Sunday, he checked into the Howard

Johnson's Hotel near the Watergate and called the State Department to report his arrival.⁴⁸

Around 7:00 AM on Sunday morning, McNeil was picked up at his hotel and escorted to the State Department by a young Foreign Service Officer on the Grenada Task Force. While en route to Foggy Bottom, McNeil was told that he had been summoned because of the dangerous situation which had developed on the island of Grenada: The ambassador's earlier suspicions about the rationale behind State's Saturday afternoon telephone call were now confirmed.⁴⁹

Despite their intention to remain conspicuously present in Augusta, from 8:10 until 8:38 AM on Sunday, Reagan, Shultz and McFarlane were whisked by helicopter from Andrews Air Force Base to the White House for a series of emergency meetings to consider the implications of that morning's devastating terrorist attack upon American Marines in Beirut.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, from around 8:00 until 9:00 AM, McNeil attended a Restricted Interagency Group meeting chaired by Assistant Secretary Motley in the State Department's windowless "crisis room." Among the dozen or so others in attendance were Major General Crist, Lieutenant Colonel North, State Department Deputy Legal Adviser Michael G. Kozak, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State L. Craig Johnstone.⁵¹ Here, McNeil was informed that due to the gravity of the OECS request, Reagan wanted another assessment of the Grenada situation before making a "go/no go" decision.⁵² In a whimsical allusion to the "Mission: Impossible" television series, Motley told McNeil, "Your mission, should you choose to accept it, will be to go to Barbados." McNeil was to probe the Caribbean leaders, to make certain of their commitment to invasion. "It's not every day that you get this sort of request," Motley observed.⁵³

After McNeil had given his assent to the proposed mission, the bespectacled diplomat received enumerated instructions and a list of essential points, which had been hastily prepared on Saturday by the legal team of Michael Kozak, to be included in any formal OECS written request for assistance.⁵⁴ McNeil examined the outline and told Motley that he believed it was unsatisfactory since it might be construed as a Washington-prepared document of invitation. His reluctance notwithstanding, the President's special emissary ultimately resolved to bring the list with him.⁵⁵

For about half an hour after the Restricted Interagency Group crisis meeting, McNeil met with Eagleburger, Motley, Rear Admiral Jonathan Howe, Director of Political-Military Affairs at State, and perhaps a few other officials. The ambassador reviewed his instructions and suggested other questions which he might ask the Caribbean leaders.⁵⁶ McNeil had been specifically charged to make his own independent evaluation of the situation. Under Secretary Eagleburger, who had just spoken by phone with Shultz at the White House, told McNeil that no final Grenada decision had thus far

been made and emphasized that McNeil should give no hint to the Caribbeans about his own recommendations. The tragedy in Beirut might derail an invasion.⁵⁷ McNeil would later recall: "When I left I sensed that we would probably not intervene. The White House, shocked by the loss of 250 Marines in the Beirut bombing, feared the political consequences, and the Department of Defense was reluctant at the least, wanting more time to prepare."⁵⁸

Off to Barbados

As Eagleburger and Motley sped to the White House for Sunday's first meeting with the President, McNeil was rushed with General Crist to Andrews where the two boarded an unmarked jet aircraft. With them in the Gulfstream were: Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Connelly, an assistant to General Crist; Lawrence Rossin, a Foreign Service Officer who would later participate in the attempt to rescue Sir Paul Scoon;⁵⁹ and a member of the CIA.⁶⁰ As the aircraft took off around 10:15 AM, McNeil agreed with Crist that the two would try to work harmoniously.⁶¹

During the course of the five-hour flight to Barbados, which stopped once for fuel at Homestead Air Force Base in Miami, McNeil reviewed his instructions with General Crist. At length, McNeil developed a checklist of approximately twenty-eight points he wished to address in his imminent meeting in Bridgetown.⁶² Around 5:00 PM Barbados time—about the same time that Reagan was reconvening a meeting of his top advisers in Washington—the Americans arrived at Grantley Adams Airport and were greeted by Deputy Assistant Secretary Charles Gillespie.

McNeil stopped very briefly to drop off his bags at the Sands Hotel where he was met by Ambassador Bish. Unknown to McNeil then, he would not return to his accommodations until after 3:15 AM Monday morning.⁶³ He was next driven to Government House, which for many years had overlooked Carlisle Bay and which today was well-protected by Barbadian police.⁶⁴

Around 6:15 PM, as Reagan and his advisers continued their Beirut/Grenada deliberations in the White House Situation Room, McNeil's marathon meeting with the Caribbean leaders began in the Cabinet Room of Government House.⁶⁵ Among those in attendance for the four-hour meeting were: prime ministers Eugenia Charles of Dominica, Tom Adams of Barbados, John Compton of St. Lucia, and Edward Seaga of Jamaica; foreign ministers Louis Tull of Barbados and Neville Gallimore of Jamaica; Brigadier General Rudyard E. C. Lewis of Barbados; and the Americans, General Crist, Charles Gillespie, Ambassador Bish, and Ludlow Flower, Bish's Deputy Chief of Mission.⁶⁶

After being introduced by Ambassador Bish, McNeil told those assembled that the President had not yet decided how the United States would respond to the OECS invitation. He then began to pose those questions which he had

helped prepare that Sunday morning and afternoon.⁶⁷ Reportedly among them: Were the United States citizens on Grenada in genuine danger? Was resistance to the hardline faction growing on the island? Was a civil war on Grenada likely? In the event of such a conflict, what was the probability that the communist forces would prevail? How would the Soviets and Cubans react in the event of a civil war?⁶⁸

The Caribbean leaders told McNeil, whom the hawkish Bish judged to be rather skeptical at first,⁶⁹ that the Americans on Grenada appeared genuinely vulnerable, especially the medical students. Moreover, they submitted, resistance on the island was growing and a bloody civil war seemed likely.⁷⁰ In that event, the Cubans and Soviets would probably become involved. The West Indians feared that eventually democracy would be at risk throughout the region.⁷¹ They "were convinced in their own minds" that military action was necessary, McNeil would ultimately conclude. He judged that "they had a good sense of what was going on on Grenada," better than U.S. intelligence had.⁷²

At least an hour into the discussion, McNeil explained to the Caribbean leaders that if the United States were to act, it would first need a written request. McNeil deliberately had delayed introducing this point so as not to exaggerate the likelihood of American action. The leaders apparently had already been apprised of this requirement by Gillespie,⁷³ however, and asked McNeil about the outline of essential points he had brought with him from Washington. The ambassador replied that he thought it unsatisfactory and said he believed that they might compose a far better formal request.⁷⁴ After allowing them to peruse the State Department list, McNeil set it aside.⁷⁵ Then, the foreign ministers, Tull and Gallimore, were dispatched to Prime Minister Adams' office, one floor below the Cabinet Room, to prepare a Caribbean invitation of American assistance. They would return in about forty minutes with a draft that would quickly be approved and sent out to be typed.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Tom Adams explained to McNeil and Gillespie in painstaking detail why he believed the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States specifically had authority in this matter and why it was acting in accordance with its charter.⁷⁷

At length, Frank McNeil turned to a final concern of the State Department: How would the Grenadian people react to an invasion by the United States? Would the American restoration of order be well received or resented on the island?⁷⁸ The Caribbeans assured McNeil and his colleagues that there would be no "Yankee go home" signs. During the 19 October demonstrations, they pointed out, pro-American and anticommunist signs had been very common. The English-speaking Grenadians, far from harboring anti-American sentiments, were in fact very pro-American.⁷⁹

Throughout the lengthy meeting, in accordance with his explicit instructions, McNeil stressed that Washington had not yet made a decision.

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Indeed, as Eugenia Charles would later chide him, he had emphasized the point perhaps as many as five separate times.⁸⁰ Now, as McNeil's discussion with the Caribbeans came to a close, he and Charles Gillespie repeated that the leaders should not presume that the United States would join in the OECS collective action. The Americans pledged, however, that they would impress upon Washington the need for quick action one way or another.⁸¹ Unknown to McNeil and Gillespie at the time, back in Washington Reagan had already made a decision around 7:00 PM to launch Urgent Fury.⁸²

At 10:00 PM, immediately after their lengthy meeting had ended, Frank McNeil, Charles Gillespie and Ludlow Flower departed for the American embassy. Meanwhile, at McNeil's suggestion, General Crist met with Caribbean military officials for approximately another two hours to discuss a contingency plan for invasion of Grenada. Just as his diplomatic colleagues had done, the Marine general made clear that American planning for military action did not guarantee American participation, only American consideration.⁸³ Crist's objective was to ensure that in the event of an invasion, Caribbean troops would quickly be introduced to the island, thus facilitating an early U.S. withdrawal.⁸⁴

For the next hour or so, McNeil, Gillespie and Flower reviewed the most recent intelligence on the Grenada situation. They also spoke with Gary Chafin, a Foreign Service Officer who had just returned from Grenada. Chafin reported that the majority of the American students were very much afraid and desirous of rescue.⁸⁵ He also reported that Colonel Pedro Tortolo, a Cuban expert on Grenadian affairs, had arrived on Grenada from Cuba. After an initial assessment, and earlier phone calls from the State Department to which he deliberately did not respond, McNeil sent a preliminary cable to Washington.⁸⁶

In the very brief cable, he concluded that the Revolutionary Military Council was convinced that the United States would invade Grenada that Sunday evening. "The Grenadians," the ambassador wryly observed, "have put two and two together and come up with three-and-a-half."⁸⁷ The United States had two options, McNeil argued: Either take military action quickly or present the RMC with some sort of ultimatum. If this second alternative were taken, McNeil judged, the RMC would not likely respond positively.⁸⁸

Around 1:00 AM, after General Crist's return to the embassy and further discussion, Gillespie and McNeil finally contacted Assistant Secretary Motley by secure telephone. McNeil reported that the OECS invitation had been formalized and that Colonel Tortolo had arrived in Grenada. He then repeated what he had observed in his cable: The RMC was apparently convinced that the United States was about to invade Grenada. Moreover, the Grenadians seemed increasingly to view the American citizens on the island as pawns.⁸⁹ Accordingly, McNeil recommended that the United States take prompt military action to ensure surprise and minimize casualties. McNeil would later

write: "I recommended sending in the troops, so long as it was done quickly before surprise was lost. In so doing, I was mindful of Teheran, where colleagues had languished as hostages for so long. It is far easier to prevent a hostage situation than to deal with it once it is consummated, and I judged the danger to the students was growing. I also found the reasoning of the OECS leaders entirely persuasive as to the dangers to the neighboring small islands if the thugs who massacred Bishop and his followers kept power. But . . . the make-or-break factor for me was the students."⁹⁰

The Scoon Invitation

Sometime after McNeil and Gillespie had spoken with Motley, perhaps around 2:00 AM, Prime Minister Adams called the American embassy. Since Ambassador Bish was already asleep, Ludlow Flower took the call. Adams told Flower that British High Commissioner Giles Bullard had conveyed to him some *very important* news: That Sunday evening, David Montgomery, the Deputy High Commissioner, had met with Sir Paul Scoon in the garden of the Governor-General's residence. There, Scoon had asked Montgomery to relay a request for assistance.⁹¹ Sir Paul would have sought the help of the United States through official channels, Adams explained to Flower, but the Governor-General had feared that he would have been killed had he done so.⁹²

Flower promptly relayed word of Sir Paul Scoon's invitation to McNeil and Gillespie. McNeil, in turn, called Motley for the second time that early Monday morning.⁹³ Significantly, word of the Scoon invitation had been received by American authorities *after* the OECS written request had been made, *after* McNeil's invasion recommendation, and even *after* President Reagan's decision to invade. Michael Kozak and his legal assistants, who would continue working through the night,⁹⁴ were quickly apprised of Adams' claim that Scoon had sought the assistance of the United States.⁹⁵ Accordingly, Mary McLeod, the Assistant Legal Adviser for Politico-Military Affairs, began to examine Grenadian constitutional law. In the event that Adams' story were true, the legal status of the Governor-General had to be accurately ascertained.⁹⁶

Assistant Secretary Motley, among other Reagan administration officials, was somewhat skeptical of the hawkish Adams' story. Although there was no way he could be certain about its accuracy,⁹⁷ he would ultimately decide to "take the Prime Minister at his word." The invitation by the Grenadian Governor-General provided a "nice legal justification" for American action. Even without such an invitation, however, Motley would have favored an American invasion.⁹⁸ So, too, presumably, would have most of the Reagan administration.

McNeil's Return to Washington

On Monday morning, 24 October, after having had, at the most, four hours of sleep, Frank McNeil went to Grantley Adams Airport to see off Edward Seaga.⁹⁹ For about an hour before the Jamaican Prime Minister's departure, McNeil, Gillespie, Adams and Seaga discussed the Grenada situation. Although McNeil repeated that no final decision had been made, he did concede that he had urged Washington to act immediately if it were to act at all. He added that he hoped that word of a decision would be conveyed to the Caribbean leaders that day.¹⁰⁰

In time, McNeil and Gillespie returned to the embassy where McNeil again communicated with Motley by phone. The Assistant Secretary now asked McNeil to pick up Prime Minister Charles on the nearby Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. At Ambassador McNeil's suggestion, the OECS chairman would be present at President Reagan's Tuesday morning press conference. Milan Bish had already phoned to invite Charles to fly to Washington, without specifying the Administration's intentions, and Charles had readily agreed.¹⁰¹

Shortly before his departure from Barbados, and shortly after the close of President Reagan's last technical meeting with invasion planners,¹⁰² McNeil received final instructions from Langhorne Motley: Unless word were sent to the contrary, the Caribbean leaders should be told at 6:00 PM that an American invasion of Grenada would be undertaken on Tuesday, 25 October. Around 4:30 PM, McNeil boarded his Gulfstream, carrying the written OECS invitation with him.¹⁰³

After having landed on the tiny Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, Ambassador McNeil met Eugenia Charles, who had been flown there from Dominica by the French.¹⁰⁴ Prime Minister Charles had been under the impression that she was to be flown to Washington for the purpose of convincing President Reagan to launch a military mission. In fact, McNeil told her at 6:05 PM as their plane was taking off for the United States that Reagan had already determined to invade. "That was quick," Charles exclaimed.¹⁰⁵

After their lengthy flight, McNeil and Charles landed at Andrews Air Force Base around 1:30 AM Tuesday morning. From Andrews, McNeil drove Prime Minister Charles to the Madison Hotel in Washington, arriving there at approximately 2:00 AM. From there he would pick her up in five short hours for a meeting with the President.¹⁰⁶ For McNeil, the weekend of 22-24 October was not one well-suited for lengthy slumber. Nor, indeed, was much sleep then enjoyed by many policymakers in Washington and the Caribbean.¹⁰⁷

At 7:30 AM Tuesday, Ronald Reagan met with Eugenia Charles in the Oval Office over juice and coffee.¹⁰⁸ Among those also present for the twenty-eight-minute discussion were George Shultz, Robert McFarlane, Caspar Weinberger, Edwin Meese, Michael Deaver, Constantine Menges, Langhorne

Motley and Frank McNeil. Prime Minister Charles began the morning conversation by thanking the President for deciding to help: Year after year the Grenadian dictatorship had progressively worsened, and the faction that had overthrown Maurice Bishop was composed of the most hard-line, dangerous and pro-Moscow communists. Reagan replied that the United States and the states of the eastern Caribbean shared a common democratic heritage and a desire for peace. Describing the contents of his imminent television statement, President Reagan then extended his personal invitation to Charles to accompany him to the White House press room and to answer questions posed by the American media. The Prime Minister of Dominica promptly replied, "I would be pleased to appear with you, Mr. President."¹⁰⁹

At 8:00 AM, after her brief meeting with the President, Eugenia Charles was escorted by Constantine Menges to the White House dining room for breakfast with Ambassador McNeil and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam.¹¹⁰ While the Prime Minister was away, it was discovered that the words "to restore democracy" had been deleted from the President's prepared statement on American objectives, one which Reagan was to deliver in less than an hour. Such a deletion seemed inappropriate: McNeil had frequently stressed to the Caribbean leaders that if the United States were to become involved militarily, then Grenada would get a bona fide "democracy," not a return to Sir Eric Gairy, the corrupt leader who had been ousted by Bishop in March 1979. Kenneth Dam agreed, and the words were restored to the President's 9:07 AM invasion announcement, which Reagan delivered with Eugenia Charles at his side.

Implications of the McNeil Mission

At least two critical facts emerge from a reconstruction of Ambassador Frank McNeil's brief mission to Bridgetown. First, the OECS invitation of American assistance was legitimate, reflecting the considered objectives of the Caribbean leadership, if conveniently, those of the Reagan administration as well. The 23 October written request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States was *not* composed by Americans, even though the State Department Legal Adviser's Office had drafted a preliminary outline for such a request and Ambassador McNeil had brought it with him to Barbados. Second, Sir Paul Scoon's oral invitation of assistance, though communicated clandestinely to the American embassy in Bridgetown, was likewise authentic. It was not, as has commonly been charged, a bogus *post facto* justification for action concocted by the United States and the OECS. These two facts, and others revealed by a recounting of McNeil's diplomatic mission, have important implications for an evaluation of the Reagan administration's invasion decision.

First, contrary to what has sometimes been supposed, international law actually played a role in Washington's Grenada deliberations. As we have seen, on Saturday, 22 October, the State Department Legal Adviser's office ("L") was called upon to draft an outline for a written request of assistance by the OECS. On Sunday morning, 23 October, Deputy Legal Adviser Michael Kozak participated in a "Grenada" meeting of Motley's Restricted Interagency Group, and he participated in other Administration discussions as well. And very early on Monday morning, 24 October, "L" was apprised of Scoon's oral request of American assistance and immediately began to examine the legal status of the Grenadian Governor-General. To be sure, considerations of international legality almost certainly did not drive the decision-making process. Indeed, there is good cause to believe that such concerns played only a very modest role.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, in the case of Grenada, the Legal Adviser's office was not cut out of the Reagan administration's foreign policy loop, as it appears unfortunately to have been when the decision to mine Nicaraguan harbors was made.¹¹²

Second, "concern for the safety of U.S. citizens on Grenada," consistently cited by the Reagan administration in post-invasion justifications,¹¹³ seems to have been authentic. At the very least, the President's special emissary appears genuinely to have perceived that Americans were at risk. According to his 1988 description, McNeil "recommended sending in the troops," principally because he "judged that the danger to the students was growing." Although he had "found the reasoning of the OECS leaders entirely persuasive," the "make-or-break factor [for him] was the students."¹¹⁴ A respected professional diplomat and a political moderate, Ambassador McNeil was no cheerleader for activist foreign policy per se. Indeed, his critique of Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams' Central American "fantasy" in 1984-1986 led to McNeil's forced resignation from the State Department.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, Frank McNeil's recent account cannot merely be dismissed as "special pleading" for the Reagan administration. His concern for Americans on Grenada may perhaps have been misplaced, but it almost certainly was real and appears likely to have been shared by others in the Administration.

Third, the request for American military assistance by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States played a prominent role in the Reagan administration's decision to undertake Urgent Fury.¹¹⁶ Had not Grenada's Caribbean neighbors actually sought U.S. support, the perceived legitimacy of a full-scale U.S. invasion of Grenada would have been substantially undermined. Indeed, the recognition of this fact was the *raison d'être* of McNeil's special mission to Barbados. To suggest that the OECS invitation was of great significance is not to suggest, however, that it was the *sine qua non* for American use of force. By itself, concern for the safety of U.S. citizens on Grenada would probably have been sufficient to prompt a limited rescue operation by the United States. Nevertheless, an action on the scale of Urgent

Fury would have been extremely difficult to justify, both politically and legally, without prior OECS solicitation.

Finally, Sir Paul Scoon's oral request could have had very little impact, if any, upon President Reagan's decision to take military action. Given the time that word of his invitation was received in Washington, very early on Monday, 24 October, the Governor-General's plea was simply too late to influence significantly Administration deliberations; the President had already decided around 7:00 PM on Sunday to invade. "The legitimacy of [the OECS] request, plus my own concern for our citizens, dictated my decision," Reagan would explain in a nationally televised address on 27 October 1983.¹¹⁷ Conspicuously absent from this speech—the most prominent explanation he ever offered for Urgent Fury—was any reference to Scoon's request, even though such allusion would no longer have endangered Sir Paul, who had been rescued by U.S. forces on 26 October. Indeed, President Reagan *never* mentioned Scoon's request in any public explanation for his invasion decision. Urgent Fury, it now appears, was undertaken because of this constellation of factors: the apparent risk to U.S. nationals on Grenada; the fortuitous request of American help by Grenada's neighbors; and Ronald Reagan's conviction that "if we've got to go there, we might as well do all that needs to be done."¹¹⁸

Notes

1. For a discussion of the military aspects of the operation, see Peter M. Dunn and Bruce W. Watson, eds., *American Intervention in Grenada: The Implications of Operation Urgent Fury* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985); Richard A. Gabriel, *Military Incompetence* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985); and Ronald H. Spector, *U.S. Marines in Grenada* (Washington: History and Museums Division Headquarters, 1987). Prominent legal analyses of the Grenada mission include: Scott Davidson, *Grenada: A Study in Politics and the Limits of International Law* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987); William C. Gilmore, *The Grenada Intervention: Analysis and Documentation* (London: Mansell, 1984); and John Norton Moore, *Law and the Grenada Mission* (Charlottesville, Va: Center for Law and National Security, 1984). On the geopolitical significance of the Grenada action, see Scott B. MacDonald, Harald M. Sandstrom, and Paul B. Goodwin, eds., *The Caribbean after Grenada: Revolution, Conflict, and Democracy* (New York: Praeger, 1988); and Jiri Valenta and Herbert J. Ellison, eds., *Grenada and Soviet/Cuban Policy: Internal Crisis and U.S./OECS Intervention* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986).

2. For a well-developed argument in support of the latter view, see John Quigley, "The United States Invasion of Grenada: Stranger Than Fiction," *The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review*, Winter 1986-1987, pp. 271-352. See also Bernard Gwertzman, "Steps to the Invasion: No More 'Paper Tiger,'" *New York Times*, 30 October 1983, p. A20.

3. "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," *The Economist*, 10 March 1984, p. 34.

4. Alan George, "Did Washington Ghost-Write Scoon's Appeal?" *New Statesman*, 11 November 1983, p. 5.

5. "Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee," Session 1983-84, House of Commons, *Grenada* (London: HMSO, 1984), p. xvi.

6. Michael J. Levitin, "The Law of Force and the Force of Law: Grenada, the Falklands, and Humanitarian Intervention," *Harvard International Law Journal*, Spring 1986, p. 646.

7. The only published accounts of McNeil's mission which offer any detail are Gregory Sanford and Richard Vigilante, *Grenada: The Untold Story* (New York: Madison Books, 1984); and Frank McNeil, *War and Peace in Central America: Reality and Illusion* (New York: Scribner's, 1988).

8. For a recent account of the Grenada invasion and its antecedents, see Reynold A. Burrowes, *Revolution and Rescue in the Caribbean: An Account of the U.S.-Caribbean Invasion* (New York: Greenwood, 1988).

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The only detailed account of the Reagan administration's decision-making process thus far published by a participant is Constantine C. Menges, *Inside the National Security Council* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988). The three best journalistic treatments of the decision-making process are: Ralph Kinney Bennett, "Grenada: Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," *Reader's Digest*, February 1984, pp. 72-77; Don Oberdorfer, "Reagan Sought to End Cuban 'Intervention,'" *Washington Post*, 6 November 1983, pp. A1, A21; and "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," *The Economist*, pp. 31-34.

9. The "hardline/moderate" dichotomy somewhat oversimplifies the political division within the New Jewel Movement, Bishop's Marxist-Leninist Party which had controlled the PRG. See Leslie Maingot, "Grenada: Revolutionary Shockwave, Crisis, and Intervention," in Jorge Jeine and Leslie Maingot, eds., *The Caribbean and World Politics: Cross Currents and Cleavages* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988), p. 193. For a detailed discussion of the Leninist character of the New Jewel Movement, see Jiri Valenta and Virginia Valenta, "Leninism and Grenada," in Valenta and Ellison, eds., *Grenada and Soviet/Cuban Policy*, pp. 6-19.

10. Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 4 November 1988; author's interviews with Milan Bish, 24 August 1988, 26 September 1988, 20 October 1988, 26 October 1988; and author's interview with Ludlow Flower, 6 July 1989. For a recent, detailed account of Bishop's murder, see Geoffrey Wagner, *Red Calypso: The Grenadian Revolution and Its Aftermath* (London: The Claridge Press, 1988), pp. 147-150.

11. There is some doubt about the precise degree to which Ambassador Milan Bish and Deputy Assistant Secretary Charles Gillespie, who both were present at the Dover Convention Centre on Friday, actually influenced the OECS deliberations. Although they may or may not have actively participated in the official OECS meeting *per se*, it seems clear the two communicated an American predisposition to assist the OECS.

According to Prime Minister Seaga, U.S. officials attending Friday's OECS meetings had voiced their "concern over the turn of events in Grenada and the expanding Cuban and Soviet influence on the island." Patrick E. Tyler, "The Making of an Invasion: A Chronology of the Planning," *Washington Post*, 30 October 1983, p. A14. According to Constantine Menges, "Since no final decision had yet been made by President Reagan, it was not possible to give [the Caribbean leaders] a guarantee that if they asked for American help, the United States would say yes. The answer could well be no, and then where would they be? However, . . . Milan Bish could tell [them] that the probability of U.S. military action would be much higher if they requested military action collectively. Still, for them such a step would be risky. Two thousand miles away in Washington, we wondered, 'Will they or won't they?'" Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 76.

Ambassador Bish may even have directly affected the outcome of the OECS vote. Lester Bird, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, had apparently questioned the wisdom of military action and had abstained in the OECS vote. When Bish discovered this, he telephoned Vere Bird, Antiguan Prime Minister and Lester's father, who withdrew Antigua's abstention. Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada: Revolution, Invasion and Aftermath* (London: Hamilton Hamish, 1984), pp. 157-158. While not confirming this story, Bish did not deny it. He emphasized Vere Bird's support for the Grenada mission, however. Author's interview with Milan Bish, 26 October 1988.

12. Author's interviews with Langhorne Motley, 20 September 1988 and 4 November 1988. For a discussion of the Restricted Interagency Group, see Roy Gutman, *Banana Diplomacy: The Making of American Foreign Policy in Nicaragua, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); and Keith Schneider, "North's Record: A Wide Role in a Host of Sensitive Projects," *New York Times*, 3 January 1987, pp. A1, A4.

13. Oberdorfer, "Reagan Sought," p. A21.

14. Langhorne A. Motley, "The Decision to Assist Grenada," *Department of State Bulletin*, March 1984, vol. 84, no. 2084, p. 71.

15. "Shultz's News Conference, 25 October 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, December 1983, vol. 83, no. 2081, p. 70; Oberdorfer, "Reagan Sought," p. A21; Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," p. 74. Oberdorfer and Bennett call the meeting one of the Special Situations Group. Motley calls it one of the "Crisis Preplanning Group." Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 7 March 1989.

16. Oberdorfer, "Reagan Sought," p. A21. EOB 208, the "crisis management center," included the most advanced computer, audiovisual and secure communications systems. Its construction had been supervised by Oliver North. David C. Martin and John Walcott, *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America's War Against Terrorism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 61. The facility had been infrequently used because every department had its own crisis facility. Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 4 November 1988.

17. See Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 290; and Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 77. Although Clarridge is not mentioned explicitly by Menges, he is presumably the "operations officer from CIA" referred to by the author.

18. Tyler, "The Making of an Invasion," p. A14.

19. Francis X. Clines, "Days of Crisis for President: Golf, a Tragedy and Secrecy," *New York Times*, 26 October 1983, p. A1.

20. For accounts of the meeting, see Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," pp. 74-75; Menges, *Inside the NSC*, pp. 77-78; "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," *The Economist*, p. 32.
21. Author's interviews with Milan Bish, 24 August 1988, 26 September 1988, 20 October 1988, and 26 October 1988.
22. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 77.
23. CARICOM, the Caribbean Community and Common Market, was established by the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973. *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 17, p. 947. CARICOM is committed to the promotion of economic integration, the expansion of intra-regional functional cooperation and the coordination of regional foreign policy. Membership is comprised of all the states of the Commonwealth Caribbean region: Antigua and Barbuda; Barbados; Belize; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Jamaica; Montserrat; St. Kitts-Nevis; St. Lucia; St. Vincent; and Trinidad and Tobago. See Anthony Payne et al., *Grenada: Revolution and Invasion* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), p. 89.
24. Even before the OECS heads of government had finished their session, plans were being made for the CARICOM meeting. O'Shaughnessy argues that the "involvement of the large countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean in any legal action against the RMC would greatly strengthen its apparent justification. As far as international public opinion was concerned, the members of the OECS could hardly be expected to carry much weight." O'Shaughnessy, *Revolution, Invasion and Aftermath*, p. 160. The State Department does not appear, however, to have viewed a CARICOM invitation as legally significant since the organization was principally a commercial one. Author's interviews with Michael Kozak, 3 November 1988; Langhorne Motley, 4 November 1988.
25. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 78.
26. Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 7 March 1989. Motley's account challenges that offered by Menges in *Inside the NSC*, pp. 78-79.
27. Burrowes, *Revolution and Rescue in Grenada*, p. 78.
28. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 78. See also Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," p. 75.
29. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 78; Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," p. 74.
30. Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 7 March 1989.
31. Ed Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," *Time*, 7 November 1983, p. 27.
32. One official would later recall, "I had a real fear that it could be a very bad situation: Desert One all over again." Cited by Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," p. 27.
33. Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," p. 27.
34. Oberdorfer, "Reagan Sought," p. A21.
35. The contents of the National Security Decision Directive are reported in Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," p. 75. Oberdorfer also notes the three-fold objective of "Urgent Fury," including the elimination of Cuban "intervention" on Grenada and the prevention of its reestablishment. See "Reagan Sought," p. A1. Ambassador McNeil corroborated Oberdorfer's report. Author's interview with McNeil, 11 August 1988.
36. Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," pp. 74-75.
37. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, pp. 78; Woodward, *Veil*, p. 291.
38. Davidson, *A Study of Politics*, p. 82.
39. According to one Special Situations Group participant: "Everyone was gung-ho" for invasion. Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," p. 27. This characterization appears to have been somewhat exaggerated, however.
40. See "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," *The Economist*, p. 32.
41. *Ibid.*
42. "Shultz's News Conference," *Department of State Bulletin*, p. 70.
43. Oberdorfer, "Reagan Sought," p. A21. This was confirmed by Motley in his interview with the author, 7 March 1989.
44. According to Payne et al., the group decided "not to tell US allies, including Britain, of the administration's intention." *Revolution and Invasion*, p. 151. For more on Britain's failure to be consulted by the United States, see "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," *The Economist*, pp. 32-34; and "Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee," *Grenada*.
45. See especially, Larry Speakes, *Speaking Out* (New York: Scribner's, 1988); and "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," p. 32.
46. Motley wanted to ensure that the Caribbean troops would be introduced early into Grenada. If not, he feared that they might not be brought in at all. Under such circumstances, the American post-invasion military presence would be undesirably prolonged. Author's interviews with Langhorne Motley, 20 September 1988 and 4 November 1988.
47. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1988.

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50. Tyler, "The Making of an Invasion," p. 14; Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 54.
51. Author's interviews with Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988 and 24 February 1989.
52. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988. See also Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 6.
53. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989. See also Frank McNeil, *War and Peace in Central America*, p. 173.
54. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988; author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 26 September 1988 and 7 March 1989; author's interview with Ludlow Flower, 6 July 1989; and author's interview with Michael Kozak, 3 November 1988. Working with Kozak were Assistant Legal Adviser for Inter-American Affairs K. Scott Gudgeon and Assistant Legal Adviser for Politico-Military Affairs Mary McLeod.
55. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.
56. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1988.
57. *Ibid.*, 24 February 1989.
58. McNeil, *War and Peace in Central America*, p. 174.
59. See Lawrence G. Rossin's letters to the author, dated 20 March 1989 and 12 June 1989.
60. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.
61. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988 and 11 November 1988. See also Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 6.
62. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Author's interview with Ludlow Flower, 6 July 1989.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Author's interviews with Ambassador Bish, 26 September 1988; Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988; and Ludlow Flower, 6 July 1989. See also McNeil, *War and Peace in Central America*, p. 174.
67. Author's interview with McNeil, 20 September 1988. Author's interview with Milan Bish, 26 September 1988.
68. Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 6.
69. Author's interview with Milan Bish, 26 September 1988.
70. The pro-Soviet Coard might play an important role in such a war. The Caribbean leaders told McNeil that Coard was not dead, as the Americans had believed. Author's interview with Milan Bish, 20 September 1988.
71. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988; Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 6.
72. Author's interviews with Ambassador McNeil, 11 August 1988 and 24 February 1989. Kenneth Dam later testified that McNeil found the "Caribbean leaders unanimous—and I repeat, unanimous—in their conviction that the deteriorating conditions on Grenada were a threat to the entire region that required immediate and forceful action." See U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Subcommittees on International Security and Scientific Affairs and on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 98th Cong., 1st session, 2 November 1983, "U.S. Military Actions in Grenada: Implications for U.S. Policy in the Eastern Caribbean" (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1984), p. 11.
73. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.
74. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988.
75. McNeil recalled that he even may have torn up the document. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.
76. Author's interview with Milan Bish, 26 September 1988; author's interview with McNeil, 11 November 1988; author's interview with Ludlow Flower, 6 July 1989. The 23 October 1983 OECS invitation is reprinted in Gilmore, *Analysis and Documentation*, p. 100.
77. Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 7. McNeil confirmed that the Caribbean leaders had "talked in terms of law." Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 11 August 1988. According to Kozak, the Caribbean leaders "had good answers" when queried about the legality of the OECS invitation. Author's interview with Michael Kozak, 3 November 1988.
78. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988; Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 7.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988.
81. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988; Sandford and Vigilante, *The Untold Story*, p. 7.
82. "[H]aving had the advice of all his advisers," Reagan made what Shultz would later rather misleadingly describe as a "tentative decision" shortly before 7:00 PM to proceed. "Shultz's News Conference," *Department of State Bulletin*, p. 70. The President's decision seems to have been, in effect, a confirmation of the one made seventy-five percent on Saturday. *Economist*, "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," p. 32. This interpretation was confirmed by Fred C. Iklé in an interview with the author, 20 July

1989. According to his account, Menges learned the outcome of Sunday evening's final deliberations at 7:00 PM: the Grenada operation would take place as scheduled. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, pp.81-82.

83. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988.

84. Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 4 November 1988.

85. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988. According to Motley, "conversations with embassy officers indicated that more than 300 wished to leave the island." Motley, "The Decision to Assist Grenada," p. 71.

86. McNeil had been instructed to keep cables to a minimum for security reasons. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.

87. Motley would later jokingly refer to McNeil's missive as his "three-and-a-half cable." Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988.

88. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.

89. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988.

90. McNeil, *War and Peace in Central America*, p. 174.

91. Author's interview with Milan Bish, 24 August 1988; author's interview with Ludlow Flower, 6 July 1989. These interview accounts reinforce Scoon's statement made on 31 October: "I think I decided [that military assistance was necessary] on Sunday the 23rd, late Sunday evening." Transcript of BBC-TV interview with the Grenadian Governor-General on "Panorama," 31 October 1983.

92. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988.

93. *Ibid.*, and 24 February 1989.

94. Author's interview with Davis R. Robinson, 21 September 1988.

95. Author's interview with Michael Kozak, 3 November 1988.

96. *Ibid.*

97. Author's interview with Langhorne Motley, 4 November 1988.

98. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988.

99. Author's interviews with Ambassador McNeil, 11 November 1988 and 24 February 1988.

100. Author's interview with McNeil, 24 February 1989.

101. It had earlier been suggested that one Caribbean leader should attend Reagan's press conference and Prime Minister Adams' name had been introduced as a possible choice. Adams believed he was too busy on Barbados to fly to Washington. Moreover, Eugenia Charles was the current OECS chair. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1989.

102. Between 2:15-3:30 PM EST, President Reagan had met with Caspar Weinberger and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in what was apparently a final, technical planning meeting for the Grenada invasion. Payne et al., *Revolution and Invasion*, p. 153. The meeting is reported in "Shultz's News Conference," *Department of State Bulletin*, p. 70; and *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, 24 October 1983, v. 19, no. 43, p. 1504.

103. Kozak reported that McNeil carried the document with him. Author's interview with Michael Kozak, 11 November 1988.

104. McNeil's airplane was too large to land safely on Dominica. Since the Government of Dominica lacked its own airplane, the French transported Charles. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988.

105. Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 24 February 1988.

106. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1988.

107. Seventy-two-year-old President Reagan, for example, would average roughly five hours of sleep per day during this period. Walter Shapiro, "Testing Time: Reagan Was Reagan," *Newsweek*, 7 November 1983, p. 80.

108. For accounts of the 25 October meeting, see Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," p. 77; Woodward, *Veil*, p. 291; and Menges, *Inside the NSC*, pp. 85-86. This account also draws upon the author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988.

109. Menges, *Inside the NSC*, p. 86.

110. *Ibid.*; Author's interview with Ambassador McNeil, 20 September 1988.

111. Author's interview with Fred Iklé, 20 July 1989. Author's background interview with high-ranking State Department official.

112. At least during the Grenada episode, the behavior of the Reagan administration would seem to support Scott Davidson's contention that "whatever role is attributed to law, it will never be absent . . . from the complex of decision-making." Davidson, *A Study of Politics*, p. 177.

113. In addition to Motley, "The Decision to Assist Grenada," pp. 70-73, and "Shultz's News Conference," pp. 69-72, see the following: "President's Remarks, 25 October 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, p. 67; "Ambassador Kirkpatrick's Statement, U.N. Security Council, October 27, 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, pp. 74-76; "Ambassador Kirkpatrick's Statement, U.N. General Assembly 2 November 1983," *Department of State*

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Bulletin, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, pp. 76-77; "Ambassador Middendorf's Statement, O.A.S., Permanent Council, 26 October 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, pp. 72-73; "President's Remarks and Question-And-Answer Session (Excerpts), 3 November 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, pp. 78-79; "Secretary Dam's Remarks, Louisville, 4 November 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, pp. 79-82; "White House Statement, 3 November 1983," *Department of State Bulletin*, (December 1983), v. 83, no. 2081, p. 78; "Address to the Nation, 27 October 1983," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, (31 October 1983), v. 19, no. 43, pp. 1497-1502; and "Letter from Davis R. Robinson, Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State, to Professor Edward Gordon Reiterating U.S. Legal Position Concerning Grenada, 10 February 1984," reprinted in Appendix 9 of Moore, *Law and the Grenada Mission*, pp. 125-129.

114. McNeil, *War and Peace in Central America*, p. 174. Emphasis mine.

115. See Walter LaFeber's review of McNeil's *War and Peace in Central America* in *Political Science Quarterly*, Fall 1989, pp. 532-533.

116. Even before Saturday morning's Special Situations Group meeting, the significance of the OECs request was recognized. When word of the OECs oral invitation first reached the United States from Barbados very early on Saturday morning, 20 October, the news was deemed sufficiently serious to prompt high-level discussions in Washington and Augusta that would run from around 3:00 AM until 5:15 AM. At 5:15 AM, even President Reagan was awakened. If the request had not then been perceived as having great weight, Reagan would presumably have been allowed to sleep until his normal wake-up time. See Gwertzman, "Steps to the Invasion," p. A20; "Britain's Grenada Shut-out," *The Economist*, p. 32; and Magnuson, "D-Day in Grenada," p. 27.

117. "Address to the Nation, 27 October 1983," p. 1501.

118. Bennett, "Anatomy of a 'Go' Decision," pp. 74-75.



Foreign policy demands scarcely any of those qualities which are peculiar to a democracy; on the contrary, it calls for the perfect use of almost all those qualities in which a democracy is deficient. Democracy . . . cannot combine its measures with secrecy or await their consequences with patience. These are qualities which are more characteristic of an individual or an aristocracy.

Alexis de Tocqueville