

To be made at about-
1300 Z

TEXT OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S STATEMENT ON GRENADA

Begins" Early this morning forces from 7 Caribbean democracies and the United States landed on the island of Grenada in the East Caribbean.

I ordered American participation in this multilateral effort which was organised at the urgent formal request of the 5 democracies in the OECS. Forces from 8 countries including contingents from Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St Kitts, St Lucia, St Vincent and the United States are now on Grenada.

We have taken this decisive action for three reasons. First and foremost, because of the overriding importance to protect innocent lives, including up to 1,000 Americans whose personal safety is my paramount concern. Two, to forestall further disorder. Three, to assist in the restoration of democracy in the island of Grenada where a brutal group of leftist thugs silently seized power killing the Prime Minister, three Cabinet members, two Labour leaders and other civilians including children.

Let there be no misunderstanding. This collective action has been forced on us by events that have no precedent in the Eastern Caribbean and no place in any civilised society. American lives are at stake. What appears to have begun the evening of 12 October as a struggle for power among contending

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factions of a dictatorship degenerated into wide-scale murder. In the midst of this extraordinarily dangerous situation the only visible act of authority has been the imposition of a shoot-on-sight curfew. We have witnessed a complete disintegration of any organised authority.

The Caribbean democracies and the United States have since 1980 been concerned by Grenada's tightening links to Cuba and the Soviet Union. The tragic events of the last ten days appear to have had no direct relation to either the Soviets or Cubans. We do know, however, that Grenada's self-proclaimed leaders are hard-line communists with close and long held ties to Moscow and Havana. These new rulers have not succeeded in establishing peace or stability.

Last weekend Grenada's neighbours in the OECS were still unable to receive reliable information or assurances. They decided they had to take collective action to restore constitutional and democratic order in Grenada. The Organisation formally appealed for assistance to their Caribbean neighbours and friendly governments. They pointed out that the stakes included not only the physical safety of the people in Grenada - both foreigners and citizens of that country - but the peace and security of the entire East Caribbean region.

We have been following the situation as closely as possible. 800-1,000 Americans, including many medical students and senior citizens, make up the largest single group of foreign residents in Grenada. From the start of these latest troubles, we have

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consciously sought to calm fears. We were determined not to make an already bad situation worse and increase the risk our citizens faced.

But when I received reports that a large number of our citizens were seeking to escape the island thereby exposing themselves to great danger, and after receiving a formal request for help from neighbouring states, I concluded the US had no choice but to act strongly and decisively. I thus agreed to the urgent request from Grenada's neighbours to participate in the joint effort now under way. Let me repeat. US objectives are clear - to protect the lives of innocent citizens, to facilitate the evacuation of those who want to leave and help restore democratic institution in Grenada.

I understand that several Caribbean states have already asked that the OECS consider the situation in Grenada. Our diplomacy will work in close cooperation with the OECS and the other countries participating in this multilateral effort." End.