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The Impact of the American Invasion of Grenada on Anglo-American Relations and the Deployment of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces in Britain

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THE IMPACT OF THE AMERICAN INVASION OF GRENADA ON ANGLO-
AMERICAN RELATIONS AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF INTERMEDIATE-RANGE
NUCLEAR FORCES IN BRITAIN

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
Timothy Robert Anglea
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the impact the American invasion of Grenada in 1983 had on Anglo-American relations and the deployment of cruise missiles in Britain. Anglo-American nuclear relations were dependent on a strong level of trust between the two governments. The deception employed by President Reagan's government in concealing American intentions concerning Grenada from the British government broke that trust. The American invasion also furthered doubts held by the general British population concerning the placement of American owned and operated cruise missiles on British soil. The deployment of Intermediate-Range Nuclear forces in Britain and Western Europe was crucial to Prime Minister Thatcher's foreign policy objectives. The American invasion of Grenada imperiled the deployment of INF and demonstrated profound differences in how President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher viewed the Anglo-American alliance and foreign policy in general. Ultimately, the Grenada affair provides an opportunity to study Britain's ability to maintain an independent foreign policy in the superpower era as well as Margaret Thatcher's reliance on internationalism and alliance-building in achieving her foreign policy objectives.

DEDICATION

To Britney

for the love and encouragement you showed throughout my thesis-writing process

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INTRODUCTION

At the start of Margaret Thatcher's premiership in 1979, Britain faced serious questions on whether it would be an Atlantic or a European power. Britain's foreign policy objectives, however, remained largely consistent. While Thatcher broke the decades-old practice of consensus domestic politics in Britain by scaling back the welfare state, privatizing public companies, and closing collieries, her foreign policy reflected a continuation of the policies developed by both postwar Labour and Tory governments. For Thatcher, as for other postwar Prime Ministers, a strong relationship with the United States designed to enhance Britain's global and European influence remained of paramount importance. However, at the same time she sought to infuse a greater sense of nationalism and renewed British greatness into her foreign policy as well. Thatcher continued to rely on a strong, united NATO to maintain Britain's security interests, but avoided greater political integration with Europe. However, a serious threat existed during the 1980s of a potential split in the western alliance due to changes in left-leaning political parties and changes in public perceptions of the United States throughout Britain and Western Europe. The question of America's reliability and trustworthiness as a guarantor of safety hugely impacted Thatcher's foreign policy. Without the US, her defensive and diplomatic goals could not be met or implemented properly. The American invasion of Grenada in 1983 thus heightened the potential danger to both the western alliance and Thatcher's government.

In *Thatcher's Diplomacy* (1997), political scientist Paul Sharp praises the Prime Minister's ability to maintain an independent foreign policy in an era of decreasing national sovereignty. Sharp decries the lack of emphasis on Thatcher's foreign as

opposed to her domestic policy. He believes Thatcher should be regarded “as an international statesman, someone who has had a decisive impact, not merely on the foreign policy of her own country, but on the conduct of international affairs in general.”¹ At the beginning of her premiership, Britain faced stark challenges both domestically and internationally, and “Britain’s activity and influence in the ‘three circles’ of world power – the Anglo-American relationship, the empire-Commonwealth, and Europe – were possibly more limited and more contingent on circumstances than they had ever been.”² Faced with such problems, Thatcher maintained a largely independent foreign policy through strong alliance-building and maintenance. Sharp believes Thatcher based her foreign policy on a “combination of political nationalism and economic liberalism [i.e. free trade, deregulated industry, privatization].”³ Contemporary political thought pointed to the gradual relinquishment of political independence to supranational agencies like the Eastern Bloc and EEC. Political scientists argued at the time that “to maintain prosperity entails a country entering into commitments which reduce its political independence” since “defending the latter has an economic cost.”⁴

This reasoning, as will be seen in the next chapter, reflects the arguments made by several historians: Britain’s high levels of defense spending and refusal to fully integrate into Western Europe had severely hampered its postwar economy and political power. Sharp, on the other hand, argues that Thatcher ensured that Britain maintained its sovereignty and independence despite the intense pressure created by the superpowers to

¹ Paul Sharp, *Thatcher’s Diplomacy: The Revival of British Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), p. xiii.

² Turner, *Britain and the World*, p. 227.

³ Sharp, *Thatcher’s Diplomacy*, p. xvii.

⁴ Sharp, *Thatcher’s Diplomacy*, p. xvi.

order and constrain the world within a dependent system, both financially and technologically.⁵ While Sharp does overstate Thatcher's uniqueness in this aspect of postwar British foreign policy (she was not the first postwar Prime Minister to seek greater influence and independence than Britain's economic situation seemed to allow), his work corrects an important imbalance in the historical literature caused by the fascination and passion aroused by Thatcher's controversial domestic policies. This thesis seeks to shed further light on Margaret Thatcher's foreign policy and the important role she played within the western alliance by examining her response to the US invasion of Grenada.

On 25 October 1983, the United States invaded the island of Grenada in the South Caribbean. President Ronald Reagan decided the Marxist coup that had occurred in Grenada on 19 October represented an excellent opportunity to remove a potential Soviet satellite from the Western Hemisphere. A number of international incidents directly impacting the United States had already occurred during 1983, including the Soviet downing of Korean Airlines flight 007 and the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Lebanon, just two days prior to the invasion of Grenada. While these various incidents had important impacts on American foreign policy, the invasion of Grenada also had a large impact on Britain's foreign policy and relationship with the United States. Grenada was a member of the British Commonwealth and a former colony, but the importance of the American invasion to British foreign policy had little to do with Grenada itself. Instead, the invasion's timing, occurring just weeks prior to the scheduled deployment of

⁵ Sharp, *Thatcher's Diplomacy*, p. xvii.

US operated cruise missiles in the UK and Western Europe, mattered most to Prime Minister Thatcher's government.

This thesis argues that the deployment of cruise missiles relied on a strong level of trust between the governments of the United States and Britain. Britain's decision to forgo a dual-key operated launch system for cruise due to its high cost meant that the United States would both own and operate the cruise missiles deployed on British soil. Many in the British public felt uneasy with this relationship, requiring Thatcher to work throughout 1983 to ease public doubt. The British public questioned whether President Reagan, decried as an actor and western cowboy, could be trusted to control nuclear weapons on British soil. The Prime Minister, always eager to tout her close relationship with the President, assured them he was trustworthy. However, her primary argument for supporting cruise was its importance to Britain's foreign and defense policies. The deployment of cruise missiles as a part of NATO's Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) represented western unity and determination to match any military buildup by the Soviet Union. Additionally, INF reinforced the United States' commitment to European defense. Thus, the success or failure of the long-term placement of US cruise missiles in the UK required a strong level of trust between the British and US governments. The American invasion of Grenada broke that trust.

The invasion of Grenada has previously been overlooked by historians for a variety of reasons including unavailable documents, its short duration, and the lack of any significant consequences in America's relations with Britain, or other countries. While Thatcher's government may have faced greater opposition and protests in its deployment of cruise missiles, the missiles were deployed on schedule. However, recently released

documents from the Foreign and Prime Minister's Office reveal the invasion's importance to the British government. Additionally, the debates in Parliament following the invasion show the danger posed to the Anglo-American alliance by an increasing level of disenchantment with the Americans demonstrated by both Conservative and Labour MPs. This thesis argues that the British government viewed both the Anglo-American alliance and NATO as vulnerable to the external and internal pressures caused by America's invasion of Grenada.

While this thesis seeks to go beyond the relationship between President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher, the Grenada affair provides an opportunity to examine their views on foreign policy and the Anglo-American relationship. Reagan, as the head of a superpower and the senior partner in the Anglo-American relationship, could act unilaterally and deceptively towards his ally without expecting serious blowback. Thatcher, on the other hand, viewed the building and maintenance of strong alliances as key to winning the Cold War and maintaining Britain's place in the world. Reagan's failure to adequately consult with the British on his decision to invade a small, independent country that also happened to be a member of the British Commonwealth represented bad alliance diplomacy. Instead of building trust between the two nations at a crucial time in the Cold War, Reagan increased doubts held by the British public and even caused Thatcher to question whether a significant shift had occurred in the Anglo-American relationship and America's foreign policy. Her belief in the importance of independent nations acting together within the western alliance to withstand Soviet encroachments in Western Europe and elsewhere faced an obstacle in Reagan's unilateralism and belligerency.

This thesis begins with a brief exploration of the historiography of Anglo-American relations in the postwar era. While historians writing in the years immediately following World War II tended to view the relationship as “special” and beneficial to Britain, historians now question whether the relationship between the two governments ever moved beyond base pragmatism or whether it was more beneficial to Britain than the alternative of closer relations with Western Europe. My second examines the status of Anglo-American relations at the time of the invasion of Grenada as well as the history of Grenada and the series of events that led to the coup that killed Maurice Bishop. The third chapter explores Reagan’s decision-making process on Grenada. Additionally, the British response to being deceived by their close ally instead of being consulted is discussed. My last chapter details the impact of the American invasion of Grenada on the placement of cruise missiles in Britain as well as Western Europe. The thesis concludes with an examination into how the Grenada affair reveals Thatcher’s ideas and expectations of the Anglo-American alliance. The importance of the Grenada affair in demonstrating how “middle-ranking” powers such as Britain attempted to maintain distinct, independent foreign policies during the super-power age is also explored in the conclusion.

I. THE PRAGMATIC RELATIONSHIP: A BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE POSTWAR ERA

The American invasion of Grenada in 1983 revealed much about the attitudes held by both President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher regarding the Anglo-American alliance. The lack of consultation on Reagan's part incensed Thatcher, but the British government restrained itself from outright condemnation of US action due to the foundational importance of the Anglo-American alliance to Britain's foreign policy. Margaret Thatcher's government relied on close cooperation from the United States during the 1980s to accomplish its foreign policy objectives. Her government also relied on strong diplomatic relations and support from Western European governments. Thatcher's strategy of balancing Britain's relationships with Europe and the United States faced many difficulties during her tenure as Prime Minister, including America's unilateral decision to invade Grenada just weeks before the scheduled deployment of American cruise missiles in the UK and Western Europe. The Grenada affair thus provides opportunities to study the Anglo-American relationship from both a diplomatic and defense perspective.

Much has been written on relations between the United States and the United Kingdom in the postwar period, with the majority of scholars examining the question of whether or not a 'special relationship' exists between the two nations. Beyond the simple question of whether or not a special relationship exists, a fundamental issue for historians has been whether the Anglo-American relationship arose naturally or was created. The term "special relationship" was coined by Winston Churchill in 1945 during a speech in the Commons, but made famous by his "Sinews of Peace Address" in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946 when he proclaimed that "neither the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous

rise of a world organisation will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples... a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States.”⁶ Many historians believe that Churchill did more than just name an already existing phenomena; he played a key role in creating the special relationship as well in order to ensure British foreign policy objectives were recognized and supported in Washington.⁷ Other historians deem the Anglo-American relationship a product of a shared cultural and political history. Some historians offer variants of these two dominant ideas, but all recognize the importance of the relationship between the American President and British Prime Minister in establishing the quality and effectiveness of the special relationship.⁸ The Anglo-American relationship has proven to be as complex historiographically as it has been important politically, and a proper understanding of the alliance is key to interpreting British diplomatic and military strategy in the postwar era.

The period a historian writes in as well as her nationality impact a historian’s interpretation of Anglo-American relations. Every diplomatic dispute between the two nations, such as the Suez Crisis or America’s invasion of Grenada, prompts some political scientists and social commentators to declare an end to the special relationship; but a strong showing of diplomatic unity between the US and UK, such as the Nassau Agreement or British support for American wars in the Persian Gulf, causes these same

⁶ Simon Tate, *A Special Relationship? British Foreign Policy in the era of American Hegemony* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 3.

⁷ Historian John Charmley states that the special relationship was “in very large measure... an artifact created by one of the greatest literary and political artists of the century, Winston Churchill.” *Churchill’s Grand Alliance: The Anglo-American Special Relationship 1940-1957* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995), p. 3.

⁸ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, pgs. 4-5.

figures to believe the Anglo-American relationship is special again. Ultimately, the historiography of the Anglo-American relationship displays periods of closeness and aloofness between the two nations in the postwar period. Debates on the existence of a special quality to the relationship are based on historians' understanding of current circumstances and how they demonstrate a historical continuation of past periods of close cooperation or bitter separation. Additionally, the political and cultural relationship between the United States and Britain receives more attention from British politicians, historians, and the public at large than from their American counterparts. The greater interest shown by British historians in the existence of a special relationship reflects the importance of US-UK relations to the British government and people. As a result, much of the historiography of the Anglo-American relationship focuses on the ability of successive British governments to influence American foreign policy in a direction favorable to British foreign policy objectives.

Historians have long debated the question of whether the close postwar relationship between the United States and Britain resulted from sentiment or necessity. Lionel Gelber's work *America in Britain's Place* (1961) represented an early study of Anglo-American relations. Gelber, a Canadian, described the special relationship between Britain and the United States as being focused on mutual interests, especially defense. He believed that "Anglo-American solidarity... [is] the mainstay of the West."⁹ As Britain's position of leadership in the western world declined following World War II, the United States took on the mantle of western leadership. Gelber asserted that America has much to learn from British leadership, and emphasizes the importance of continued

⁹ Lionel Gelber, *America in Britain's Place: The Leadership of the West and Anglo-American Unity* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p. 2.

cooperation between the two powers in the face of Soviet aggression. Gelber's book was released in 1961, the same year Britain entered into negotiations to join the European Economic Community. He sought to influence British decision-makers and public opinion by emphasizing Britain's important relations with America and the Commonwealth, which could be diminished through greater European integration.

Despite early signs of cooperation between the United States and Britain during the first decades of the twentieth century, the special relationship fully developed following the United States' assumption of western leadership during and after World War II. According to Gelber, the peaceful transition of power exemplified the unique nature of the Anglo-American relationship. The unity between the two western nations came from their close social and political history, their "common view of man and society."¹⁰ Both shared a democratically-based political system that relied on compromises between political parties in order to solve problems and come to agreements. Gelber pointed to this dialectical tradition of politics as the primary reason the US and Britain were able to transfer leadership of the West and settle their differences peacefully.¹¹ Another impetus for compromise, beyond a shared political tradition, was both nations' desire for a world order free of totalitarianism. Gelber described the Anglo-American relationship as the one measure keeping the Soviet Union from global domination. With the cost of failure so high, Gelber encouraged the United States to learn from Britain's period of western leadership and to maintain good relations with the UK in order to win the East-West conflict. While Gelber believed the Second World War laid the groundwork for the strong military and intelligence sharing between the US and

¹⁰ Gelber, *America in Britain's Place*, p. 10.

¹¹ Gelber, *America in Britain's Place*, p. 14.

UK during the Cold War, he, like all the historians studied in this thesis, pointed to the Cold War as the primary impetus and foundation of the Anglo-American relationship.

Gelber argued that Britain should forgo closer relations with Europe and keep strong Commonwealth ties in order to maintain its place in both the special relationship and the global hierarchy, which represented a strong belief in Churchill's "Three Circles" doctrine of British foreign policy.¹² He thus contributed to later debates between historians on the merits of closer relations with either the United States or Europe, with subsequent historians often criticizing British leaders for not recognizing that closer relations with Europe would provide better opportunities for British economic and diplomatic success. Historian John Darwin has studied Britain's strategic plans for each of Britain's three circles of diplomacy, especially the Empire/Commonwealth. During World War II, British leaders were "already aware of the enormous importance of close cooperation with the white dominions if they were to make good their claim to be one of the 'Big Three.'"¹³ However, each of the dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) rejected calls "for imperial unity and a common foreign policy to which Britain, the dominions and the rest of the Empire, including India, would be tied."¹⁴ Each nation recognized that in the postwar world centered on the United Nations, "a separate voice at the United Nations offered better protection of their 'national' interests than

¹² The "three circles" approach to Britain's postwar foreign policy views Britain as centrally located between Europe, America, and the Commonwealth. Simon Tate states that "by remaining centrally involved in all three communities, and acting as a bridge uniting them, it is argued that Britain can maintain global influence – although it is also thought essential that the British government should not become too closely involved with any one of the three communities as this would destroy its position as a mediator between them." Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 2.

¹³ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System 1830-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 519.

¹⁴ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 520.

collective membership of a Commonwealth bloc in which London would enjoy an inevitable lead.”¹⁵ Additionally, the dominions looked to the United States for security, not the United Kingdom. Thus, while Britain emphasized the importance of the Commonwealth and Empire to Britain’s economic and diplomatic strength long after World War II ended, prior to the war’s conclusion the government realized that its postwar diplomatic strategy would require a close, continual relationship with the United States.

The importance of maintaining the “three circles” diplomatic approach to Britain’s foreign policy was evident in Gelber’s work itself. Gelber believed that entering into the European Economic Community would subjugate Britain’s foreign policy and relations with Commonwealth countries to European decision makers. He feared this loss of sovereignty would lead to a subsequent loss of Britain’s position as “the linchpin of [the] global power structure.”¹⁶ While Gelber acknowledged that the United States had taken Britain’s place as the primary defender of the Commonwealth countries, he believed that Britain still held an important position in directing the Commonwealth’s outlook and policy. Gelber thus demonstrates in his work the struggle postwar British governments have endured trying “to maintain a dynamic equilibrium in their relationships with governments in the three circles that would allow them to maximise their power and influence in world affairs.”¹⁷

Gelber’s book primarily studies the special relationship’s defensive nature. Gelber understood that the Anglo-American relationship arose out of shared political and

¹⁵ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 523.

¹⁶ Gelber, *America in Britain’s Place*, pgs. 149, 151.

¹⁷ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 2.

social history, but primarily described it as a relationship of necessity. Threats arising from Germany during the World Wars and the Soviets during the Cold War forced the US and Britain to work together. Gelber thought that the United States had much to learn from Britain, going so far as to advise a fundamental change in America's political system to make it more British. He said that "leadership in a world contest prescribes the most effective use of American strength and some other type of representative democracy may be better for that."¹⁸ Despite the political advocacy found throughout his book, Gelber's analysis provided a foundation for the future histories of the Anglo-American relationship.

Historian H.G. Nicholas emphasizes the importance of a shared cultural heritage in the development of the special relationship in his book *The United States and Britain* (1975). He believes that "history and geography have combined to endow the foreign relations of Britain and the United States with strikingly analogous characteristics."¹⁹ Due to his understanding of the special relationship arising from a common language and past, Nicholas subscribes to the "philosophy of choice" argument rather than the "philosophy of necessity" argument, believing that Britain and America developed close relations out of shared national interest, not desperation. American and British policy makers have shared an "Anglo-American consciousness" that allows them to see the world on the same terms. This shared worldview and historical understanding naturally led the two nations to choose to cooperate in their foreign policy objectives when their ideals were threatened during the twentieth century.

¹⁸ Gelber, *America in Britain's Place*, p. 135.

¹⁹ H.G. Nicholas, *The United States and Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 1.

Nicholas places joint security concerns as the primary impetus for Anglo-American relations following World War II. While personal diplomacy played a part in building the Anglo-American alliance, friendships and alliances had been built between diplomats and servicemen residing in Washington and London during the war, Nicholas still places necessity over choice in describing the special relationship's motivation.²⁰ The US needed Britain as a defensive bulwark in Western Europe, and Britain needed US financial and military support as it began to adjust to its post-war global position.²¹ Nicholas believes the relationship's basis in necessity can also be seen through the nations' disputes with one another. When disagreements between the countries arose, such as questions on the scope of the Korean War and the Suez Crisis, they often resulted from conflicting national interests between Britain and America.²² During the Suez Crisis, the British were concerned with protecting an historic lifeline to their Colonial possessions East of Suez and maintaining national prestige. America worried over possible Soviet infiltration into the Middle East, and sought to guard the West's image as protectors of peace, not imperialist aggressors. Ultimately the American position prevailed because "Britain needed the U.S.A. more than the U.S.A. needed Britain, both in the Middle East and in the wider world."²³

This view of the special relationship seems to contradict Nicholas' previous assertion that the Anglo-American alliance was built on strong cultural and historical ties. He follows the line of reasoning later developed by C.J. Bartlett by emphasizing the

²⁰ The importance of personal diplomacy and advocacy in bringing the US into the war is recounted in Lynne Olson's work *Citizens of London: The Americans who Stood with Britain in its Darkest, Finest Hour* (New York: Random House, 2011).

²¹ Nicholas, *The United States and Britain*, pgs. 125-126.

²² Nicholas, *The United States and Britain*, p. 155.

²³ Nicholas, *The United States and Britain*, p. 156.

importance of common threats and political necessity in the founding and continuance of the special relationship. Nicholas fails to demonstrate from his sources the importance of cultural factors in the creation of the Anglo-American alliance during World War II. Instead, he seems to indicate that cultural and historical ties merely facilitated the development of the special relationship when the need arose.

In *The Special Relationship* (1992), C. J. Bartlett provides a short history of the Anglo-American relationship from the 1930s until the First Gulf War. His primary proposition is that the special relationship was not natural or instinctive to Anglo-American leaders, but a political construct created in the face of common threats and opponents. He states that “without the actions of...aggressor states, relations might well have been dominated by disputes over economic questions.”²⁴ Bartlett’s position stands in opposition to historians like Nicholas and Gelber who believe that common historical and cultural ties caused the special relationship to arise naturally in times of need. Instead, Bartlett believes the relationship between the US and Britain was neither constant nor guaranteed, even during times of international conflict.

Bartlett believes that necessity created the special relationship, not sentiment. The British and Americans faced common foes during both World War II and the Cold War and had no other option than to form a close alliance in order to maintain both regional and global security. Bartlett does recognize that once the relationship was established, historical and personal ties were vital to the relationship’s continuance. Nevertheless, Bartlett (writing pre-9/11) thought that the future of the special relationship was in doubt since its *raison d’être* had ceased to exist. He also believed that a reunited

²⁴ C.J. Bartlett, *‘The Special Relationship:’ A Political History of Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (New York: Longman, 1992), p. ix.

Germany presented America with a more attractive alliance than Britain could offer.²⁵

Bartlett believed that the basis of the special relationship in the future would be a common language and culture with no real political influence or cooperation. This view, however, is in contrast to his understanding of the special relationship's foundation: a political union with no strong ties to culture or heritage.

In his book *A Special Relationship?* (2012), Simon Tate studies the Anglo-American alliance strictly from the perspective of postwar British governments. He argues that beyond any political expediency, “historical and cultural ties between countries have been integral to post-war British governments’ perceptions of the special relationship.”²⁶ While the US may have viewed the special relationship as being purely political in nature, the result of interest not sentiment, the British viewed politics, culture, and history as inseparable in their foreign policy. A key historical construct used by British governments has been the idea of the West, and Britain’s place in its hierarchy of leadership. For post-war British governments, the West and the three circles of British responsibility (Commonwealth, United States, and Europe) were the same. Just as the three circles approach to foreign policy and the Anglo-American relationship arose after World War II, the idea of the West also gained credence after 1945. The idea of western unity was conceived of primarily in response to an Eastern threat, Communism. While politics were important to the West’s creation, common historical and cultural backgrounds contributed to a sense of a shared western identity. British governments fused political and cultural ideas in order to create the construct of western unity, and thus created a space to “fulfill a political bridge-building role between US and European

²⁵ Bartlett, ‘*The Special Relationship*,’ p. 179.

²⁶ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 39.

governments.”²⁷ John Charmley goes beyond Tate’s explanation by describing the “special” nature of the Anglo-American alliance is a “benign legend which has been used to make the British feel better about the way in which successive Governments have subordinated British interests to American desires.”²⁸

In describing Britain’s view of the special relationship, Tate utilizes what he terms the critical geopolitical method. This method “draws upon Foucault’s work to argue that the way we understand the world is through discourses that are deployed by politicians to (re)present the world in different ways.”²⁹ From this perspective British politicians did not exaggerate the importance of the West, the special relationship, and Britain’s place within them; but instead created a discursive space in which they could transform their ideas into reality. Post-war British governments chose to represent the West in a way “which provided the greatest opportunity for British governments to continue with an active foreign policy.”³⁰ Thus, the West was presented as completely reliant on a strong Anglo-American relationship.

Historians investigating the Anglo-American relationship have debated the merits of the British government’s decision to place its relationship with the United States at the center of its postwar foreign policy. A key component of this debate has been determining how successful successive postwar British governments were in achieving their foreign policy objectives. In *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century* (2010), Michael J. Turner examines British postwar foreign policy within the framework of the “Three Circles” of responsibility described by Winston Churchill: Europe, the

²⁷ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 48.

²⁸ Charmley, *Churchill’s Grand Alliance*, pgs. 358-359.

²⁹ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 52.

³⁰ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 53.

Commonwealth, and the United States. Prior to the decolonization and devaluation of the 1960s, British governments insisted that they could maintain their global position and influence through the “three circles.” Due to their diminished economic power, however, the British came to view “gaining more leverage in Washing DC [as] a permanent goal since so many British interests around the world seemed to depend on pushing or restraining the Americans.”³¹ Additionally, Turner states that for Britain, “commitment to NATO, strengthening the ‘special relationship’ and maintaining an independent deterrent became the core features of defence planning.”³² Clearly, the British viewed a strong Anglo-American relationship as the foundation of their post-1960 foreign policy.

Many historians, such as Paul Kennedy in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987) and John Dumbrell in *A Special Relationship* (2006), argue that Britain steadily lost much its economic and political power due to a failure to adjust to its changed circumstances following World War II.³³ If the British government had recognized its inability to maintain its global commitments following the war, it could have focused its financial expenditures on improving Britain’s economy at home instead of attempting to maintain its position abroad. Turner, however, argues that Britain’s decline has been exaggerated. Turner believes that historians like Kennedy, who believe Britain would not have struggled as much economically if it had devoted more attention to just one of the circles (Europe) instead of trying to maintain influence in each circle are producing an

³¹ Michael J Turner, *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 79.

³² Turner, *Britain and the World*, p. 78.

³³ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

analysis that is “unwarrantably negative and condemnatory.”³⁴ He instead insists that “what is most noteworthy is not Britain’s relative decline, but Britain’s ability to manage and minimize decline.”³⁵ The Anglo-American relationship and the influence it enabled represented a key part of this decline management. Just as in the debate on the “special” aspect of the Anglo-American relationship, historians often come to their conclusions on the relative success or failure of the Anglo-American alliance based on the period they write in or on.

Ritchie Ovendale’s book *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (1998) emphasizes the important role British politicians played in the development of the special relationship. Ovendale believes the academic study of the special relationship began in earnest after the British Public Records Act of 1958 was adjusted under Harold Wilson, which reduced the “fifty-year rule” for release of government documents to thirty years. This change shifted the study of Anglo-American relations to Britain, where the alliance was viewed from the perspective of British policy makers and presented Britain as a much more active member in the special relationship than previously believed.³⁶ This could be explained by the historians’ reliance on primarily British sources, which Ovendale depends on as well.

³⁴ Turner, *Britain and the World*, p. viii. Kennedy explains the foundation of Britain’s economic weakness when he states that in the postwar era, “Britain continued to rely upon captive colonial markets, struggled in vain to preserve the old parity for sterling, maintained extensive overseas garrisons (a great drain on currency), declined to join in the early moves toward European unity, and spent more on defense than any of the other NATO powers apart from the United States itself.” *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, p. 424.

³⁵ Turner, *Britain and the World*, p. viii.

³⁶ Ritchie Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), p. 18.

Ovendale questions the historical narrative that the West was led into the Cold War by America following World War II by demonstrating the importance of British officials in shaping American opinion towards the Soviets. Ovendale, along with Bartlett, Tate, and Turner, supports the idea that the Cold War brought an Anglo-American special relationship into being. While close cooperation, especially in defense matters, existed during World War II, rifts between the two nations began to rise towards the end of the war that were exacerbated in the war's immediate aftermath. Charmley describes Churchill's efforts in the early 1950s "to revive his vision of the old wartime alliance" as "sad and revealed how little substance there had been to it."³⁷ The abrupt cessation of Lend-Lease threw Britain's economy into turmoil, and a clear danger existed of American withdrawal from world affairs, as had happened following World War I. Britain could not afford to maintain its presence in Greece and Turkey, key Soviet targets, as well as the rest of the world. Thus, as John Darwin records, "Britain was being dragged willy-nilly into confrontation with a power of awesome military strength and possibly limitless ambitions. At the same time, it was also deeply uncertain... what part the United States might play in resisting Soviet aggression."³⁸

After educating the Americans on the dangers posed by the Soviet Union in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East, the British government maneuvered America, the Commonwealth, and Western Europe into a defensive alliance. Ovendale in particular credits Labour Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin for establishing the groundwork that led to NATO and the Anglo-American relationship. Through the post-war special relationship, "Britain could achieve a position closely related to that of the United States,

³⁷ Charmley, *Churchill's Grand Alliance*, p. 358.

³⁸ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 530.

and yet sufficiently independent of it to be able to influence American policy in the desired direction.”³⁹ However, Ovendale insists that the special relationship did not always exist. At times, particularly during Eisenhower’s early presidential years, America viewed Britain as “just being one among a number of allies.”⁴⁰ After the Suez Crisis, rapprochement between the allies was spurred by the continued threat of Soviet incursions in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Ovendale believes that throughout the postwar era, “there was a pragmatic calculation as to how Britain could best utilize the special relationship in its own interests.”⁴¹ He acknowledges that the Anglo-American relationship was more important to the British than to the Americans, but believes the British presented themselves as necessary allies, and took it upon themselves to educate the Americans as they attempted to create a *Pax Americana* reminiscent of the *Pax Britannica*. However, despite the transfer of leadership from London to Washington, British politicians continued to work the special relationship to achieve their desired foreign policy goals. Pragmatism brought the Americans and British together in the postwar era, and Ovendale observes that “there is little evidence of sentimentality in the attitude of British policymakers in their understanding and operation of the special relationship with the United States.”⁴²

Charmley disagrees with Ovendale’s assessment of the Anglo-American relationship. He argues that “Churchill’s ‘misguided sentimental investment’” in Anglo-American unity “paid few dividends for Britain.”⁴³ Instead of operating in Britain’s best interests, the

³⁹ Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*, p. 81.

⁴⁰ Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*, p. 103.

⁴¹ Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*, p. 162.

⁴² Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*, p. 162.

⁴³ Charmley, *Churchill’s Grand Alliance*, p. 361.

“British political establishment was so locked into its vision of the ‘special relationship’ that psychological dependence dictated submission.”⁴⁴

Simon Tate, similarly to Owendale, recognizes that the special relationship has received much more attention in British politics and popular culture than in America, and that “for successive British governments maintaining the vitality of the special relationship has been a key foreign policy aim.”⁴⁵ It is thus evident that from the British perspective, the Anglo-American special relationship has been a reality and a necessity since World War II. In a similar fashion to Turner, Tate’s work attempts “to provide counterbalance to the prevailing view in academia that post-war British governments have accepted their declining status and influence in the special relationship since 1945, and that the rate of decline accelerated markedly following the events of the Suez Crisis in the late 1950s.”⁴⁶ Tate describes Churchill’s view of the Anglo- American alliance as a grudging acceptance of junior partnership, but still expecting an active role in determining and taking action on foreign policy. Tate asserts that this original perception of a hegemonic special relationship has not changed despite the waning of British power and prestige internationally.⁴⁷

In order to explain the British view of American hegemony, Tate draws upon the analysis of the interplay of coercion and consent developed by Italian political thinker Antonio Gramsci. America had a strong means of coercion through its nuclear arsenal, but threats of nuclear war could not be used against European or other allies. Since hegemony in Gramsci’s formulation can only operate through the consent of its members,

⁴⁴ Chrmlay, *Churchill’s Grand Alliance*, p. 358.

⁴⁵ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, pgs. 3, 5.

⁴⁶ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 9.

⁴⁷ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 7.

conflicts that cannot be solved coercively must be solved relationally. Tate concludes that while British governments recognized America's coercive strength both economically and militarily, they had "considered that within Europe and the Commonwealth [Britain] retained the greater relational power and therefore the greater ability to lead those governments by consent."⁴⁸ Thus, the British viewed themselves as indispensable partners in the hegemonic order of the United States, expecting due recompense for assisting the US in solving international disputes that could not be handled coercively.

While historians have generally agreed that the Anglo-American relationship was built on necessity and used primarily by the British to achieve their foreign policy goals, questions remain on whether the relationship was beneficial to the British, and to what degree the British succeeded in swaying American foreign policy decisions. During the 1960s and 1970s, the British government began to reexamine its position within the "three circles," specifically with Europe. In *A Special Relationship*, John Dumbrell focuses on the Anglo-American relationship after 1960. Dumbrell, like Ovendale and Tate, examines the relationship from the British government's perspective. He seeks to determine "the degree to which the 'special relationship,' in its Cold War and post-Cold War incarnations, has signified partnership and mutuality, rather than simple US dominance."⁴⁹ Additionally, Dumbrell attempts to distinguish between "the 'special relationship' as policy and the 'special relationship' as a state of international

⁴⁸ Tate, *A Special Relationship?*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 6.

interaction.”⁵⁰ While the United States’ foreign policy relied on good relations with Britain and Europe, the British have relied on one aspect of the “special relationship” or another to accomplish their postwar foreign policy, whether it be nuclear, financial, or diplomatic cooperation.⁵¹ The British, like all middle-ranking powers during the Cold War, “used various strategies to enhance their security without undue sacrifice of sovereignty.”⁵² Britain’s strategy relied on the mutual interests and culture found in the Anglo-American alliance to accomplish its goals while maintaining its sovereignty.

Difficulties arose as the United States pushed Britain to engage with Europe to a greater degree both politically and economically in the 1960s. As Britain’s global presence increasingly declined throughout the 1960s, its usefulness to the United States came to depend more on its ability to influence European affairs in a direction favorable to the United States. Prior to Macmillan’s government, however, the British believed they could better influence US policy as the head of the Commonwealth and as a distinctly Atlantic, not European, power. This thinking, as Dumbrell believes, caused the British government to maintain a distorted view of the world, resisting the inevitability of Britain’s future with Europe. Thus, the idea of a special relationship “unquestionably bolstered British pomposity and unrealism during the Cold War, making the management of decline even more problematic.”⁵³

Historians agree that Britain’s global position, both economically and militarily, declined during the 1960s, prompting the British government to reevaluate its traditional foreign policy of close relations with the United States and the Commonwealth nations

⁵⁰ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 12.

⁵¹ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 12.

⁵² Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 16.

⁵³ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 17.

and limited economic and political integration with Europe. Turner emphasizes that before the 1960s, Britain succeeded in proving its military and diplomatic worth to the United States. He cites a US strategic report from 1951 detailing that “Britain alone among Americas allies had the resources of an independent military power” that could act on the global stage.⁵⁴ As a result, the United States treated Britain preferentially in its nuclear policy as well as the access it granted to the British government. Turner brings specific attention to Britain’s ability to resist US pressure that pushed for greater European integration. Despite a strong belief that British integration with Europe would provide greater American influence in Europe, American leaders in the 1950s “did not press Britain too hard, since Britain’s wider role in collective recovery and rearmament was too important to be sacrificed for the sake of integration.”⁵⁵ David Watt in his essay *The Anglo-American Relationship* explains that Britain in the 1960s no longer had “the political, economic, or military power to ensure either (a) a purely British veto over any single American policy (except where, as in the case of bases in Britain, British sovereignty is directly involved) or (b) a purely British ability to influence the general direction of American foreign policy.”⁵⁶ Thus, according to Watt, the special relationship had effectively concluded by the end of the 1960s and the British government needed to reexamine its foreign policy.

However, Britain’s refusal to join in the early efforts to construct an economically interconnected Europe, as well as its close relations with the United States (particularly

⁵⁴ Turner, *Britain and the World*, p. 57.

⁵⁵ Turner, *Britain and the World*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ David Watt, *Introduction: The Anglo-American Relationship*, in *The ‘Special Relationship:’ Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* eds. William Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 4.

its nuclear cooperation) created immense difficulties for the British government in its attempts to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1960s, as French President Charles De Gaulle viewed British entry into the EEC as a potential avenue of American interference in European affairs. Britain's devaluation crisis of 1967 as well as Harold Wilson's decision to cut drastically Britain's defense budget and presence "East of Suez" in the same year "provoked a sense of outrage in Washington, and stoked the resentment felt at Britain's failure to supply troops to Vietnam."⁵⁷ Excluded from the EEC and widely viewed as insignificant by the United States, subsequent British governments argued over a "Europe-versus-the United States" direction for Britain's foreign policy throughout the 1970s, and attempted to endear themselves to either side depending on which Prime Minister occupied 10 Downing Street.⁵⁸

Party affiliation, at least until the 1980s, was relatively insignificant (compared with what we might assume based on twenty-first century politics) in determining one's support of an Anglo-American or Anglo-European foreign policy. Edward Heath's Conservative government in the early 1970s attempted to move Britain towards Europe, while the subsequent Labour governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan "were concerned to repair the fences which they saw Heath as having damaged" with the United States.⁵⁹ Watt believes that Heath understood "the emotional importance to the Europeans of a British 'commitment' to the Community," displayed this commitment in his willingness to offend Americans in order to endear Britain to European nations.⁶⁰ Heath "snubbed Kissinger's Year of Europe in 1973 and later in the same year joined

⁵⁷ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Watt, *Introduction*, p. 13.

⁵⁹ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 94.

⁶⁰ Watt, *Introduction*, p. 13.

other European countries in refusing to allow American planes to use British bases to reinforce the Israelis in the Arab-Israeli war.”⁶¹ Watt recognizes that the issue of the Arab-Israeli war represented a real conflict of interests between Britain and the United States going back to the very creation of the Israeli state in 1948, but on most foreign policy issues Heath “merely alienated the Americans without greatly improving Britain’s relations with the Community.”⁶²

Dumbrell also believes that Heath “lacked the instinctive pro-Americanism of other British prime ministers.”⁶³ The Prime Minister believed strongly in Britain’s future as a European nation, and successfully brought Britain into the EEC in 1973 (although this had more to do with De Gaulle’s absence from the Élysée Palace than Heath’s presence at 10 Downing Street). Heath questioned the extent of US power and instituted a policy of “conscious distancing of London from Washington which he saw as necessary to ease Britain into the European Community.”⁶⁴ Heath, unlike prior and later Prime Ministers, believed Britain would benefit more from proximity to Europe than to the United States. He believed the structure of the Anglo-American relationship benefitted American interests far more than British interests. A relationship between equals in Europe would benefit Britain much more than Britain’s vastly unequal relationship with the United States. However, Dumbrell also notes that the difficulties between Britain and

⁶¹ Watt, *Introduction*, p. 13. Jerry Z. Muller, paraphrasing an editorial in *The New York Times*, described Kissinger’s goals for the Year of Europe as “a period of imaginative updating and refurbishing of the NATO alliance, capped with a new Atlantic Charter.” Unfortunately for Kissinger, Muller believed the year “has become instead the year in which Washington’s relationship with its European partners has struck an all-time low.” Z, “The Year of Europe?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (January 1974), p. 237.

⁶² Watt, *Introduction*, p. 13.

⁶³ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 91.

⁶⁴ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 88.

America during Heath's premiership can be exaggerated.⁶⁵ Heath recognized that an expanded relationship with Europe helped the British government maintain its global position and its importance to the United States.

As Foreign Secretary under Harold Wilson from 1974 to 1976, and as Prime Minister from 1976 to 1980, James Callaghan worked on restoring amicable relations between the US and Britain. Dumbrell explains that he returned to the traditional role adopted by the British Prime Minister as an "Atlantic intermediary: explainer of America's ways to Europe and of Europe's ways to America."⁶⁶ This role proved that British governments still struggled with fully placing their interests within Europe and acting less as a full participant within Europe and more as an outside force. While Britain's influence had steadily declined, Callaghan still believed he could act "as a defuser of potential US-European misunderstandings on the intertwined issues of disarmament and détente."⁶⁷ However, Dumbrell believes Callaghan's strategy was flawed. By positioning Britain as an Atlantic power instead of a European power, Callaghan risked making Britain insignificant. The Americans sought greater European influence, and thus could turn greater attention to France or West Germany instead of Britain. Additionally, Callaghan's decision to distance Britain from Europe could hurt Britain's credibility as a reliable and strong EEC member.⁶⁸

Thus, at the outset of Thatcher's premiership, the British government still had the same basic question at the foundation of its foreign policy as it had for the past twenty years: should Britain be a European or Atlantic power? However, greater

⁶⁵ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 89.

⁶⁶ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 98.

⁶⁷ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 98.

⁶⁸ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 98.

historiographical attention has been paid to Thatcher's relationship with President Reagan than on how she sought to answer this question. As a result, the relationship between President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher has dominated the study of Britain's foreign policy in the 1980s. Both leaders represented a turn toward conservative government and a "widely heralded departure from the norm of mainstream non-ideological governments and centrist politics."⁶⁹ On foreign policy, Reagan returned to an attitude of confrontation towards the USSR, both in his discourse and his actions abroad. Thatcher also clearly stood opposed to the Soviet Union, but historians differ on Thatcher's ability to maintain an independent foreign policy and to favorably influence the direction of America's foreign policy for Britain's benefit. Recent historians have studied the relationship between Reagan and Thatcher as a microcosm of the wider "special relationship" between the two countries.

In his work *Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher: A Political Marriage* (2007), Nicholas Wapshott describes a close, friendly relationship between Thatcher and Reagan. He believes that Thatcher "achieved, through her guidance based upon the vision she shared with the President, an altering of course that no British Prime Minister has managed since Winston Churchill."⁷⁰ Due to her close relationship with the President, a shared worldview, and a strong personality, Thatcher became the leader within the Anglo-American relationship. Wapshott states that in the 1980s, "it was [Thatcher] who made the demands... and it was Reagan who willingly made the concessions."⁷¹ In

⁶⁹ Joel Krieger, *Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Decline* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 15.

⁷⁰ Nicholas Wapshott, *Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher: A Political Marriage* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007), p. xii.

⁷¹ Wapshott, *Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher*, p. xii.

Reagan and Thatcher: The Difficult Relationship (2012), Richard Aldous argues in contrast that the two leaders shared common goals, but differing methods of achieving those goals. Thatcher relied on strong alliance-building and good relations between the US and Europe to achieve her foreign policy objectives while Reagan often acted unilaterally, as in the case of Grenada. Both, however, wanted their relationship to be perceived as close and “special.” Aldous says “it was a view they had consciously attempted to foster during their shared time in office,” and that “each had vigorously asserted it in their memoirs and reminiscences.”⁷² Aldous, however, believes that behind the facade of a close relationship lay “a complex, even fractious alliance.”⁷³ The Grenada affair thus represents a hiccup in an otherwise amicable relationship to Wapshott, while Aldous views the event as representative of a much more significant fracture between Reagan and Thatcher.

Historians have studied the American invasion of Grenada primarily in the context of American Cold War belligerency and regional politics.⁷⁴ The central debate on the invasion focuses on the question of whether Reagan’s actions were legal or warranted. Historians tend to doubt the legality of Reagan’s invasion of Grenada as well as the dangers posed to American students on the island by the new government. Historians also believe Reagan’s unilateral decision to invade Grenada when the opportunity arose demonstrates a larger pattern within his foreign policy. In his essay

⁷² Richard Aldous, *Reagan and Thatcher: The Difficult Relationship* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), p. 2.

⁷³ Aldous, *Reagan and Thatcher*, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Works focusing on the invasion itself and its impact on Grenada include: *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada* by Kai P. Schoenhals and Richard A. Melanson, *Grenada: Revolution and Invasion* by Anthony Payne et. al., *Grenada: An Eyewitness Account of the U.S. Invasion and the Caribbean History that Provoked It*, and *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada* by Mark Adkin.

America, Europe, and the Imperial Legacy (1986), Edward Mortimer describes Reagan's tendency "to see all world politics as a competition between [America] and the Soviet Union."⁷⁵ He argues that Reagan's actions in Nicaragua and Grenada exemplify a classic tenet of imperialism, the *horror vacui*, a "fear that any space on the global chessboard left unoccupied will be seized by a rival and then used to threaten one's existing positions."⁷⁶ Grenada thus represented a potential threat, possibly another Cuba, in the region Reagan often referred to as America's "backyard." Grenada thus presents historians with an opportunity to study the differing strategies employed by both Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in their efforts to restrain and rollback Soviet power.

As has been seen, the American invasion of Grenada has previously been examined solely within the context of American hemispheric relations or the relationship between President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher. In *The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister* (2006), John O'Sullivan provides a limited overview of how the American invasion of Grenada impacted the deployment of cruise missiles in Britain, but presents it as largely insignificant since the deployment occurred.⁷⁷ He is thus representative of many historians who believe the American invasion of Grenada warrants little study since its impacts were limited. I argue instead that the impact of the American invasion of Grenada on British foreign and domestic policy warrants greater study. As newly released documents from the Foreign Office and the Office of the Prime Minister reveal, the Grenada affair caused great concern in Whitehall. The timing of the

⁷⁵ Edward Mortimer, *America, Europe, and the Imperial Legacy*, in *The 'Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* eds. William Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 357.

⁷⁶ Edward Mortimer, *America, Europe, and the Imperial Legacy*, p. 357.

⁷⁷ John O'Sullivan, *The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister: Three Who Changed the World* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2006), p. 226.

invasion created difficulties for the scheduled deployment of cruise missiles the month following the invasion. Additionally, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were concerned over a potential shift in American foreign policy that could undermine Britain's established defensive and diplomatic strategies. While the missiles were deployed successfully, the invasion intensified anti-American sentiment and placed the western alliance in danger as left-leaning political groups increasingly saw the United States as a belligerent power on par with the Soviets. Richard Ullman's essay *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat in Historical and Present Perspective* (1986), demonstrates the uncertainty of American-European relations during the 1980s. To Ullman, "the European refrain is that American policies have heightened East-West tensions and have shattered *détente*."⁷⁸

Reagan's nuclear policies, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and his interventionist foreign policy had reinvigorated left-leaning political parties across Europe, especially in Britain and West Germany. Ullman describes these parties as "substantially more radical and left-leaning" in 1986 "than they were in 1979 and 1982, respectively, when they last governed their countries."⁷⁹ While the Labour Party in Britain had previously upheld the importance of Britain's nuclear deterrent and the relationship with the United States, it had experienced "a drastic shake-up of leadership and [reflected] the currently much more radical and anti-American orientation of [its]

⁷⁸ Richard H. Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat in Historical and Present Perspective*, in *The 'Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* eds. William Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 108.

⁷⁹ Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat*, p. 109.

activist rank-and-file members.”⁸⁰ Ullman points directly to American actions in the Third World as the reason for the shift in the British politics and public opinion. He states that:

American policies in the Third World... make it easy for Europeans to argue that in their external behavior there is no meaningful difference between the United States and the Soviet Union and that the mere condition of being a superpower will inevitably cause them to act in a similar manner: both seek hegemony. Neither will tolerate political diversity within its sphere of influence. Therefore both are undeserving of aid or comfort or political support.⁸¹

A real danger clearly existed that the relationship between the United States and Britain could be undone in part due to Reagan’s unilateral decision to invade Grenada in 1983 without consulting the British government or recognizing the untimely nature of his action as relating to cruise deployment. With public opinion already uncertain regarding the placement of American nuclear weapons on British soil, even the hint that the American President might have a tendency for rash action created immense problems for Thatcher’s planned placement of cruise missiles. Additionally, with the Labour Party calling for denuclearization, the Anglo-American alliance itself faced the possibility of extinction. Without close nuclear cooperation, there would “not be much left of the Anglo-American ‘Special Relationship.’”⁸²

While the relationship between the United States and Britain may not have been any more “special” than any other geopolitical relationship held by the two nations, it represented a key component of Britain’s entire postwar foreign policy. Margaret Thatcher’s ability to maintain the relationship and soothe over public uncertainty following the Grenada crisis ensured that Britain’s relationship with the United States

⁸⁰ Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat*, p. 109.

⁸¹ Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat*, p. 109.

⁸² Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat*, p. 112.

endured, and that Britain's work to build a strong European alliance opposed to Soviet expansion was not in vain. Whether one believes that the Anglo-American alliance represented a beneficial relationship for Britain in the postwar era or not, the Grenada affair marked a much more important moment in the history of Britain's postwar foreign policy than has previously been believed. The next chapter will examine the current state of Anglo-American relations at the time of the Grenada affair as well as the series of events that occurred in Grenada in the run-up to the American invasion.

II. FROM “DISTANT ISLANDS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC” TO AN ISLAND IN AMERICA’S “BACKYARD:” THE RUN-UP TO INVASION

The defense policy of the United States is based on a simple premise: The United States does not start fights. We will never be an aggressor. We maintain our strength in order to deter and defend against aggression -- to preserve freedom and peace.

- Ronald Reagan⁸³

The crisis in Grenada occurred at a low point in Anglo-American relations. The first major Anglo-American diplomatic conflict in the years before the Grenada crisis involved economic sanctions against the USSR. The Polish government had declared martial law on 13 December 1981 in response to growing Solidarity agitation for political reforms, and had established a Military Council for National Salvation. As the situation within Poland continued to deteriorate, the United States and Britain viewed the Soviets as the instigators behind the political crackdown. The possibility of Soviet intervention in the affairs of a distressed state, which had recently occurred in Afghanistan, loomed large. However, the proposed solutions to the problems revealed an important disparity in how Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher approached international diplomacy.

Thatcher primarily sought a solution to the problem in Poland without involving the Soviet Union at all. She believed that offering Poland the carrot of food relief, rescheduled debts, and a renewed aid program would produce the desired result without recourse to the stick of economic sanctions.⁸⁴ The desired result was Poland’s ability to solve its problems internally, without outside interference from the USSR or NATO. In a letter to President Reagan on 22 December, Thatcher emphasized that “the Western

⁸³ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on National Security” (speech given from Oval Office, Washington, D.C., 23 March 1983), *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

⁸⁴ Record of conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Lord Carrington, 20 December 1981. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation* (MTF hereafter), docid=122536 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

response should be both firm and coordinated.”⁸⁵ In particular, the UK feared a US-led effort to bring the matter up for debate in the UN Security Council. Never before had a resolution on the human rights within an individual country been debated within the Security Council, and the British Government feared a precedent would be set allowing “the other side” to use the same medium to pass judgment on the human rights situation in Northern Ireland and other places under British sovereignty.⁸⁶ As the level of Soviet involvement became clearer, the United States prepared a list of economic sanctions against the USSR, without reference to the UK. While calls from the US for the cancellation of Aeroflot landing rights and a cessation on negotiations for a new grain agreement sparked little debate, the demand to halt the transfer of materiel for the construction of the Soviets’ Siberian pipeline caused great concern.⁸⁷

When the US government first announced the sanctions in December 1981, the ban on pipeline materiel affected only US companies, but the President hoped that his NATO allies would also accept the sanctions and present a united front against the Soviets. The British Government doubted the willingness of European countries to accept US sanctions against the USSR, and thus felt disinclined to push for sanctions in Europe. Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary, believed that the sanctions proposed by the United States focused “more on East-West relations than on the situation in Poland,” a theme which arose again and again in Anglo-American foreign policy

⁸⁵ Letter from Margaret Thatcher to President Reagan, 22 December 1981. MTF, docid= 109294 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

⁸⁶ Telegram from Ambassador Parsons to the Foreign Office, 23 December 1981. MTF, docid=122541 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

⁸⁷ Margaret Thatcher, *Margaret Thatcher: The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), p. 253.

debates.⁸⁸ As her previous letter on 22 December had seemingly been dismissed, the Prime Minister again wrote to President Reagan expressing concern “that the unity of the Western alliance could be seriously damaged by the current differences over how to react to the repression in Poland.” The proposed sanctions were in danger of providing the Soviets with a propaganda victory, and doing “more harm to the West than to the Soviet Union.”⁸⁹ Thatcher’s irritation “was increased still further by the news that the Americans were intending to renew grain sales to the USSR on the pretext that this would drain the USSR of hard currency – but transparently because it was in the interests of American farmers to sell their grain.”⁹⁰ Reagan’s hypocrisy, as well as the economic toll cancelling the contracts would entail, caused Thatcher and her European allies to demand that the existing European contracts be allowed to go forward.

The events surrounding the Falklands War soon took precedence over the situation in Poland, but the question of sanctions resurfaced on 18 June 1982 when the United States announced the extension of the pipeline ban from only US companies to their foreign subsidiaries as well, such as the Scottish firm John Brown Engineering. The Prime Minister “harshly criticized” the US decision during a press conference with the Italian Prime Minister on 8 July, a rare example of Thatcher publically criticizing the United States.⁹¹ In addition to the decision itself, which represented a rejection of conclusions presented by British and European Governments regarding the importance of the pipeline to their economic and energy needs, the timing of the US announcement also

⁸⁸ Record of telephone conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Lord Carrington, 29 December 1981. MTF, docid=122553 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

⁸⁹ Letter from Margaret Thatcher to Ronald Reagan, 29 January 1982. MTF, docid=123178 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

⁹⁰ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 256.

⁹¹ “Pipeline ban criticized by Thatcher, *The Times*, 8 July 1982, p. 6.

irritated Thatcher. Coming just four days after the Argentinean surrender in the South Atlantic, the US pronouncement seemed to disregard the wishes of its ascendant ally, and dismiss the notion that Britain was once again a world player.

Reagan's decision to expand the sanctions just days after his "chief ally's" victory must be understood within the larger context of Anglo-American disagreement over both the Falklands War and differences in East-West strategy. Reagan believed that Britain's insistence on recapturing the Falklands opened an opportunity for a Soviet-friendly government to come to power in a defeated Argentina, thus depriving the United States of a strong anti-Communist government in South America. Britain's willingness to "trade with the enemy" and ensure European dependency on Soviet energy sources also irked President Reagan. The pipeline dispute continued until a compromise was reached allowing for a single pipeline instead of the planned double pipeline. Thatcher criticized Reagan's pipeline diplomacy in her memoirs, writing that "what I found irritating and on occasion quite unjustified was the way in which the actions the Americans preferred inflicted a good deal more pain on their allies than on themselves and, one might argue, the communists in Poland and the Soviet Union."⁹² Despite a satisfying resolution, Thatcher remembered Reagan's actions as "a lesson in how not to conduct alliance business."⁹³

The other serious disagreement in the months leading up to the Grenada crisis was the Falklands War. In April 1982, Britain faced the Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands with little American support for the first few weeks of the war. Instead of rushing to support his closest ally, Reagan relied heavily on the advice of many of his top

⁹² Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 252.

⁹³ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 256.

advisors who thought the US should remain neutral so as not to offend America's South American allies. Margaret Thatcher's political life was in jeopardy, as a failure to take back the Falklands or paying too high a price in lives and treasure to do so would surely bring down her government. Despite the danger to Thatcher's government and British prestige, Reagan revealed a startlingly low level of concern for his chief ally's political future in the early weeks of the conflict. One reason for the weak American response was disagreement within the administration on how to respond. In a telegram to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), British Ambassador to the United States Nicholas Henderson stated that "there were those who attached great importance to the preservation of US relations with Latin America; the need to give the Russians and Cubans no opportunities in this Hemisphere; the general anti-war sentiment in the aftermath of Vietnam; and the widely held view, however unreasonable, that the Falklands are a 'Colonial' problem."⁹⁴ Reagan's advisors who held these positions pushed for a mediatory role in the conflict.

Richard Aldous believes that some American diplomats, such as General Vernon Walters, inadvertently encouraged the Argentineans to strike by dismissing the possibility of any British reprisals, and by promising to assuage Britain's "wounded pride."⁹⁵ Jeane Kirkpatrick, the United States' Ambassador to the United Nations, firmly believed that the US should support its hemispheric allies, even if they were authoritarian regimes.⁹⁶ Although Argentina had endangered America's Atlantic ally, it fully supported the

⁹⁴ Telegram from Ambassador Henderson to FCO, 1 June 1982, p. 1. MTF, docid=124053 (Accessed 16 February 2014).

⁹⁵ Aldous, *The Difficult Relationship*, p. 82.

⁹⁶ Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary*, 1 November 1979. <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/dictatorships-double-standards/>.

United States in the wider East-West conflict and thus must be kept close. On the other hand, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, an “unabashed Anglophile,” offered the British immediate aid in military materiel and intelligence.⁹⁷ The disagreement over how to respond originated in the confusion over which diplomatic paradigm should be favored – the East-West or the Atlantic. At first, Reagan hesitated to send immediate aid, both militarily and diplomatically, to Britain to ensure that Thatcher’s Government survived the crisis. He later changed course, but the vacillation caused deep fissures in his own administration as well as the Anglo-American relationship.

Thatcher recognized Reagan’s difficult position, not wanting “to choose between Britain, their natural ally, and their interests in Latin America.”⁹⁸ However, Thatcher felt that the President should have agreed with Casper Weinberger, who believed that “America could not put a NATO ally and long-standing friend on the same level as Argentina.”⁹⁹ Weinberger explained his sympathetic position towards the British by stating that “we could not condone, by silence or inaction, naked aggression anywhere, certainly not in our own hemisphere and not by a corrupt military dictatorship against one of our NATO allies.”¹⁰⁰ Throughout the early days of the conflict, US Secretary of State Alexander Haig continued to press for a peaceful solution to the conflict involving a ceasefire and further negotiations to determine the question of which nation could claim

⁹⁷ Caspar Weinberger and Gretchen Roberts, *In the Arena: A Memoir of the 20th Century* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2001), p. 374. Queen Elizabeth II awarded Caspar Weinberger an honorary knighthood “in recognition of his ‘outstanding and invaluable’ contribution to military cooperation between Britain and the United States” in February 1988. Thatcher and Geoffrey Howe urged this recognition largely due to his assistance during the Falkland’s War. “Weinberger Is Made An Honorary Knight,” *The New York Times*, 2 February 1988.

⁹⁸ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 188.

⁹⁹ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 188.

¹⁰⁰ Weinberger and Roberts, *In the Arena*, p. 375.

sovereignty over the Falklands. Haig traveled from Washington to Buenos Aires to London constantly in his herculean efforts to avert further armed conflict. These efforts often annoyed Thatcher, who believed that the US should stop hesitating and come down on the side of its closest ally. In a phone call with Haig on 14 April, Thatcher sternly rejected the wording of a statement to be put out by the Secretary of State claiming that “Britain’s use of the US facilities on Ascension Island had been restricted” due to the mediating role adopted by the US government.¹⁰¹ In addition to reminding Haig that Ascension Island belonged to the United Kingdom and the British navy had full access to its facilities, Thatcher also relayed the House of Commons’ disapproval of the United States positioning itself squarely between a dictator and a democracy.¹⁰²

President Reagan, meanwhile, continued to push for a non-military solution to the problem. This desire was not the result of a sudden aversion to bloodshed, but a product of Reagan’s profound fear of Communism’s spread into the Western Hemisphere. In his diary on 14 April, responding to the same press story as Haig had when he formulated his statement regarding Ascension Island, Reagan stated: “In what I think is a most irresponsible act... they [the press] have charged that we are lending aid to Britain’s Navy in the Falklands dispute.”¹⁰³ His anger at being accused of helping his closest ally

¹⁰¹ Telephone call between Margaret Thatcher and Al Haig, 14 April 1982. MTF, docid=121989 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

¹⁰² While Ambassador Henderson believed that America’s eventual support came in part due to the efforts of Al Haig, he also stated that “Haig has I realizes and extremely disconcerting tendency to shift his position from day to day. He is hyperactive and anxious to get into the act and ever ready to come up with some plan. The contradictions we get in his thinking are also a function of his concern to fonfide (sic) in us at every stage, even when his ideas are half-formed.” Telegram from Ambassador Henderson to FCO, 1 June 1982, p. 2. MTF, docid=124053 (Accessed 16 February 2014).

¹⁰³ Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries* ed. Douglas Brinkley (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), p. 79. Reagan was misinformed on the level of US support being

clearly demonstrates that personal politics were subservient to regional and global politics during the Falkland's War.

On 30 April, Thatcher received her desired cooperation as “the United States now came down clearly on our side.”¹⁰⁴ President Reagan condemned the Argentinean aggression and promised to assist the UK with military materiel. Weinberger immediately “directed the Defense Department to expedite all existing requests from the United Kingdom for military support,” and ensured “that all new British requests were to have first priority.”¹⁰⁵ The support had come, but the time and energy required to gain this assistance from such a supposedly close ally left Thatcher troubled. Ambassador Henderson summarized the efforts to gain US support by stating that “it is I think important to bear in mind that US assistance should not be taken for granted; that it required constant working on the US administration, congress and public opinion to keep them in the right position; and that its value to us is very great.”¹⁰⁶

given to the UK. Sidewinder missiles and their guidance systems were being supplied at Ascension Island on the order of Weinberger.

¹⁰⁴ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 212.

¹⁰⁵ Weinberger and Roberts, *In the Arena*, p. 375. Weinberger admired Thatcher greatly. He believed that “the decisive factor in Britain’s victory was Mrs. Thatcher’s firm and immediate decision to retake the islands, despite the impressive military and other advice she received that such an action could not succeed.” p. 374. On the impact of American aid, Weinberger believed that “our material assistance was crucial, but it certainly could not have been if the British forces had not enjoyed Mrs. Thatcher’s staunch leadership.” p. 375.

¹⁰⁶ Telegram from Ambassador Henderson to FCO, 1 June 1982, p. 2. MTF, docid=124053 (Accessed 16 February 2014). US support was extraordinarily valuable to the British. Henderson listed the following material supplies: “the latest air to air side-winder missiles urgently required for use by the Harriers, the Vulcan Phalanx anti-missile gun system for HMS *Illustrious*, 4700 tons of airstrip matting for Port Stanley Airport once it has been recaptured, conversion of the SS *Stena Inspector* for use as a repair ship in the South Atlantic, Shrike missiles for use by the Vulcans, helicopter engines, submarine detection devices for use by the Sea King helicopters, temporary accommodation on a large scale for Ascension Island for our

As will be seen again in the Grenada crisis, the Soviet Union was a greater enemy in Reagan's estimation than Britain was an ally. Reagan was willing to upset his British allies in order to keep a friendly, anti-Communist government in charge of an important regional country. He made this choice clear to Margaret Thatcher in a heated conversation on 31 May when he stated his fear "about what happens if the present government, as bad as it's been in this whole affair, if it falls and is replaced as it would be by the leftist Peronists."¹⁰⁷ Margaret Thatcher, surely struggling to find any sympathy for the government in Argentina, refused to end military operations without Argentinean surrender and withdrawal. Reagan had pledged his public support, but his conversation with Thatcher revealed that he continued to privately push the Prime Minister to compromise with the Argentineans long after his public declaration of support.

Toward the end of the conflict in the South Atlantic, President Reagan visited the United Kingdom and addressed an assembly of Members of Parliament in the Royal Gallery at Westminster. Al Haig described the general European opinion of Reagan at the time as a western cowboy, ready to turn the Cold War hot.¹⁰⁸ In his speech he sought to achieve "the twin goals of persuading the people of Europe that he was committed to peace and that his defense buildup was a necessary pre-condition for being able to negotiate with the Russians."¹⁰⁹ Reagan believed that in order to accomplish the goal of "reducing the risk of war by reducing the means of waging war on both sides," there must

forces, Stinger ground to air missiles (already used successfully against Argentine aircraft), as well as the usual array of weapons and ammunitions. pgs. 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ White House record of telephone conversation, 31 May 1982. MTF, docid=114114 (Accessed 28 September 2013).

¹⁰⁸ Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, *Reagan at Westminster: Foreshadowing the End of the Cold War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), p. 61.

¹⁰⁹ Rowland and Jones, *Reagan at Westminster*, p. 59.

first be equality in nuclear deployment.¹¹⁰ The West could only negotiate from a position of strength. While his defense of INF deployment provided support for Reagan and Thatcher's shared goals, he gave small attention to Thatcher's hugely important endeavor over the Falklands. Well into his speech he stated that:

On distant islands in the South Atlantic young men are fighting for Britain. And, yes, voices have been raised protesting their sacrifice for lumps of rock and earth so far away. But those young men aren't fighting for mere real estate. They fight for a cause— for the belief that armed aggression must not be allowed to succeed, and the people must participate in the decisions of government... the decisions of government under the rule of law.¹¹¹

Reagan clearly could have provided a more vehement defense of Britain's war effort, but he placed the British effort within the larger context of East-West relations and the clash of ideologies.

Following Reagan's Westminster address, Prime Minister Thatcher hosted the President at 10 Downing Street for lunch and gave a speech in his honor, thanking the President and Secretary of State Haig for their strong support of Britain's war effort despite the "considerable cost to American interests." Thatcher also thanked the President for his efforts to build European unity on defense issues, acknowledging that "you recognized how central your allies were to America's interests and vice versa – that no country, however strong, can remain an island in the modern world." She concluded her speech with an emphasis on the Anglo-American alliance and hailed "our ability to discuss problems of common interests... to discuss them freely and candidly, not

¹¹⁰ Rowland and Jones, *Reagan at Westminster*, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Rowland and Jones, *Reagan at Westminster*, p. 7.

necessarily always agreeing, but giving and taking advice as family friends, without exciting anxiety or envy.”¹¹²

However, just days before Reagan’s visit to London, a particularly embarrassing episode in Anglo-American relations occurred at the United Nations. As the *Times* reported on 5 June 1982, “The United States joined Britain last night in blocking a draft resolution in the Security Council for a ceasefire in the Falklands conflict but later admitted that its veto should have been an abstention.”¹¹³ As the UK delegation to the UN described in a telegraph to the FCO, “after the vote, Mrs. Kirkpatrick astonishingly stated that she had been asked by her government to say that if it were possible to change a vote once cast, the United States would like to change its vote from a veto to an abstention.”¹¹⁴ While the US had voted with the UK, Kirkpatrick’s statement following the vote nullified the argument that Britain was not alone on the Security Council in rejecting a cease-fire. Britain had been abandoned by the United States and “there was no doubt that Argentina would use the episode to its full advantage in its propaganda war against the British Government.”¹¹⁵ Clearly President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher shared common goals and ideologies, but as the difficulties that arose during the Falklands crisis and the Grenada affair reveal, both American action and inaction caused a great deal of anxiety for Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher’s speech honoring President

¹¹² Speech by Margaret Thatcher at 10 Downing Street, 8 June 1982, p. 8. MTF docid=124391 (Accessed 16 February 2014).

¹¹³ Zoriana Pysariwsky, “Blow for Britain at UN,” *The Times*, 5 June 1982, p. 1. Britain opposed the draft resolution because it “failed to link a ceasefire in the South Atlantic explicitly to the withdrawal of Argentine forces from the Falklands within a fixed time limit.” p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Telegram from UK delegation to the UN to the FCO, 4 June 1982, p. 1. MTF docid=124098 (Accessed 17 February 2014).

¹¹⁵ Zoriana Pysariwsky, “Blow for Britain at UN,” *The Times*, 5 June 1982, p. 1.

Reagan reflected her hopes for what the Anglo-American relationship could be, rather than how it actually functioned in reality.

Following the British victory in the Falklands War, Margaret Thatcher's popularity in Britain soared. Thatcher felt she had restored Britain's place in the world as well as its self-confidence as a nation. She proudly stated that "everywhere I went after the war, Britain's name meant something more than it had."¹¹⁶ Thatcher had ensured the assistance of the United States despite the rifts within the Reagan administration on how to respond to the Falklands crisis. The Conservative Party won a landslide electoral victory on 9 June 1983, as Thatcher convinced a majority of the British public to support the pillar of her defense initiative, the placement of INF in the UK and Western Europe. However, events transpiring in a small nation of the British Commonwealth in the Caribbean were to cause Thatcher a great deal of personal and political difficulties in this regard.

Britain's relationship with Grenada began in 1763 when the island was acquired from France as a part of the Treaty of Paris ending the Seven Years War. The island quickly attracted British planters who focused the island's production on sugar. The incessant abuse of slave labor ensured that Grenada became Britain's second most valuable colony in the West Indies after Jamaica.¹¹⁷ The British and French continued to struggle for mastery over the island, and a French-supported slave revolt, led by Grenadian native Julien Fedon, almost succeeded in driving the British from the island in

¹¹⁶ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 173.

¹¹⁷ Kai P. Schoenhals and Richard A. Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada: The New Jewel Movements, the United States, and the Caribbean* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985), p. 3.

1795. Fedon died during the unsuccessful revolt, but remained a national hero long after death, especially following the rise of the People's Revolutionary Government in 1979.¹¹⁸

Grenada's importance to the British Empire waned with the introduction of free trade principles to Britain's sugar market in the early 1800s. The loss of tariff protections caused Grenada's sugar plantations to fail as cheaper Brazilian and Cuban sugar drove the Grenadians from the market, resulting in the abandonment of forty-seven sugar estates on Grenada by 1856.¹¹⁹ British plantation owners fled the economic doldrums of Grenada for more secure sources of revenue elsewhere. However, this economic setback combined with the abolition of slavery in 1834 provided cheap farmland for newly-freed slaves. Unlike their previous masters, these Grenadians were content with subsistence farming as long as they were free. Thus a strong feeling of independence and self-worth permeated Grenadian society, and demonstrated itself in strong and continuous calls for self-government until Britain granted Grenada independence in 1974.¹²⁰

The leader of Grenada's independence movement from the 1950s onwards was Eric Gairy. Much of Grenada's population still depended on plantation work, but the British colonial authorities kept these unskilled workers from unionizing and agitating for higher wages and better working conditions. Low wages and a lack of representation resulted in great unrest among Grenada's rural poor. Eric Gairy organized peasants and unskilled workers into two trade unions, the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers Union and the Grenada United Labor Party (GULP). The British colonial authorities and the plantation owners refused to recognize these trade unions, and as a result, Gairy led

¹¹⁸ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, p. 6-8.

impoverished workers from cocoa and nutmeg plantations into St. George's, Grenada's capital, to call a strike and demand recognition on 19 February 1951.¹²¹ The strike brought about a significant rise in wages, as well as the emergence of the trade unions as political players. Gairy used the political arm of the GULP to gain control of the Legislative Council in the 1951 election, the first to be conducted under conditions of universal suffrage.¹²² Gairy continued to lead the Legislative Council for most of the years leading up to 1974. On 7 February 1974, Gairy led Grenada into complete independence from Britain, but ensured that Grenada remained a member of the British Commonwealth.

Gairy's regime faced criticism on several fronts. His regime was corrupt and repressed opposition through brutal retribution from the secret police, the "Mongoose Gang." Gairy "was diverting government funds to his private ventures... while the public sector of the economy was virtually starved during the last twelve years of his reign."¹²³ Additionally, "the prime minister, who believed in witchcraft, UFO's, and dreams, viewed any kind of education as a potential threat to his corrupt and bizarre rule."¹²⁴ Gairy's repressive and authoritarian regime inspired large levels of opposition, which eventually coalesced into the New Jewel Movement (NJM) in 1973.

A British-trained lawyer named Maurice Bishop, heavily influenced by the Black Power movement, led the new party. Under Bishop's leadership, the NJM expanded its core principles of "racial and national pride, Rastafarianism, 'popular power' and

¹²¹ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, p. 14-15.

¹²² Anthony Payne, Paul Sutton and Tony Thorndike, *Grenada: Revolution and Invasion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), pgs. 5-6.

¹²³ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, p. 19.

¹²⁴ Schoenhals and Melanson, *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, p. 19.

‘participatory democracy,’” to include elements of socialist and Marxist theory.¹²⁵ Terrible economic conditions, limited individual freedoms, and the constant threat of terrorization at the hands of the “Mongooses” led many lower and middle class Grenadians to support the NJM. The NJM decided that “parliamentary democracy in a deeply corrupt political system could not defeat Gairy and that force was the only answer.”¹²⁶ An opportunity to overthrow the Gairy regime arose on 13 March 1979 while Prime Minister Gairy was at the UN calling for the creation of “a UN agency to investigate cosmic phenomena” and UFOs.¹²⁷ Under the direction of Bishop, Hudson Austin, and Bernard Coard, the NJM overthrew Gairy’s regime and established the People’s Revolutionary Government (PRG).

Both Washington D.C. and London demonstrated a distinct disinterest in the Grenadian revolution of 1979. During the Cabinet Meeting following the coup, James Callaghan’s Labour government stated that “it was clearly not our policy to get involved in the internal affairs of other members of the Commonwealth.” The Cabinet decided that “we should do everything possible to avoid becoming entangled in arguments over Grenada,” and ensured that “there was no intention to intervene in Grenada.”¹²⁸ President Carter’s administration responded in a similar manner to the British. Brian Meeks points to several reasons for the low level of interest shown by President Carter’s administration. Meeks believes that “the English-speaking islands of the Eastern Caribbean were still extricating themselves from British colonialism and had therefore

¹²⁵ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 11.

¹²⁶ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 16.

¹²⁷ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 15.

¹²⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 15 March 1979, CAB/128/65/12. TNA.

not been fully incorporated into the American geopolitical picture.”¹²⁹ Additionally, the human rights violations of the Gairy regime surely soured Carter’s feelings towards the overthrown government. Carter’s administration thus recognized Bishop’s new government within ten days of the revolution.¹³⁰ Carter’s lack of interest in Grenada’s revolution as well as his previously weak foreign policy resulted in the creation of a “permissive world context” in which the Grenadian revolution could succeed without worry of US interference.¹³¹

However, the Carter administration feared the fostering of close ties between Cuba and Grenada following the revolution, but enraged the PRG by failing to send bilateral assistance to Grenada. American fears increased after “a Cuban ship... pulled into St. George’s harbor and begun unloading crates that the U.S. government [believed] were arms and ammunition.”¹³² However, the Carter administration believed that “economic and social instability” represented a greater threat to the Caribbean than any Cuban military assistance. Carter stated that “we will increase our economic assistance to alleviate the unmet economic and human needs in the Caribbean region and further ensure the ability of troubled peoples to resist social turmoil and possible communist

¹²⁹ Brian Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions and Revolutionary Theory: An Assessment of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), p. 154.

¹³⁰ Karen DeYoung, “Grenada Coup Wins Cautious Acceptance,” *Washington Post*, 24 March 1979, A18.

¹³¹ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 155. Meeks believes the Revolution occurred at the best possible time for Grenada. The “leftward-moving” Manley government in Jamaica quickly recognized the new government in Grenada, and the United States was distracted by the ongoing civil war in Nicaragua.

¹³² Karen DeYoung, “U.S. vs. Cuba On Caribbean Isle of Grenada,” *Washington Post*, 26 April 1979, A27.

domination.”¹³³ While Carter looked to prevent further socialist revolutions in the Caribbean through economic assistance, President Reagan sought to reclaim lost ground whenever possible. The Grenadian Revolution thus played a pivotal role “in bringing Carter’s foreign policy into question and in returning the US to a more traditional hegemonic policy.”¹³⁴

President Reagan understood foreign policy, and thus the situation in Grenada, much differently than Carter. Robert Pastor believes that “the Reagan administration viewed the problems of the Caribbean Basin strictly in terms of the East-West struggle, and therefore U.S. policy toward Grenada was important for what it told the world about U.S. determination to confront communism.”¹³⁵ Pastor contrasts the views of Reagan and Carter nicely by stating that “whereas the Carter administration viewed Grenada as a small, radical problem in the Eastern Caribbean, the Reagan administration approached Grenada as a small object in a larger East-West struggle.”¹³⁶

Reagan blamed Carter for allowing the revolutionary government to take hold in Grenada, and revealed his keen interest in the island during a speech he gave on 10 March 1983 to the National Association of Manufacturers. He highlighted the danger radical governments posed to US trade via the Panama Canal and other sea lanes, but also focused on the threat to America’s national security. While he focused his speech on US

¹³³ John M. Goshko, “Caribbean Threat: Instability,” *Washington Post*, 6 October 1979, A1.

¹³⁴ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 155.

¹³⁵ Robert Pastor, “The U.S. and the Grenada Revolution,” in *A Revolution Aborted: The Lessons of Grenada* ed. Jorge Heine (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), p. 206.

¹³⁶ Pastor, “The U.S. and the Grenada Revolution,” p. 209.

efforts in El Salvador, he mentioned several other “governments seizing power... with ideological and military ties to the Soviet Union,” including Grenada.¹³⁷ He stated that:

Grenada, that tiny little island -- with Cuba at the west end of the Caribbean, Grenada at the east end -- that tiny little island is building now, or having built for it, on its soil and shores, a naval base, a superior air base, storage bases and facilities for the storage of munitions, barracks, and training grounds for the military. I'm sure all of that is simply to encourage the export of nutmeg. People who make these arguments haven't taken a good look at a map lately or followed the extraordinary buildup of Soviet and Cuban military power in the region or read the Soviets' discussions about why the region is important to them and how they intend to use it. It isn't nutmeg that's at stake in the Caribbean and Central America; it is the United States national security.¹³⁸

Reagan returned to Grenada's new runway construction during his “Star Wars” speech on 23 March 1983. Reagan outlined several defense initiatives to the nation, including the planned deployment of cruise missiles in Britain and Western Europe, as necessary to get the Soviet Union to the negotiating table. Reagan declared that “we will begin [cruise] deployment late this year. At the same time, however, we're willing to cancel our program if the Soviets will dismantle theirs. This is what we've called a zero-zero plan. The Soviets are now at the negotiating table -- and I think it's fair to say that without our planned deployments, they wouldn't be there.”¹³⁹ Revealing the proximity of the Soviet threat, Reagan also showed several photographs highlighting Soviet activity in Central America and the Caribbean. The fourth photograph he held up revealed the ongoing construction of the Grenadian airfield. Reagan warned that:

¹³⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Address on Central America and El Salvador,” (speech given at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers, Washington, D.C., 10 March 1983) *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

¹³⁸ Reagan, “Address on Central America,” 10 March 1983, *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

¹³⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on National Security” (speech given from Oval Office, Washington, D.C., 23 March 1983), *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

On the small island of Grenada, at the southern end of the Caribbean chain, the Cubans, with Soviet financing and backing, are in the process of building an airfield with a 10,000-foot runway. Grenada doesn't even have an air force. Who is it intended for? The Caribbean is a very important passageway for our international commerce and military lines of communication. More than half of all American oil imports now pass through the Caribbean. The rapid buildup of Grenada's military potential is unrelated to any conceivable threat to this island country of under 110,000 people and totally at odds with the pattern of other eastern Caribbean States, most of which are unarmed. The Soviet-Cuban militarization of Grenada, in short, can only be seen as power projection into the region.¹⁴⁰

President Reagan thus clearly believed that Grenada represented a key piece in the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Bishop and the NJM sought to gain support within the United States, and “one important element of the New Jewel strategy was an attempt to draw the Reagan administration into open controversy over Grenada, as a means of polarizing American opinion and generating support for the New Jewel Regime among U.S. liberals.”¹⁴¹ The Grenadians had three objectives in their public relations push in America: “To mobilize public opinion (including in Congress) in order to restrain the U.S. Government from attacking Grenada militarily; To win long-term contacts and sympathy for Grenada, hence turning attacks to our advantage; To solicit assistance: paper, tape recorders, typewriters, etc.”¹⁴² Reagan’s speech thus presented an opportunity for Bishop and his regime to highlight the danger of Reagan’s rhetoric and American imperialism to Grenada’s government. The NJM conducted an extensive media outreach throughout

¹⁴⁰ Reagan, “Address to the Nation on National Security,” 23 March 1983, *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

¹⁴¹ Paul Seabury and Walter A. McDougall eds., *The Grenada Papers* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1984), p. 151.

¹⁴² “Interim Report on North American Resistance Movement,” 29 March 1983, in *The Grenada Papers*, eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 156.

1983 in order to “counter attack President Reagan’s verbal attack on Grenada.”¹⁴³ The NJM used radio interviews with urban stations as well as appearances with members of the Congressional Black Caucus. The NJM ultimately sought “a broad and continuous propaganda campaign that always keeps our revolution in the minds of North America.”¹⁴⁴

Maurice Bishop and the PRG believed that they could resist American efforts to impose hegemony over Grenada. Bishop successfully attracted western capital as “the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had given their ringing endorsement to the policies followed by the PRG in the economic arena.”¹⁴⁵ Brian Meeks believes that “flawed as it was, the Grenadian revolution, as Maurice Bishop’s successful 1983 trip to the US showed, was becoming a dangerous model of an alternative approach to development and, more, of successful resistance to US hegemony in what is usually considered in Washington a US lake.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, to Reagan and his foreign policy objectives, “the success or failure of Grenada lay to a degree at the cutting-edge of the struggle against communism.”¹⁴⁷

While Bishop and the PRG attempted to present an image of “genial accommodation with the United States,” documents captured following the invasion of Grenada reveal “a profoundly orthodox Marxist-Leninist leader.”¹⁴⁸ Throughout his

¹⁴³ Ian Jacobs, “Interim Report on North America from March 23-April 21, 1983,” 27 April 1983, in *The Grenada Papers*, eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 162.

¹⁴⁴ Jacobs, “Interim Report on North America,” 27 April 1983, in *The Grenada Papers*, eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 170.

¹⁴⁵ Jorge Heine, “Introduction: A Revolution Aborted,” in *A Revolution Aborted: The Lessons of Grenada* ed. Jorge Heine, p. 17.

¹⁴⁶ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁷ Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁸ Seabury and McDougall eds., *The Grenada Papers*, p. 6.

leadership of the PRG, Bishop “was devising long-term strategies for full socialization of the Grenadian economy and its coordination with the ‘Socialist’ economic world.”¹⁴⁹

Bishop explained the PRG’s economic policies during his “Line of March” speech on 13 September 1982. He sought to explain “the economic essence in the non-capitalist path of economic development, or more precisely the path of socialist orientation.”¹⁵⁰ This

socialist orientation of the economy relied on the dominance of the public (state) sector.

Bishop stated that “we must assume total control of all financial institutions... all foreign trade... all Public Utilities... all aspects of infrastructure.”¹⁵¹ In order to accomplish

these goals Bishop believed that the government “must develop central planning mechanisms for the economy and the society as a whole.”¹⁵² Bishop understood that in

order to achieve a strong state-run economy, Grenada must first develop its economy

along capitalist principles. He declared that “simultaneously we will be nurturing the

shoots of capitalism and the shoots of socialism and the question is which one becomes

predominant and how you control and ensure that socialism is what comes out and not

capitalism.”¹⁵³ As will be seen, Bishop’s fellow members of the PRG eventually decided

that Bishop’s capitalistic economic policies had betrayed the revolution and failed to

ensure socialism’s eventual success on Grenada.

¹⁴⁹ Seabury and McDougall eds., *The Grenada Papers*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Maurice Bishop, “Line of March for the Party” (Speech presented to the General Meeting of the party, 13 September 1983) in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 74.

¹⁵¹ Bishop, “Line of March,” in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, pgs. 75-76.

¹⁵² Bishop, “Line of March,” in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 76.

¹⁵³ Bishop, “Line of March,” in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 76.

Bishop, like Gairy before him, also brutalized his people. In his “Line of March” speech, Bishop outlined his understanding of both the state and governance. Bishop declared that “the state came about in the first case; so that there would be a dictatorship and a minority, in the case of the capitalist state, would crush and oppress the majority. In the case of the Socialist State, the majority will crush, oppress and repress the recalcitrant (sic) minority.”¹⁵⁴ Bishop described the legislative process under the PRG as an oligarchic process with the Cabinet’s approval, Bishop’s signature, and then “that is what everybody in the country – like it or don’t like it – has to follow.”¹⁵⁵ For those who “don’t like it,” Bishop stated that “you get detained when I sign an order after discussing it with the National Security Committee of the Part or with a higher Party body. Once I sign it – like it or don’t like it – its up the hill for them.”¹⁵⁶

Russell Budhlall outlined the treatment experienced by both common and political prisoners sent “up the hill” in a complaint to his lawyer on 30 September 1980. He claimed that “I was beaten on my abdomen and I received punch, kick and they beat me with Gun butt. They had an instrument burning me with. They burn me all different parts of my body and then push it up through my bottom... I receive a kick on my face and I bleed through my nostrils.”¹⁵⁷ Bishop clearly operated a dictatorial and repressive regime, which in part explains the exuberant response the majority of Grenadians

¹⁵⁴ Bishop, “Line of March,” in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 72.

¹⁵⁵ Bishop, “Line of March,” in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ Bishop, “Line of March,” in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 71.

¹⁵⁷ Russell Budhlall, “Complaint of Russell Budhlall,” 30 September 1980, in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, p. 105.

expressed following the American invasion in October 1983, although other Grenadians approved the invasion for bringing justice to Bishop's executioners.

While Bishop operated a Marxist-Leninist government, several fellow members of the PRG, led by Bernard Coard, attacked Bishop for abandoning the revolution and focusing too much on "petit bourgeois" interests. Bishop wanted to build Grenada's economy and industrial base through capitalism (thus the appeals to the World Bank and IMF), but with the understanding that the state would eventually nationalize all industries. He therefore sought to walk a "tight rope" by developing the economy through capitalistic means and society through socialism.¹⁵⁸ Bernard and Phyllis Coard and several other members of the PRG, believed this "tight rope" development betrayed the PRG's Marxist foundation and thus overthrew Bishop on 13 October 1983. Tension "mixed with fear and foreboding" permeated the public's attitude following Bishop's house arrest.¹⁵⁹ Despite his brutal rule, Bishop remained a popular figure for some Grenadians. On 19 October, a large crowd marched to Bishop's house and freed him. Bishop and the crowd proceeded to Fort Rupert in an effort to address the nation via the army transmitter. Shortly thereafter, a contingent of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) arrived at Fort Rupert and fired into the crowd of Bishop's supporters, killing scores and dispersing the mob. Bishop was found by the PRA and executed.¹⁶⁰

The execution of Maurice Bishop led to the dissolution of the PRG and the establishment of the Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) under the direction of General Austin. The RMC enforced a four-day-long curfew in which government troops

¹⁵⁸ Bishop, "Line of March," in *The Grenada Papers* eds. Seabury and McDougall, pgs. 76-77.

¹⁵⁹ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 131.

¹⁶⁰ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 136.

shot anyone in public on sight.¹⁶¹ It also sought to assuage both its allies and critics in the international community. The Cuban government had condemned Bishop's execution and stated that "no doctrine, no principle, no opinion calling itself revolutionary, and no internal split can justify such atrocious acts as the physical elimination of Bishop and the prominent group of honest and dignified leaders who died yesterday."¹⁶² General Austin also visited the American students in the medical school at St. George's University and "gave his assurance that they would not be harmed and that anyone who wanted to leave could do so."¹⁶³ On 19 October the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRAF) issued a statement to the international community:

The lives and property of all foreign citizens are fully protected and guaranteed. The Revolutionary military Council hereby declares that any attempt at foreign aggression will be resisted by the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces to the last man and calls upon all countries to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Grenada and to strictly adhere to the international legal principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.¹⁶⁴

Some semblance of normalcy had returned to the island by 25 October, until the sound of American helicopters began to reverberate throughout the island.

¹⁶¹ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 137.

¹⁶² Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 138.

¹⁶³ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 142.

¹⁶⁴ Telegraph from Bridgetown to FCO, 20 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

III. A “CONSCIOUS CONCEALMENT OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS:” PRESIDENT REAGAN’S DECISION TO INVADE GRENADA

Democracies do not, with very few exceptions, start wars.
- Margaret Thatcher¹⁶⁵

President Reagan decided to invade Grenada in the early hours of 22 October, following the request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) that America lead an invasion to stabilize the region. A Marine task force en route to Lebanon to replace the Marines stationed there had already been diverted to the Caribbean to join the USS *Independence* carrier group on 20 October. Secretary of State Shultz and several other cabinet members believed that “conditions were ripe... for hostage taking” in Grenada.¹⁶⁶ The Iranian hostage crisis still dominated the memory of many Americans, especially those in the President’s cabinet who recognized the crisis’ devastating impact on Carter’s presidency. Such a situation could not arise again. Thus the US quickly accepted the decision of the OECS “to intervene by force in Grenada if the United States would assist them.”¹⁶⁷

However, the Americans encouraged the OECS to request assistance and had been in contact with the OECS prior to the meeting on 21 October when the decision to seek US military assistance was made. Gary Williams notes that “according to some sources the US ambassador to Barbados Milan Bish and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles Gillespie were present at the meeting to

¹⁶⁵ Margaret Thatcher, *Margaret Thatcher: The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), p. 238.

¹⁶⁶ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner’s, 1993), p. 328.

¹⁶⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 328.

encourage the OECS to make the request.”¹⁶⁸ While this evidence would seem to support claims made both today and in 1983 that the OECS acted as a puppet of the US government, both Gary Williams and Patsy Lewis believe the OECS acted in its own self-interest. Grenada represented a confluence of both American and OECS interests. The OECS provided President Reagan with the legal justification to invade Grenada, and the United States offered the OECS the military strength necessary to eliminate a potential national security threat in its infancy.¹⁶⁹ Thus, according to Williams, the OECS’ leaders played an important role in ensuring US intervention in Grenada. He states that while “the United States did not act solely because of the OECS request it was the OECS’ willingness to act that facilitated a military solution.”¹⁷⁰

Reagan described the fear felt by the OECS countries that “unless they were stopped... it was just a matter of time before the Grenadians and Castro moved on *their* countries.”¹⁷¹ The OECS stated that:

Member Governments are also greatly concerned that the extensive military build up in Grenada over the last few years had created a situation of disproportionate military strength between Grenada and other OECS countries. This military might in the hands of the present group posed a serious threat to the security of the OECS countries and other neighboring States. Member Governments considered it of the utmost urgency that immediate steps should be taken to remove this threat.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Gary Williams, “The Tail that Wagged the Dog: The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States’ Role in the 1983 Intervention in Grenada,” *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, No. 61 (December 1996), p. 95.

¹⁶⁹ Patsy Lewis, “Revisiting the Grenada Invasion: The OECS’ Role, and its Impact on Regional and International Politics,” *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (September 1999), p. 88.

¹⁷⁰ Williams, “The Tail that Wagged the Dog,” p. 96.

¹⁷¹ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 450.

¹⁷² Secretariat of the OECS, “Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States: Statement on the Grenada Situation of 25 October, 1983,” in *The Grenada Intervention: Analysis and Documentation*, by William C. Gilmore (New York: Facts on File Inc, 1984), p. 97.

As a result of this fear, Reagan believed that “we couldn’t say no to those six small countries who had asked us for help. We’d have no credibility or standing in the Americas if we did. If it ever became known... that we had turned them down, few of our friends around the world would trust us completely as an ally again.”¹⁷³ While the OECS treaty allowed the heads of government to make “arrangements for collective security against external aggression” under Article 8, it made no mention of how the OECS could respond to internal threats, such as the coup in Grenada.¹⁷⁴ The OECS believed Grenada had the potential to become an external threat to the other OECS members, thus their decision represented a preemptive strike of sorts. However, not all countries believed the situation in Grenada warranted an armed response, Britain included.

Following the execution of Bishop by the PRAF, the British government responded cautiously. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Howe ordered the deployment of HMS *Antrim* to Grenada to safeguard British citizens if the situation on the island deteriorated, but both were “anxious that we should not be seen to be over-reacting.”¹⁷⁵ During the Cabinet meeting on October 22, the coup in Grenada occupied little attention. Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Howe viewed Coard’s assumption of power as a *fait accompli* and noted that “the new regime was likely to be even more Marxist/Leninist than its predecessor.”¹⁷⁶ Howe later stated that the British government “had learned to refrain from post-imperial intervention in the affairs of several newborn

¹⁷³ Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 451.

¹⁷⁴ “Treaty Establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (Extracts) of 18 June 1981,” in *The Grenada Intervention*, by Gilmore, p. 81.

¹⁷⁵ Memo from duty clerk to Prime Minister, 22 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁷⁶ Cabinet Conclusions, 20 October 1983, p. 2: CAB 128/76/30. TNA.

Commonwealth states.”¹⁷⁷ The evolving political landscape in countries such as Guyana, Uganda, and Grenada was “no longer directly our business... but we remained, of course, concerned.”¹⁷⁸ While the British government sought to avoid any drastic action in Grenada (especially considering the proximity of INF deployment in the UK), Thatcher and Howe had to consider the opinions of the Caribbean Commonwealth nations.

Seven Caribbean Commonwealth nations, including Grenada, composed the membership of the OECS. These nations sought assistance from the US, not the UK, in restoring peace and democracy to Grenada. At a meeting in Barbados on 21 October 1983, the group unanimously “took the momentous decision to ask the United States to lead and organise a joint US-Commonwealth Caribbean invasion of Grenada.”¹⁷⁹ The British government received notification of the request, as they were also verbally asked to join the multi-national force, but Reagan failed to inform Thatcher of his decision to agree to the request for military intervention. Following the National Security Council meeting on the morning of 22 October, Ambassador Wright received word from US Admiral Howe that “the conclusion of the NSC meeting was that the U.S. should proceed very cautiously.”¹⁸⁰ However, the meeting’s participants had actually affirmed President Reagan’s decision to invade Grenada and “according to one anonymous participant, ‘everyone was gung-ho.’”¹⁸¹ Admiral Howe nonetheless insisted that “the Americans have made no decisions going beyond these contingency deployments,” and that “no decision had yet been made on how to respond” to the OECS request. Admiral Howe

¹⁷⁷ Geoffrey Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), p. 326.

¹⁷⁸ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 326.

¹⁷⁹ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 149.

¹⁸⁰ Ambassador Wright telegram to FCO, 22 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁸¹ Payne, Sutton, and Thorndike, *Grenada*, p. 150.

further “assured us that there would be consultation if the Americans decided to take any further steps.”¹⁸²

The British High Commissioner to Barbados Sir Giles Bullard corresponded at length with the FCO concerning decisions taken by the OECS and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) concerning Grenada. Geoffrey Howe requested his advice on several matters following the OECS’s decision to request military assistance. Howe believed that the British government “may be faced shortly with choices involving participation in or acceptance of plans for military action without other possibilities having been fully explored.”¹⁸³ He thus sought advice on the chance of a diplomatic solution succeeding in restoring constitutional government in Grenada. Bullard responded that Coard and Austin “could well undertake to hold elections and restore constitutional government, knowing that the longer [military] intervention is delayed the more difficult it will become. But from what I have heard from Coard and Austin they might not honour their undertakings.”¹⁸⁴ Additionally, the Commonwealth Caribbean nations had been deeply shocked by the execution of Maurice Bishop and were thus unlikely “to promote or go along with any attempt by a third party to promote negotiations with the military council.”¹⁸⁵ Thus no real political or diplomatic solution appeared feasible. Instead, Bullard advised the British government to allow the OECS and Caribbean Commonwealth to take the lead in deciding what should be done

¹⁸² Ambassador Wright telegram to FCO, 22 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁸³ Geoffrey Howe telegram to High Commissioner Bullard, 22 October 1983, p. 1: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁸⁴ High Commissioner Bullard telegram to Geoffrey Howe, 22 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁸⁵ High Commissioner Bullard telegram to Geoffrey Howe, 22 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

concerning Grenada. Bullard admitted his surprise at having been “asked to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of a Caribbean country,” and had “doubts as to how it will turn out, if the Americans master mind it.” However, he stated that:

People like Adams, Compton and Miss Charles (I do not know Seaga or Chamber) are commonsense politicians with considerable experience, and very far from being hawks. They are I think the best judges of how to handle the problem presented by the military coup in Grenada. If they and their CARICOM colleagues come out in favour of a multi-national force and if the US supports the idea I recommend we should give our support too or at the very least take no steps that might weaken the operation.¹⁸⁶

While Bullard supported the decision to take military action against the coup’s leaders in Grenada, the British government refused to support or oppose military actions until it received a formal, written request to join the international military force. The Prime Minister and Geoffrey Howe continued to receive conflicting messages on the likelihood of military intervention in Grenada. In his memoirs, Howe described the government’s confusion as the result of three sources of information on Grenada. The OECS had voted for military intervention “and to seek help from friendly governments, including our own,” yet “the promised formal request... never reached us.”¹⁸⁷ After the US invasion, both Howe and Thatcher insisted no formal request had been made to the British government, but British high commissioner Bullard received a formal request on 22 October as recorded by the Foreign Office: “The request to Britain was made orally but formally to our High Commissioner later that day.”¹⁸⁸ Howe and Thatcher correctly reported no reception of a written, formal request, but the British government received a formal request for assistance nonetheless.

¹⁸⁶ High Commissioner Bullard telegram to Geoffrey Howe, 22 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁸⁷ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 327.

¹⁸⁸ FCO Sitrep for Grenada, 24 October 1983, p. 3: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

The CARICOM meeting, on the other hand, had decided “in favour of sanctions rather than military action.”¹⁸⁹ Additionally, the deputy high commissioner to Barbados had visited Grenada on 23 October and reported no imminent threat to the foreign population on the island. He also reported no request from Sir Paul Scoon, the British Governor General in Grenada, “for help of any kind either to the deputy high commissioner or direct by telephone to Buckingham Palace, with which he had been in touch on the same day [23 October].”¹⁹⁰ Howe used this information from the Caribbean along with the assurances from the United States that no military decision would be made without further consultation with the British government to prepare for his remarks to the House on 24 October.

Howe steadfastly denied the likelihood of any American military action in Grenada during his appearance in the Commons on 24 October. Denis Healey, the shadow Foreign Secretary, asked, “Can the Foreign Secretary assure us that there is no question of American military intervention on the island? It could only make matters worse.”¹⁹¹ Howe stated plainly that he knew “of no such intention.” Asked repeatedly by other MPs on US intentions Howe insisted that “I have no reason to think that American military intervention is likely,” and again that “the presence of the United States naval vessels is not prompted by the consideration [military intervention] that the hon. Gentleman has in mind.”¹⁹²

However, some MPs supported military action in Grenada. Conservative MP Peter Tapsell asked Howe if he was “aware of the widespread belief in the Caribbean

¹⁸⁹ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 327.

¹⁹⁰ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 327.

¹⁹¹ Denis Healey, HC Deb 24 October 1983 vol 47 cc27-30, *Hansard*.

¹⁹² Geoffrey Howe, HC Deb 24 October 1983 vol 47 cc27-30, *Hansard*.

during the past two or three years that Grenada should be regarded as part of a Soviet game-plan, and the new airports as a jumping-off ground aimed primarily at Trinidad and Venezuela?” Tapsell and other MPs thus considered the situation in a similar way to President Reagan, and contended that the British government “should see the incident as a serious development in the global struggle for power and not just as an isolated seizure of power by a group of the military.”¹⁹³ Howe, on the other hand, believed that the situation in Grenada had not changed significantly since Prime Minister Bishop had forged close relationships with Cuba and other Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe. The Foreign Secretary also pushed back against the suggestion made by MP Russell Johnston that as the leader of the Commonwealth, the British had a responsibility to aid the Grenadians.¹⁹⁴ Howe reiterated that Grenada was an independent country and as a result “our concern and what we are prepared to do about it must be determined by recognition of that fact.”¹⁹⁵

While Howe claimed before Parliament and later in his memoirs that his testimony on 24 October before Parliament was accurate, the evidence suggests his testimony was also naïve, and potentially misleading. On 23 October, reports arrived concerning Jamaican troop transfers to Barbados.¹⁹⁶ Bullard reported the arrival of American helicopters at Barbados as well.¹⁹⁷ Additionally, Howe’s own words seem to discredit his statements in Parliament. Howe sent a telegram on 23 October at 2:50 PM, prior to his appearance in the House of Commons forty minutes later, stating that

¹⁹³ Peter Tapsell, HC Deb 24 October 1983 vol 47 cc27-30, *Hansard*.

¹⁹⁴ Russell Johnston, HC Deb 24 October 1983 vol 47 cc27-30, *Hansard*.

¹⁹⁵ Geoffrey Howe, HC Deb 24 October 1983 vol 47 cc27-30, *Hansard*.

¹⁹⁶ Telegram from FCO Kingston to FCO, 23 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁹⁷ Bullard Telegram to FCO, 23 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

“although the Americans have undertaken to consult us I am concerned at the possibility that they might be moving towards early direct intervention in Grenada.”¹⁹⁸ If Howe had such reservations prior to his Parliamentary appearance, his repeated statements casting doubt on the likelihood of US military intervention seem unfounded. His statements in Parliament could be seen as an overestimation of Britain’s ability to influence America’s foreign policy, or alternatively as an attempt to avoid an international incident that could arise from his suggestion of an impending US invasion of Grenada.

Despite his concerns that the Americans were considering imminent military action in Grenada, Howe attempted to sway American opinion. He instructed Ambassador Wright to convey to the American government his concerns. He stated that:

I and my colleagues see no grounds on which military intervention could be justified internationally unless it were required to protect lives. This does not at present seem to be the case. Furthermore there is no organisation in Grenada with which an invading force could work. Extrication could be difficult and lives would be at risk both during an operation and subsequently. Western intervention would be misrepresented in propaganda with damaging effect.¹⁹⁹

The British government instead advised the use of political and economic pressure to pressure the PRG into reforming itself. Additionally, Howe requested that the Americans not make Governor General Scoon “the focal point of any form of outside intervention. I see his role as possibly being crucial at a later stage provided that his position is not prejudiced now.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Howe Telegram to Wright, 24 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

¹⁹⁹ Howe Telegram to Wright, 24 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

²⁰⁰ Howe Telegram to Wright, 24 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

Despite British misgivings, Reagan informed Thatcher shortly before 7 PM on 24 October that “I am giving serious consideration to the OECS request.”²⁰¹ Reagan also stated that “Her Majesty’s Governor General in Grenada could be a key figure in this operation, since he is the only remaining voice of legitimacy on the island and should be the one who designates a new provisional government.” He further told Thatcher that “I welcome your thoughts on these matters. I know that you would want to be kept informed of any role the United States may decide to play in support of the island nations of the Caribbean.” As a result, he stated that he would “undertake to inform you in advance should our forces take part in the proposed collective security force, or of whatever political or diplomatic efforts we plan to pursue.” The Prime Minister, believing she had been genuinely consulted, drafted a careful reply to the President reminding him of the British government’s continued misgivings, especially from the perspective of justifying the invasion to the international community. She also expressed concern regarding the potential use of Britain’s Governor General as a focal point for a new government, which would put his life in danger and involve HMG in American intrigues.²⁰² However, the draft never reached Reagan since his message confirming America’s planned military invasion arrived just hours after his initial message “seeking advice” from Thatcher.

In his message to Margaret Thatcher at 10 PM, Reagan “informed” the Prime Minister of his proposed invasion, negating his earlier message seeking advice since Thatcher never had the chance to reply. Reagan refused to use apologetic language,

²⁰¹ President Reagan message to Margaret Thatcher, 24 October 1983 [7 PM]: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

²⁰² Margaret Thatcher draft message to President Reagan, 24 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

instead informing Thatcher that “the United Kingdom can play an important role in strengthening the new government’s position by offering political support and by providing a program of economic assistance.”²⁰³ The Prime Minister did not take well to being informed instead of consulted, and let it be known in the opening line of her reply. She stated that “I was about to reply to your earlier message inviting my thoughts when your second one arrived. I must tell you at once that the decision which you describe causes us the greatest concern.”²⁰⁴ She doubted the validity of America’s argument that it was acting to protect its citizens since American lives were not currently endangered and would only become so during the chaos of an invasion.

Thatcher also criticized the proposed US invasion on the grounds that “this action will be seen as intervention by a Western Democratic country in the internal affairs of a small independent nation, however unattractive its regime.” She revealed Britain’s greatest objection to Reagan’s proposed invasion when she asked the President “to consider this in the context of our wider East/West relations and of the fact that we will be having in the next few days to present to our Parliament and people the siting of Cruise missiles in this country.” American belligerency in Grenada, and its rejection of British consultation, would give credence to arguments that the United States could not be trusted to base its weapons in the United Kingdom. Due to the threat America’s action could have on the proposed deployment of INF, Thatcher told Reagan that “I am deeply disturbed by your latest communication. You asked for my advice. I have set it out and

²⁰³ President Reagan message to Margaret Thatcher, 24 October 1983 [10 PM]: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

²⁰⁴ Margaret Thatcher message to President Reagan, 25 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

hope that even at this late stage you will take it into account before events are irrevocable.”²⁰⁵

Shortly after sending her message, the Prime Minister phoned the President requesting further deliberation prior to any Americana action, but Reagan explained the “zero-hour” had already passed. Furthermore, he doubted the effectiveness of Thatcher’s Grenadian strategy. Reagan believed that “relying upon economic and political sanctions would provide time for Cuba and the Soviet Union to consolidate the position of the new regime.”²⁰⁶ No amount of pressure or advice from the Prime Minister could change the President’s mind. The US would invade Grenada, and the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary would face an incensed Parliament and press later in the day, seeking answers to America’s deceptive behavior towards its supposedly closest ally.

On the morning of 25 October, President Reagan addressed the nation on the American invasion of Grenada. He justified the invasion with three points:

First, and of overriding importance, to protect innocent lives, including up to a thousand Americans, whose personal safety is, of course, my paramount concern. Second, to forestall further chaos. And third, to assist in the restoration of conditions of law and order of governmental institutions to the island of Grenada, where a brutal group of leftist thugs violently seized power, killing the Prime Minister, three Cabinet members, two labor leaders, and other civilians, including children.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Margaret Thatcher message to President Reagan, 25 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

²⁰⁶ President Reagan message to Margaret Thatcher, 25 October 1983: PREM 19/1048. TNA.

²⁰⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks of the President and Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of Dominica Announcing the Deployment of United States Forces in Grenada” (speech given from Oval Office, Washington, D.C., 25 October 1983), *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

Reagan presented the speech with Eugenia Charles, the Prime Minister of Dominica, which provided further legitimacy to his claim to be responding primarily to a legal request from the OECS for military assistance.

Margaret Thatcher's response to the American invasion in Parliament and the press revolved around two objectives. As she stated:

I needed to ensure that whatever short-term difficulties we had with the United States, the long-term relationship between our two countries, on which I knew Britain's security and the free West's interests depended, would not be damaged. I was equally determined that international law should be respected and that relations between states should not be allowed to degenerate into a game of *realpolitik* played out between contesting power blocs.²⁰⁸

Thatcher thus decided to maintain a neutral position on Grenada before the public and Parliament in the immediate aftermath of America's invasion.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary faced an incredulous Parliament on 25 October as they had to report the American invasion, which just hours before had been "unlikely." The Prime Minister's usual question and answer time was interrupted to address the situation in Grenada. She gave no indication at that time of her anger at being deceived by the President. Instead she presented a balanced response to the American invasion, giving neither support nor condemnation. She explained that the US gave greater consideration to the opinions and requests of the OECS nations than to British concerns. The issue of cruise deployment also came up during the question and answer time. MP Enoch Powell attempted to draw a correlation between Grenada and the placement of cruise missiles in the UK, stating that "no undertakings that may be offered by the United States – either as to the use that it might make of missiles stationed in this country or as to the consultation that would precede such use – ought to be relied

²⁰⁸ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 326.

upon.”²⁰⁹ The Prime Minister insisted that “there is no parallel at all” between American action in Grenada and the potential use of cruise missiles without British consultation.²¹⁰

Howe also refused to condemn or support the American invasion, instead reminding the Commons that “there is room for two views on this matter.”²¹¹ Dennis Healey described Howe’s handling of the Grenada situation and his apparently misinformed testimony the previous day as giving an “impression of pitiable impotence by a British Foreign Secretary.”²¹² As will be seen in the next chapter, Healey caused Howe to quickly shift from defending the government’s handling of Grenada to defending the government’s proposed stationing of American cruise missiles in the UK. President Reagan had put the British government in an awkward position. The government had to argue that consultation would occur prior to any American decision to launch UK-based cruise missiles, while also explaining the source of the government misinformation on Grenada – a lack of American consultation.

While the Grenada affair quickly came to revolve around issues of British sovereignty and control over American-operated cruise missiles, events on the island itself were resolved quickly and positively. President Reagan invaded Grenada to remove a threat, restore democracy and good relations with surrounding countries, and protect American lives. Unlike the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, with which the American invasion often received comparison, the Americans had no intention of setting up a puppet government or establishing imperial sovereignty. Despite the questions of legality, the American public widely accepted the merits of the invasion. Secretary of

²⁰⁹ J. Enoch Powell, HC Deb 25 October 1983 vol 47 cc137-40, *Hansard*.

²¹⁰ Margaret Thatcher, HC Deb 25 October 1983 vol 47 cc137-40, *Hansard*.

²¹¹ Geoffrey Howe, HC Deb 25 October 1983 vol 47 cc137-40, *Hansard*.

²¹² Dennis Healey, HC Deb 25 October 1983 vol 47 cc137-40, *Hansard*.

State Shultz attributed this acceptance to the reaction of evacuated American medical students. He acknowledged that “we were all aware that how those students behaved and what they said to the media would greatly affect how the intervention in Grenada would be perceived in the United States.”²¹³ The first student off the plane “fell to his knees and kissed the tarmac... The TV anchorman kept trying to push the students to say that they were never in danger; it didn’t work. Suddenly I could sense the country’s emotions turn around.”²¹⁴ Shultz thus believed that the country felt “our effort in Grenada wasn’t an immoral imperialist intervention: it was an essential rescue and a job well done.”²¹⁵

In addition to the reaction of the American students, the discovery of large amounts of military hardware and hundreds of documents detailing arms negotiations with Eastern Bloc nations seemed to justify Reagan’s warning regarding Grenada’s threat to both American and OECS security.²¹⁶ Upon invading, the Americans discovered that “nearly 900 Cuban, Libyan, Soviet, North Korean, East German and Bulgarian personnel were in Grenada to assist in the transformation of the island into a major military camp.”²¹⁷ The PRA also sought “to expand their army to a total of four regular and fourteen reserve battalions by 1985,” which “would have placed as much as 15-25

²¹³ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 339.

²¹⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 339.

²¹⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 339.

²¹⁶ These documents, detailing military purchases due to arrive by 1986, recorded: “Approximately 10,000 assault and other rifles; more than 4,500 submachine guns and machine guns; more than 11.5 million rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition; 294 portable rocket launchers with more than 16,000 rockets; 84 82 mm mortars with more than 4,800 mortar shells; 12 75 mm cannon with 600 cannon shells; 15,000 hand grenades, 7,000 land mines, 60 armored personnel carriers and patrol vehicles.” *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection* (Washington: The Department of State and the Department of Defense, 1984), p. 6.

²¹⁷ Seabury and McDougall eds., *The Grenada Papers*, p. 17. The US discovered “artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, ammunition, armored personnel carriers, and rocket launchers.”

percent of the entire Grenadian population under arms.”²¹⁸ President Reagan quickly used pictures of this captured military hardware to justify the invasion. He showed pictures of several warehouses containing “weapons and ammunition stacked almost to the ceiling, enough to supply thousands of terrorists.” He went on to proclaim that “Grenada, we were told, was a friendly island paradise for tourism. Well it wasn’t. It was a Soviet-Cuban colony, being readied as a major military bastion to export terror and undermine democracy. We got there just in time.”²¹⁹ Other commentators, however, believed that “apart from anti-aircraft weapons, the arms were not all that impressive at first glance and, to some, seemed not much more than might be trawled from a Texas suburb.”²²⁰ The documented evidence of weapons stockpiles and planned purchases seems to suggest that while Grenada’s threat to the United States would only have come with the potential stationing of Soviet bombers at its newly constructed airbase, its threat to the immediate region could have been considerable.

The greatest “success” of American intervention in Grenada was the favorable response of the Grenadian people. The fighting ended quickly with limited bloodshed, and a new provisional government came to power under the leadership of the Governor General, Sir Paul Scoon, who promised and provided for early elections in 1984. The relatives of slain NJM leaders, including the mothers of Bishop and Education Minister Jacqueline Creft, welcomed the invasion. As reported in the *Times*, Alimenta Bishop stated, “I don’t know about what Maurice would have said. But we were very happy...

²¹⁸ Seabury and McDougall eds., *The Grenada Papers*, pgs. 17, 18.

²¹⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on Events in Lebanon and Grenada” (speech given from Oval Office 27 October 1983), *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*.

²²⁰ Trevor Fishlock, “Reagan wins the war and writes the history,” *The Times*, 23 November 1983, p. 5.

We didn't know what was going to happen – all these guys running around with guns killing people.”²²¹ Mr. Allan Creft declared that “we don't consider it an invasion. It was a rescue operation.”²²² Other reporters described the American soldiers as being “embraced as liberators.”²²³ Additionally, a poll of Grenadian citizens conducted shortly after the invasion found that “85 percent of Grenadians welcomed the intervention not as an invasion but as a rescue mission.”²²⁴ While the reliability of polls can be debated on several fronts, the reactions of the vast majority of the Grenadian population towards the US intervention appeared positive.

Despite the beneficial outcome of US action in Grenada for its people and the region, the British and many others firmly believed that the ends failed to justify the means. As Thatcher later stated in a BBC World Service phone-in on 30 October, “I think as a general rule we in the Western countries, the Western democracies, use our force to defend our way of life, we do not use it to walk into other people's countries independent sovereign territories, we try to extend our beliefs not by force but by persuasion.”²²⁵ Geoffrey Howe explained that “the British view... was flatly and instinctively opposed to the idea that Britain, the former colonial power, should appear to threaten the independence of another Commonwealth nation by taking military action against a government of which it disapproved.”²²⁶ On the other hand, the United States also

²²¹ “Bishop's parents welcome invasion,” *The Times*, 3 November 1983, p. 5.

²²² “Bishop's parents welcome invasion,” *The Times*, 3 November 1983, p. 5.

²²³ Trevor Fishlock, “Grenadians seize their chance to clean the slate and start again,” *The Times*, 4 November 1983, p. 7.

²²⁴ Mark Adkin, *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1989), p. 105.

²²⁵ FCO telegram containing excerpts from Prime Minister's answers to questions on BBC World Service phone-in, 30 October 1983: PREM 19/1049. TNA.

²²⁶ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 335.

should have abstained from taking military action in Grenada since “world opinion was ranged against the Soviet Union for having attempted just that in Afghanistan.”²²⁷

Ultimately, Howe primarily criticized the lack of American consultation. He believed that “what had taken place went beyond lack of consultation and involved apparently conscious concealment of American intentions.”²²⁸ At the time, however, Howe kept his criticism leveled at America’s failure to adequately consult Britain, accusations of willful deception during the tumultuous deployment of American cruise missiles could have further damaged the likelihood of a successful deployment of INF.

Ambassador Wright attempted to explain the lack of consultation surrounding the Grenada affair in a message to Howe on 30 October 1983. He explained that

The lesson of consultation is not necessarily that the Americans will ride roughshod over us whenever they decide that it is in their interests to do so. Nor do I place much reliance on the President’s or the Secretary’s promise of improved performance. In my view, their judgement of the American interest will prevail in the future as in the past. That being so, the lesson for us is that, if we wish to be consulted, we have so to conduct our affairs that it is necessary for them to do so. In the NATO alliance consultation is necessary since decisions are taken by consensus. Consultation on INF has been exemplary because deployment could not have taken place unless it had been so.²²⁹

Clearly Wright doubted that Grenada represented a shift in Anglo-American relations. Just as the two nations had previously disagreed over policy, they were bound to do so again. Britain must decide where to expend its resources to position itself as an irreplaceable ally of the United States. Otherwise, close consultation between the two governments would arise only in issues relating to NATO or Europe. Britain could only expect close consultation in regions containing British interests and influence.

²²⁷ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 335.

²²⁸ Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, p. 335.

²²⁹ Wright telegram to Howe, 30 October 1983: PREM 19/1049. TNA

However, questions remained for the Prime Minister. In a conversation with Charles Douglas-Home, *The Times* editor, on 29 October, the Prime Minister's private secretary David Barclay recorded that "the Prime Minister expressed concern about the longer term effects of the American action. She had always argued that there was an essential distinction between the Soviet Union and NATO, in that the Soviet Union was an aggressive power whereas NATO was purely defensive, working to extend democracy in the world, but not by force. That argument was no longer so convincing."²³⁰ For Thatcher, "the fundamental question... was whether Grenada could be treated as a difficult but isolated incident, as she would hope, or whether it marked a new departure in foreign affairs." The Prime Minister's ability to describe the Grenada affair in the following weeks as an abnormality in US foreign policy, and not as a fundamental shift to a more belligerent, unilateral foreign policy, would determine the success or failure of the proposed INF deployment in the United Kingdom and Western Europe.

²³⁰ Record of a meeting between Margaret Thatcher and Charles Douglas-Home on 29 October 1983, transcribed in a letter from David Barclay to Bernard Ingahm, 31 October 1983: PREM 19/1049. TNA.

IV. “THERE IS ROOM FOR TWO VIEWS ON THIS MATTER:” THE STATIONING OF INF IN BRITAIN

No matter how effectively Britain managed its defence effort it was on the unity, strength and credibility of NATO that our security ultimately depended.
- Margaret Thatcher²³¹

The British government responded to America’s invasion of Grenada in 1983 with incredulity and outrage. In addition to Prime Minister Thatcher’s personal sting at being deceived and misinformed by her close ally President Reagan, her government faced ridicule in Parliament and the press for a complete misunderstanding of the American position on Grenada. With growing public doubt within Britain surrounding the trustworthiness of the United States, Margaret Thatcher faced an obstacle to the linchpin of her defense policy: the stationing of American cruise missiles in the United Kingdom.

As political scientist Paul Sharp argues, the foundation of the Anglo-American alliance in the post-war era was nuclear collaboration.²³² Historian John Dumbrell agrees, describing Britain’s nuclear cooperation and intelligence sharing with the United States as “the essence and beating heart of the Cold War ‘special relationship.’”²³³ The United States shared intelligence and close communication with other NATO members, but the only country the US helped establish and maintain an independent nuclear deterrent of its own was the UK. Nuclear policy provided the special aspect of Anglo-American relations. The Grenada conflict highlighted the danger posed “by the policies

²³¹ Margaret Thatcher, *Margaret Thatcher: The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), p. 251.

²³² Paul Sharp, *Thatcher’s Diplomacy: The Revival of British Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), p. 123.

²³³ John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 160.

of Britain's great nuclear benefactor" to the continuation of Britain's nuclear defense policy, and to Britain's ability to maintain an independent foreign policy separate from that of the United States.²³⁴ For the British, Grenada represented a culmination of years of American international *faux pas*. The American invasion revealed Reagan's commitment to defeating the Soviet Union at all costs despite the international turmoil his actions might cause. Britain's ability to successfully deploy American cruise missiles following the Grenada crisis in turn revealed Thatcher's seasoned statesmanship and her commitment to accomplish her foreign policy objectives through internationalism. As was so often the case, American action in Grenada quickly became enmeshed in the wider East-West conflict and geopolitical posturing, while Grenada itself diminished rapidly into the background.

In 1979, the British government faced a dilemma in its defense policy. Throughout the late 1970s, the Soviets had deployed their new SS-20 mobile ballistic missiles, an intermediate-range nuclear weapon, in Eastern Europe. NATO had a long-range nuclear deterrent in Western Europe via American Polaris missiles, but lacked a corresponding weapon system to the Soviets' SS-20 missiles. American cruise missiles appeared to offer a solution to this disparity. While some argued that cruise missiles offered no greater deterrent than already possessed in long-range missiles, aircraft equipped with nuclear missiles, and nuclear submarines, Thatcher thought otherwise. According to the Prime Minister, "NATO's strategy was based on having a range of conventional and nuclear weapons so that the USSR could never be confident of overcoming NATO at one level of weaponry without triggering a response at a higher

²³⁴ Sharp, *Thatcher's Diplomacy*, p. 127.

level leading ultimately to full-scale nuclear war.”²³⁵ Cruise missiles thus bridged the gap, in her view, between “the conventional and the strategic nuclear response.”²³⁶ Cruise missiles represented half of the dual-track method of addressing the Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles adopted in December 1979. Negotiations would proceed alongside INF deployment to ensure that NATO negotiated from a position of strength on the issue of INF. Thatcher believed “that NATO would have to go ahead with the decision to deploy theatre nuclear weapons or else the alliance would lose its credibility and its purpose.”²³⁷ Thus, for Margaret Thatcher’s government the proposed deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) by NATO in Western Europe represented a crucial part of Britain’s defense policy and its role as trans-Atlantic mediator.

The British government fully supported the United States’ leadership on the issue of modernizing NATO’s nuclear force in Europe to include INF. In turn, the United States wanted Britain to help convince hesitant countries such as the Netherlands and West Germany to place new United States operated cruise missiles in their countries as a part of INF. Throughout 1979 the British worked on this objective. As Margaret Thatcher explained in a letter to President Carter, “I myself have talked about the plans at length recently with Prime Minister Cossiga and Chancellor Schmidt; Francis Pym has had special discussions with his German, Dutch, and Italian counterparts in the last fortnight; and Peter Carrington has raised the matter recently with Van der Klaauw and Frydenlund.”²³⁸

²³⁵ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 332.

²³⁶ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 332.

²³⁷ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 243.

²³⁸ Letter from Margaret Thatcher to Jimmy Carter, 9 November 1979. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation* (MTF hereafter), docid=119035 (Accessed 2 November 2013).

Margaret Thatcher placed great importance on the modernization of NATO's INF in Europe for both strategic and political reasons, as would be seen again during the difficult days following the Grenada invasion. In the same letter to President Carter, Thatcher explained that "the December decisions are... of crucial importance. A set back could seriously damage the Alliance's credibility and effectiveness."²³⁹ Despite the Prime Minister's apprehension, the decision to deploy 572 American cruise missiles in Western Europe received approval from NATO foreign ministers on 12 December 1979. The scheduled deployment year for NATO's INF was 1983. The United States government immediately offered its thanks to Margaret Thatcher and the British government for their role in accomplishing the modernization agreement. In a meeting between the Prime Minister and members of the US Congress on 17 December, Senator Frank Church (D-ID), the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, acknowledged that the United States had been preoccupied by the Iranian hostage crisis and had leaned heavily on Britain for support in securing European agreement for nuclear modernization.²⁴⁰ Other congressmen thanked the Prime Minister for her efforts to secure the release of the American hostages in Iran. The United States government clearly recognized the important role Britain played in supporting US objectives in Europe. Margaret Thatcher hoped this recognition would lead to a corresponding effort on the United States' part to provide Britain with a strong position from which to negotiate with its European counterparts. Grenada caused the Prime Minister enormous dissatisfaction in this regard.

²³⁹ Letter from Margaret Thatcher to Jimmy Carter, 9 November 1979. MTF, docid=119035 (Accessed 2 November 2013).

²⁴⁰ Record of a meeting between Margaret Thatcher and members of the US Congress, 17 December 1979. MTF, docid=112139 (Accessed 3 November 2013).

In the immediate run-up to the Grenada crisis, Britain's government faced the daunting task of successfully deploying NATO's INF in the UK, and also ensuring that its European counterparts followed through with the 1979 agreement. The British recognized the benefits successfully deploying INF would bring Britain as well as the potential problems that would arise if the 1979 agreement were abandoned. Thatcher stated that "if it [INF deployment] went ahead as planned, the Soviet Union would suffer a real defeat; if it was abandoned in response to the Soviet sponsored 'peace offensive,' there was a real danger of a decoupling of Europe and America."²⁴¹ The government understood that public opinion had to be carefully cultivated in order to ensure an orderly placement of US cruise missiles at Greenham Common in the UK. Defense Secretary John Nott outlined the problems and opportunities the government faced in deploying cruise missiles in a minute prepared on 20 October 1982. He stated that "there is... an unease about NATO's nuclear strategy generally and a feeling that the Alliance places too much reliance on nuclear weapons, is unwilling to contemplate anything other than a growing nuclear stockpile, and attaches too little importance to disarmament."²⁴² He believed that the positions and statements made by the Reagan administration reinforced this attitude. Nott also highlighted the more negative opinions the British public felt towards cruise missiles as opposed to American aircraft. Many Britons worried that US missiles were more uncontrollable than US aircraft, and therefore posed a greater threat to the UK.

²⁴¹ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 173.

²⁴² John Nott minute to Margaret Thatcher, 20 October 1982, p. 1: PREM 19/979. The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA hereafter).

Nott offered several suggestions to alleviate public fears and quell potential opposition. While cost prohibited the purchase of the cruise system from the United States, efforts could be made to highlight British participation in guarding and transporting the missiles, or the British government could reconsider the dual-key option for INF deployment, which would require two separate launch codes from the British and the Americans in order to launch a missile. Overall, Nott encouraged the government to take more initiative on NATO's arms control discussions with the Soviets, and make efforts to avoid being perceived as "the creature of the Americans."²⁴³ The ultimate danger of losing the public's support on cruise, Nott argued, was the potential loss of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent (and thus a loss of the foundation of Britain's post-war defense policy) due to public mistrust of both nuclear weapons and the American government which provided the systems necessary to deliver nuclear weapons. Additionally, to the British, the lack of "an independent nuclear deterrent, even if it was only an off-the-shelf version, meant accepting second-class status."²⁴⁴ No elected British government was prepared to accept "second-class" status.

The nuclear deterrent represented an important aspect of Britain's relationship with Europe as well, as evidenced by Britain's efforts in December 1979 to ensure European approval of INF deployment. The widespread placement of nuclear weapons in countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands revealed a united front against any potential Soviet encroachment, and also lessened the risk of a potential first strike against the United Kingdom. The UK also viewed its potential

²⁴³ John Nott minute to Margaret Thatcher, 20 October 1982, p. 3: PREM 19/979. TNA.

²⁴⁴ Howard Temperley, *Britain and America since Independence* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 186.

leadership role in Europe as a sustaining factor in the Anglo-American relationship, despite the government's difficulty in achieving any leadership role in Europe during the early 1980s. The United States believed that Britain could encourage the rest of Europe to follow US leadership in NATO. In a letter to Margaret Thatcher on 3 November 1982, Foreign Secretary Francis Pym highlighted this understanding between the United States and Britain as it pertained to INF. Pym feared that public outcry and domestic political pressure in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands would complicate the INF deployment the following year. He contended that "the Americans look to us for the lead that will encourage the others to overcome their own political difficulties."²⁴⁵ Thatcher also contended that it was "Britain's task to put the American case [for INF] in Europe since we shared their analysis but tended to put it in less ideological language."²⁴⁶ In addition to "exaggerated American rhetoric," Thatcher believed that "the perennial nervousness of European opinion threatened to undermine the good transatlantic relationship."²⁴⁷ Thus, Margaret Thatcher clearly viewed her role as an intermediary between European timidity and American bellicosity, despite the doubts held by other European governments concerning Britain's commitment to Europe.

The British government's ability to ensure the British and European deployments of the nuclear deterrent in 1983 relied in turn on America maintaining a positive reputation in international affairs. As Thatcher stated, the deployment of cruise missiles "depended to a large degree on demonstrating that the United States could indeed be

²⁴⁵ Francis Pym letter to Margaret Thatcher, 3 November 1982, p. 2: PREM 19/979. TNA.

²⁴⁶ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 171.

²⁴⁷ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 171.

relied upon as a trustworthy ally.”²⁴⁸ The pipeline embargo set a tone of anti-American opinion that only increased following the invasion of Grenada in October 1983. President Reagan’s decision to halt the sale of all American-made pipeline materials to the Soviet Union in December 1981 had worried his European allies who hoped to gain an affordable fuel source via the proposed Soviet natural gas pipeline. When Reagan extended his embargo to American companies’ foreign subsidiaries in Europe, he exasperated his allies, including Margaret Thatcher. Not only had the United States interfered in its allies’ independent economic decision making, it also had neglected to understand the financial and diplomatic impact its actions would have on its closest allies. While the United States viewed economic cooperation between NATO countries and the USSR as detrimental in times of intense East-West confrontation, the British viewed non-military trade as “a way of easing international tension.”²⁴⁹ Additionally, the British “felt that the US, so comparatively self-sufficient and nondependent on trade, did not appreciate Britain’s needs.”²⁵⁰

Thatcher recognized that Reagan was focused completely on defeating the Soviet Union, despite the cost that victory might impose on his allies. While Thatcher supported the effort to vanquish the Soviet Union, she realized that continued unilateral action on the part of the Americans could break up the western alliance as its member states grew fearful of aggressive US leadership. Margaret Thatcher’s internationalist perspective and her greater understanding of European alliance building (due to both failures and successes in this regard) allowed her to better gauge the effects unilateral American

²⁴⁸ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 326.

²⁴⁹ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 68.

²⁵⁰ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 68.

action would have on the western alliance. Thatcher knew that if the United States lost its allies' trust, the planned deployment of NATO's INF would fail. No European country would base US operated cruise missiles within its borders if that country doubted the stability of the "finger on the trigger."

As a result, the issue that caused the most apprehension in the British government in the run-up to the INF's deployment concerned the public perception of Britain's control of the cruise missiles. The foundation of the Anglo-American nuclear understanding was the Murphy-Dean Agreement of 1958, which established the guidelines of consultation between the US President and the British Prime Minister "to respond to a Soviet attack by committing nuclear retaliatory forces to the attack from the United Kingdom."²⁵¹ The Murphy-Dean Agreement determined that the decision to use nuclear weapons operated by the United States and based in the UK would "be a matter for joint decision by the two governments in light of the circumstances at the time."²⁵² More specifically, "the 'joint decision' required by the basic understanding between both governments would be taken by the President and the Prime Minister, who would speak personally with each other."²⁵³ However, as Secretary of the Cabinet Robert Armstrong reminded the Prime Minister in a letter on 11 November 1982, in a crisis situation the United Kingdom had "no physical control" of the American-operated missiles.²⁵⁴ Therefore, an extraordinary level of trust had to exist between the two governments in

²⁵¹ Stephen Twigge and Len Scott, *Planning Armageddon: Britain, the United States and the Command of Western Nuclear Forces 1945-1964* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 326.

²⁵² Stephen Twigge and Len Scott, *Planning Armageddon*, p. 326.

²⁵³ Stephen Twigge and Len Scott, *Planning Armageddon*, p. 327.

²⁵⁴ Robert Armstrong letter to Margaret Thatcher, 11 November 1982, p. 3: PREM 19/979. TNA

order to maintain the Murphy-Dean Agreement, and to convince the British public that consultation would be made prior to a UK-based nuclear strike.

In order to assuage public fears that consultation alone was not strong enough to ensure America's respect for British nuclear sovereignty, several ideas were floated to strengthen the government's control over the decision to launch a nuclear strike. The concept of a dual-key system had long provided an attractive solution to the problem of consultation. Previously, at the Bermuda talks of 1957 between President Eisenhower and Prime Minister MacMillan, the United States had agreed to station Thor missiles in the United Kingdom with a dual-control launch mechanism. In his address to the Commons on 1 April 1957, MacMillan addressed the issue of sovereignty and emphasized Britain's final say on any decision to launch Thor missiles from British territory. He stated that:

They [Thor missiles] will be provided under an agreement the full details of which have still to be negotiated, but they will be the property of Her Majesty's Government, manned by British troops who will receive their prior training from American experts. The rockets cannot be fired by any except the British personnel, but the warhead will be in the control of the United States— which is the law of the United States— and to that extent the Americans have a negative control; but it is absolutely untrue to say that the President and not the British Government will decide when these missiles will be launched and at whom.²⁵⁵

MacMillan understood that many in Britain doubted the reliability of consultation alone in ensuring British sovereignty over missiles based in the UK. MacMillan's use of dual-control thus provided a precedent for both Members of Parliament and the public at large who believed that cruise missiles should also be subject to a dual-control system so as not to compromise British sovereignty.

²⁵⁵ Harold MacMillan, HC Deb 01 April 1957 vol 568 cc37-170, *Hansard*.

The issue of dual control of cruise missiles received full attention in a paper prepared for Margaret Thatcher by Robert Armstrong. He judged that in order “to gain an absolute physical veto on the release of weapons, it would be necessary to re-engineer and reprogramme the launch control system so that release of the weapon could only be effected once two separate ‘codes’ (one authorized by the US President, one by the Prime Minister) had been entered.”²⁵⁶ However, this solution would incur a huge financial cost to the nation. Armstrong doubted the United States would fully fund and build the cruise missile systems and then allow the UK government to man the system alongside the US. Armstrong believed the US government would require the British government to fully man and fund the system if Britain demanded a physical dual key mechanism. Armstrong estimated the cost over ten years at one billion pounds.²⁵⁷

In addition to the financial cost, demanding a dual-key control mechanism for the cruise missiles could potentially alienate the US government, and put the deployment of INF in Europe at risk. The new Defense Secretary Michael Heseltine described the implications that calling for dual key would have on the Anglo-American relationship. He said that “any change now would be interpreted as reflecting a lack of trust on our part in the Americans with implications for Alliance credibility as a whole.”²⁵⁸ Francis Pym reiterated that “reopening the control issue... could only be interpreted publicly as a lack of confidence in the good faith and judgement of the US administration in time of

²⁵⁶ Michael Heseltine note attached to minute to Margaret Thatcher, 25 January 1983, p. 4: PREM 19/979. TNA

²⁵⁷ Michael Heseltine note attached to minute to Margaret Thatcher, 25 January 1983, p. 5: PREM 19/979. TNA.

²⁵⁸ Michael Heseltine minute to Margaret Thatcher, 25 January 1983, p. 2: PREM 19/979. TNA.

crisis.”²⁵⁹ Pym believed that if the British government, as America’s principal nuclear ally, called for greater control over US owned and operated weapons, the deployment of NATO’s INF would be greatly complicated, arousing the ire of the US government and endangering Britain’s foreign policy objectives. In order to achieve its goals of countering the build-up of Soviet INF with a matched deployment of NATO’s INF, the British government had to support the United States fully, despite private misgivings.

The danger dual control posed to European deployment originated in the Federal Republic of Germany, which had foresworn ever owning or operating nuclear weapons. Additionally, polls showed that stationing nuclear weapons operated by the Americans in West Germany was already unpopular. In 1981, public opinion surveys revealed that “40 percent of West Germans unconditionally opposed the stationing of U.S. missiles on their soil.”²⁶⁰ With a spring election looming in West Germany, any hint of dual control over NATO’s INF in Europe could cause the West German government to delay the deployment of American cruise missiles, or lead to a complete rethinking of West German deployment.²⁶¹ As the British Ambassador to the USSR Iain Sutherland pointed out, failure to carry through NATO’s planned deployment of INF, or even rumors of such an occurrence could encourage the Soviet Union to halt the ongoing arms control talks in Geneva. He believed that the Soviets “may well still hope that, at some stage between now and December, western public opinion will do their work for them and deliver into their hands decisions to cancel or at least restrict western deployment of cruise and

²⁵⁹ Francis Pym letter to Margaret Thatcher, 26 January 1983: PREM 19/979. TNA.

²⁶⁰ Peter Schweizer, *Reagan’s War: The Epic Story of His Forty-Year Struggle and Final Triumph Over Communism* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), p. 221.

²⁶¹ Michael Heseltine minute to Margaret Thatcher, 25 January 1983, p. 4: PREM 19/979. TNA.

Pershing [missiles] which they would be unable to win at the negotiating table except in return for conditions with respect” to their own nuclear deterrent.²⁶²

In fact, the Soviets did take a wait-and-see approach to the arms control negotiations as potential disagreements between Western European nations became apparent. As US Secretary of State George Shultz explained, the Soviet aim in deploying their SS-20s “was to undermine Western Europe’s confidence in us.”²⁶³ Shultz believed that the Soviets sought to create an imbalance, seemingly saying that “we can hit the capitals of Europe from our soil, and we dare the United States to say that it would respond with a strategic nuclear strike, a nuclear exchange risking demolition of the United States itself.”²⁶⁴ Thus the Americans also recognized the danger to NATO and the western alliance if NATO failed to deploy INF. Shultz feared that the Europeans might decide that “if they could not look to America to ensure their security, perhaps they should accommodate the Soviet Union’s wishes.”²⁶⁵ Clearly it was in the Soviets’ best interests to halt INF’s deployment.

The question of INF deployment became a central issue in both the British and West German elections in 1983. The Soviet Union funneled money into West German peace groups that supported the Social Democrat candidate Hans-Jochen Vogel, who promised to disallow INF deployment. The Soviet government continued to make grave pronouncements for the prospects of peace if the planned placement of INF occurred.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Ambassador Sutherland telegram to Foreign Office, 5 April 1983: PREM 19/979. TNA.

²⁶³ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner’s, 1993), p. 346.

²⁶⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pgs. 346-347.

²⁶⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 347.

²⁶⁶ Peter Schweizer, *Reagan’s War*, p. 224.

As a result of the political pressure in Western Europe and the UK, the British government refused to discuss the possibility of dual control outside of closed Cabinet sessions. Eventually the government decided that the costs and risks posed by adopting dual control far outweighed the benefits, and implemented the deployment of INF as previously planned.

The British government worked hard throughout 1982 and 1983 to ensure that public opinion of the Americans, and in particular President Reagan, remained high enough to ensure an orderly stationing of American cruise missiles in Britain and Western Europe. The issue of the Siberian pipeline had finally been negotiated satisfactorily, and the scheduled deployment of cruise missiles was just weeks away when the United States invaded Grenada.²⁶⁷ As has been seen, the invasion shocked the British government. While the lack of consultation taken before invading a Commonwealth member rankled many Tory and Labour MPs, the political timing of the invasion could not have been worse. Margaret Thatcher's party had just won an astounding victory in the 1983 General Election, but America's seemingly rash action in Grenada threatened to severely deplete Thatcher's political capital just months after the election. As the Parliamentary debates and Cabinet sessions following the Grenada crisis reveal, the issue of American credibility and cruise placement quickly became the focal point of the entire Grenada episode.

On 25 October, the day following the invasion, Denis Healey, Labour's shadow foreign secretary, responded to Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe's explanation of

²⁶⁷ The compromise reached on the Soviet pipeline allowed for a single pipeline instead of the planned double pipeline. Instead of contracts being cancelled, they were merely decreased.

America's invasion with particular vitriol. He described the Americans as deceivers who had committed an "unpardonable humiliation of an ally."²⁶⁸ He demanded that the British government publically condemn the US action. Other Labour MPs questioned the supposed closeness of the Anglo-American alliance, and took lines similar to Healey's. Many Tories, on the other hand, questioned the government on its unwillingness to join the Americans in freeing the Grenadian people from their oppressors. Tory MP Peter Tapsell described the American action as "inevitable and desirable," and questioned why those "who are for ever blathering on about the dangers posed by Soviet imperialism" opposed American intervention in Grenada.²⁶⁹ Tory MP Julian Amery brought the Commonwealth into the equation, asking why the British government had failed to support the nations of the Caribbean Commonwealth that had asked for assistance in removing the threat posed by an unstable, Marxist Grenada. He believed the government would have shown true leadership and responsibility by inviting the Americans to lead the invasion of Grenada on behalf of the Caribbean Commonwealth.²⁷⁰

As the week wore on, it became apparent why the government took a middle position in response to the American invasion of Grenada. A denunciation of the US by the British government would strengthen the anti-cruise movement, while supporting US action would give tacit approval to the low level of consultation taken prior to the invasion (about which Thatcher was most displeased), and open the government to condemnation from the British public and other European governments. Denis Healey quickly jumped to the attack on 26 October by questioning what the government knew

²⁶⁸ Denis Healey, HC Deb 25 October 1983, vol 47 cc143-53, *Hansard*.

²⁶⁹ Peter Tapsell, HC Deb 25 October 1983, vol 47 cc143-53, *Hansard*.

²⁷⁰ Julian Amery, HC Deb 25 October 1983, vol 47 cc143-53, *Hansard*.

about America's plans and when they knew those plans. He summed up his position by saying, "Either Her Majesty's Government were deceived by their major ally, or Her Majesty's Government were deceiving the House."²⁷¹ Healey's criticisms quickly shifted from the government to the Prime Minister herself by stating that "the Prime Minister has made something of a cult of her special relationship with the American President at the expense of British interests" in the Commonwealth and Europe, and in so doing, Thatcher represented no more than "an obedient poodle to the American President."²⁷² While such personal attacks were common and lacked the power to persuade, Healey's next line of attack presented a potential threat. Healey ended his speech with a direct call for action:

If events continue as now foreseen, the British Government must, at the very minimum, refuse to accept the deployment of American missiles on British soil unless Britain has the physical power to prevent the use of those missiles against her will. What has happened in Grenada must be a warning to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in that regard. We on this side of the House—and I believe many on the other side of the House—believe that America's action against Grenada was a catastrophic blunder and that the failure of Her Majesty's Government to prevent it was an unforgivable dereliction of duty. However, something at least may be gained from the experience of the past few days. This experience should warn America's allies of the danger of servility to a leadership from Washington which could be disastrous to the interests of the western world. It should remind all of America's allies of the need to unite to shift American policy to the ways of co-operation and common sense.²⁷³

On their own, the remarks of Healey, the newly-christened shadow Foreign Secretary of a party that had just been soundly defeated in a general election several months earlier, represented the same arguments used by Labour in that disastrous 1983 election campaign. However, his remarks this time mirrored public opinion. The impact of American action in Grenada on British public opinion could be seen in poll changes

²⁷¹ Denis Healey, HC Deb 26 October 1983, vol 47 cc291-335, *Hansard*.

²⁷² Denis Healey, HC Deb 26 October 1983, vol 47 cc291-335, *Hansard*.

²⁷³ Denis Healey, HC Deb 26 October 1983, vol 47 cc291-335, *Hansard*.

throughout 1983. In January, the government faced an uphill struggle as a MORI poll reported that only 36% of the population supported stationing cruise missiles compared to 54% who opposed cruise deployment. The government successfully moved public opinion during the election campaign so that at the beginning of September 1983, 45% of the population supported cruise deployment while 44% of the population still opposed cruise placement. This hard-earned public relations victory quickly vanished following America's invasion of Grenada. On 1 November, a week after the invasion, the majority of the public once again opposed the deployment of American cruise missiles with 50% of the population opposing and 38% supporting the decision.²⁷⁴

Healey's warning about "servility to a leadership from Washington" thus demonstrated the shifting perception of many European politicians who had begun "to see the United States as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution."²⁷⁵ The Anglo-American alliance had long been the solution to Britain's foreign policy strategies and objectives, but Reagan's actions in Grenada and other Third World countries posed severe problems for the continuation of Anglo-American cooperation. While Reagan viewed his intervention in Grenadian politics as a victory in the East-West struggle and a defense of American interests, many in Thatcher's government worried his active foreign policy would "sour the possibilities for an accord with Moscow and exacerbate tensions that might otherwise be reduced."²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ "Cruise missiles – trend," *Ipsos MORI*, November 1983. <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3243/Cruise-missiles-trend.aspx>.

²⁷⁵ Richard H. Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat in Historical and Present Perspective*, *The 'Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* eds. William Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 109.

²⁷⁶ Ullman, *America, Britain, and the Soviet Threat*, p. 114.

The British government viewed American action as rash and shortsighted. As has been seen, shortly before the conflict began Britain repeatedly warned the American government against intervening in Grenada's affairs. While the government hedged its public criticism of America's action, the Cabinet sessions were filled with disappointment and incredulity at the lack of consultation taken by the US prior to their decision. Most discussions focused on damage control. In a session on 27 October 1983, the Cabinet recognized that Grenada's independent status precluded the need for the US "to seek British advice, or to accept it if sought."²⁷⁷ Additionally the Cabinet decided that public condemnation was inappropriate due to the close relationship between Britain and the United States. Thatcher insisted that "Britain's friendship with the United States must on no account be jeopardized."²⁷⁸ The government had been placed in a bind. The United States represented the linchpin of Britain's foreign policy and therefore could not be criticized publically, but a failure to adequately defend Britain's position opened the government to further accusations of being "Reagan's poodle." Ultimately, as Thatcher noted in her memoirs, the British government was forced "to defend the United States' reputation in the face of widespread condemnation."²⁷⁹

In the Cabinet meeting on 3 November, attention remained focused on why the US failed to adequately consult Britain, and how Britain's failure to support US action in Grenada was perceived by the US administration. Foreign Secretary Howe explained that "the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz, had expressed regret to him at the United States government's failure to consult the British government earlier about

²⁷⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 27 October 1983, CAB 128/76/31. TNA.

²⁷⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 27 October 1983, CAB 128/76/31. TNA.

²⁷⁹ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 332.

American plans to intervene in Grenada. The failure had been due largely to [the administration's] preoccupation with the terrorist attack on the United States force in Lebanon on 23 October."²⁸⁰ James Prior, the Secretary for Northern Ireland, travelled to the United States following the invasion. He expressed his opinion that "the close relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom did not appear to have been seriously damaged by the difference of view between the two Governments over Grenada." However, some in the US administration questioned Britain's unwillingness to support US action in Grenada after the United States had supported Britain's action in the Falklands the previous year.

John Dumbrell argues that American and British perceptions of the Grenada affair were "deeply affected by the Falklands conflict."²⁸¹ The Americans believed they were acting in their own self-interest by invading Grenada, preventing both the rise of a new Soviet-backed enemy in the Western Hemisphere and a potential large-scale hostage crisis, and thus expected that "Britain was unlikely to protest any American activism in the Western hemisphere."²⁸² US Secretary of State Shultz felt annoyed by Thatcher's sense of outrage. He stated that "we had turned ourselves into pretzels for Mrs. Thatcher over the Falklands crisis."²⁸³ However, the two events were vastly different, and were perceived as such by the Thatcher government. Argentina invaded sovereign British territory in the Falklands, while in Grenada, a Marxist coup overthrew a government

²⁸⁰ Cabinet Conclusions, 3 November 1983, CAB 128/76/32. TNA. President Reagan actually decided to invade Grenada on 22 October, a day prior to the bombing of the US Marines barrack in Lebanon. Consultation was limited due to fears regarding leaks on either the British or American side, not a preoccupation with events in Lebanon.

²⁸¹ Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 117.

²⁸² Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, p. 117.

²⁸³ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 336.

founded by an earlier Marxist coup. The British, not overjoyed at the extent of US cooperation during the Falklands War, continued to face diplomatic difficulties over America's relationship with Argentina.

In the aftermath of Grenada, the British government continued to support the United States administration, but the United States seemed poised to offend British sentiments once again through its foreign policy with Argentina. Thatcher had instructed the British ambassador to the UN to abstain from voting on a resolution tabled by Guyana, which condemned US action in Grenada. The government hoped that abstaining would encourage the United States government "to abstain on the Argentine-sponsored resolution about the Falkland Islands, for which they were likely to vote in favor."²⁸⁴ Also, the US government planned to resume arms sales to Argentina "despite the further adverse consequences this was bound to have for the United States/United Kingdom relationship in the aftermath of Grenada."²⁸⁵ The Cabinet concluded on 10 November that "an American decision to resume arms sales to Argentina would have a damaging effect on British opinion in the context of Cruise missile deployment."²⁸⁶ As hard as the British government was working to convince the British public that America could still be trusted, the United States seemed to continuously ignore the impact its decisions were having on the British government.

The British government's exasperation with the United States government was displayed during a meeting between Margaret Thatcher and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam on 7 November. The Prime Minister pointed to Britain's decision to

²⁸⁴ Cabinet Conclusions, 27 October 1983, CAB 128/76/31. TNA.

²⁸⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 3 November 1983, CAB 128/76/32. TNA.

²⁸⁶ Cabinet Conclusions, 10 November 1983, CAB 128/76/33. TNA.

abstain from voting on the UN resolution condemning US action in Grenada, and asked why the United States planned on voting with Argentina instead of with the UK in the United Nations General Assembly. Additionally, Thatcher predicted that US armament of Argentina “would be seen as having one purpose – to build up the Argentine potential to fight the United Kingdom.”²⁸⁷ If the United States armed the Argentines, Thatcher “would have to be vigorously critical – and the decision could have other repercussions on public opinion.” Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Howe reiterated that both the disagreements over Grenada and the United States’ Argentinean policy “tended to have implications for co-operation on defence and INF.”

Despite these grave pronouncements from Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe, Dam insisted that the US government would support the Argentinean resolution in the General Assembly that expressed regret over Britain’s refusal to negotiate the issue of the Falklands sovereignty with the Argentine government and requested that negotiations be renewed.²⁸⁸ Thatcher, recognizing her inability to change US policy concerning the resolution, attempted to win her second point by saying that of the two policy decisions, “the US supply of arms to Argentina would be infinitely more serious.”²⁸⁹ Dam dismissed Thatcher’s fears by pointing out that the United States only planned on recertifying the Argentinean government to receive US arms. Additionally, Dam believed “that some relationship between the United States and the Argentine military was in the long term desirable for democracy in Argentina.” Howe, again understanding

²⁸⁷ Record of conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Kenneth Dam, 7 November 1983, p. 12: PREM 19/1151. TNA.

²⁸⁸ “U.N. Resolution 38/12,” 16 November 1983. *South Atlantic Council*. <http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/SAC/UN/UN-LIST.HTM>.

²⁸⁹ Record of conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Kenneth Dam, 7 November 1983, p. 13: PREM 19/1151. TNA.

the inability of the British to dissuade American foreign policy, asked the Deputy Secretary of State to at least consider “that the further certification could be distanced from the Grenada events the better.” He realized that additional public disagreements between the US and UK coming so quickly after the invasion would increase doubts about the British government’s close relationship with the US, and the United States’ willingness to honor its pledge to consult the British government prior to a nuclear strike launched from the UK.

Thatcher also asked for consultation over what types of weapons the Americans proposed to sell to the Argentinean government. While Dam avoided agreeing to consultation over the arms negotiations, he reminded the Prime Minister that only the presidential administration could approve an arms sale. This failed to comfort Margaret Thatcher, who said “that following recent events we would have to be very sure that no administration decision had been taken.”²⁹⁰ The meeting concluded without the British government significantly shifting the US administration’s foreign policy direction to better match Britain’s desired foreign policy objectives.

During the government’s deliberations on how to ensure a situation like Grenada would not rise again between Britain and the United States, pressure continued to mount within Parliament and the public to halt the deployment of cruise missiles. Prior to the Grenada crisis, several groups already opposed the placement of American missiles in the UK. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) worked with the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp movement to shift public opinion against the INF deployment. On 1 April 1983, the two groups joined together to form a 40,000-person

²⁹⁰ Record of conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Kenneth Dam, 7 November 1983, p. 14: PREM 19/1151. TNA.

strong human chain stretching from Greenham Common in Berkshire (the proposed cruise missile site) to the Royal Ordnance Factory in Burghfield. This demonstration represented the largest protest the CND ever held outside of London.²⁹¹ Following the American invasion of Grenada, the CND and Greenham women protestors increased their efforts to sway public opinion.

Reporter Denis Hackett observed that many protestors worried about further unilateral American action. While Reagan had claimed that neither Britain nor the United States would act independently of the other on nuclear issues, the American invasion of Grenada cast doubt on his assertion.²⁹² Speaking in support of the protestors, Labour MP Anthony Wedgwood Benn stated “that Reagan will not consult Mrs. Thatcher before the cruise missiles are used.”²⁹³ He believed that “there was now a genuine fear that Britain could be destroyed ‘as a by-product of an adventurous American policy which we oppose.’” Britain would be targeted by the Soviets “even if we opposed US policy” due to the presence of US cruise missiles.²⁹⁴ On the weekend following America’s invasion of Grenada, hundreds of women protestors cut through the fence surrounding Greenham Common and dashed paint on the runway in an effort to keep American planes carrying cruise missiles from landing. Security increased at the air base following the incursions, and one hundred and eighty seven women were arrested for cutting through the fence over the weekend of the 29-30 October. In London on the 31 October, several hundred protestors gathered in Trafalgar Square and “vented their anger

²⁹¹ Nicholas Timmins, “Thousands of hands link in CND rally,” *The Times*, 2 Apr 1983, pg. 1.

²⁹² Denis Hackett, “Cruising into controversy,” *The Times*, 28 Oct 1983, pg. 7.

²⁹³ “More Greenham arrests after second attack,” *The Times*, 31 Oct 1983, pg. 24.

²⁹⁴ “More Greenham arrests after second attack,” *The Times*, 31 Oct 1983, pg. 24.

at the imminent arrival of cruise missiles.”²⁹⁵ This formed part of a last minute effort to dissuade Parliament from reaffirming the 1979 NATO decision to deploy the cruise missiles at Greenham Common.

On 31 October, the final debate on the stationing of cruise missiles was held in Parliament. The Secretary of State for Defence Michael Heseltine defended the government’s position against opposition from both the Liberal and Labour party leaders. David Steel, leader of the Liberal party, introduced an amendment calling for dual control of the cruise missiles. After debate, the amendment gained little support, going down in defeat 360 to 22. The Labour party opposed the deployment of any cruise missiles in the UK, dual-key or otherwise. Michael Heseltine argued that while the current government had approved the decision in 1979 to deploy American cruise missiles in the UK, “the evidence is overwhelming that the last Labour government was deeply involved in the discussions and accepted the need for that decision when six months after the 1979 general election we took it.”²⁹⁶

Denis Healey responded that “after Grenada Britain could no longer be satisfied with the present arrangements.” Healey believed the danger posed by United States’ cruise missiles based in the UK had been seen “last week [as] the United States brushed the United Kingdom aside when the threat was vague and distant.” How could “the Prime Minister really believe the United States administration, certainly under this President, would take any notice when the threat was to thousands of American soldiers in Europe?” After all, the core of Reagan’s argument that the Grenada invasion had been

²⁹⁵ Alan Hamilton and David Cross, “Greenham security is stepped up,” *The Times*, 1 Nov 1983, pg. 2.

²⁹⁶ “Dual key rejected: US trusts us so we should trust them,” *The Times*, 1 Nov 1983, pg. 4.

legal was the danger posed to approximately 1,000 US medical students. Healey, for one, believed the United States would not hesitate to defend its troops from any perceived threat despite British objections. Ultimately Healey's objections failed to influence enough Conservative MPs to vote against the government, and the reaffirmation of the 1979 NATO agreement passed 362 to 218.²⁹⁷

On 2 November, Secretary of State for Defence Michael Heseltine warned potential demonstrators that any infiltrators who approached the missile bunkers within Greenham Common could be shot. Heseltine argued that the danger posed by terrorists using the demonstrators as a cover could not be ignored, but this proclamation further heightened the intense rhetoric involved in the cruise deployment. The chairman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Joan Ruddock, said Heseltine's statement illustrated "the extreme lengths to which this Government is prepared to go to implement a policy which is clearly unpopular with the British people."²⁹⁸ The first cruise missiles began arriving in the UK on 14 November 1983. In response Labour leader Neil Kinnock warned "the Prime Minister that the British people will not forgive her for allowing first-use nuclear weapons to be deployed in Britain, especially when the American Government which owns and controls those weapons has so recently and so obviously shown its contempt for the views of the British Government."²⁹⁹

The British government successfully deployed American cruise missiles in November 1983 despite the difficulties posed by American action in Grenada.

²⁹⁷ "Dual key rejected: US trusts us so we should trust them," *The Times*, 1 Nov 1983, pg. 4.

²⁹⁸ Phillip Webster and Rodney Cowton, "Cruise intruders could be shot, says Heseltine," *The Times*, 2 Nov 1983, pg. 1.

²⁹⁹ Julian Haviland and Rodney Cowton, "Cruise arrives at Greenham," *The Times*, 15 Nov 1983, pg. 1.

Thatcher's intense disagreement with Reagan over Grenada largely dealt with the invasion's timing. The Americans failed to consider the problems their action would cause for NATO's planned INF deployment, which was to take place within a month of their assault on Grenada. Thatcher's support of American military action in El Salvador and Nicaragua, examples of US military intervention in independent countries facing internal strife, leads one to believe that her anger at America's invasion of Grenada would have been less severe if it had occurred at another time.

While any unilateral military action taken by the United States so close to INF's deployment would have caused problems for Thatcher's government, the invasion of a Commonwealth nation exacerbated the problem. The British government consistently reminded Parliament of Grenada's complete independence from the UK, but many MPs believed that Britain still maintained some level of responsibility for maintaining Grenada's independence and well being. Additionally, as the Parliamentary debates reveal, many MPs equated American action in Grenada with the proposed cruise deployment in the UK. These MPs and others thought that if the US would not adequately consult the British government over its proposed plans for a Commonwealth country, how could it be trusted to consult the British government on cruise issues, especially if American interests varied with British interests? While making the correlation between Grenada and cruise was a stretch, it played well in the press and confirmed the reservations held by many British citizens concerning the placement of American-operated cruise missiles in the UK. The episode reveals that despite the British government's best efforts, the government's ability to shift America's foreign policy to match its own only existed on a situational basis. If Britain's foreign policy strategy

failed to match up to the United States' strategy, the British experienced a much more difficult time achieving their goals. The Grenada crisis thus represents an opportunity to study both Britain's ability to pursue an independent foreign policy separate from the United States, as well as the two countries' understanding of the Anglo-American alliance.

CONCLUSION

Political scientist Paul Sharp has praised Margaret Thatcher for maintaining an independent foreign policy during her time as Prime Minister. While some Labour MPs in Parliament believed that Thatcher represented no more than “Reagan’s poodle,” Sharp believes that “she identified the U.S. as the primary upholder of an international order which was good, from which Britain benefited greatly and which, hence, it had an obligation to help maintain.”³⁰⁰ Through this framework, Thatcher’s acceptance of repeated American slights did not reveal Britain’s weakness or servitude, but a strategic understanding that Britain could only remain great if the United States remained great.

Thatcher’s belief that a successful British foreign policy depended on a strong and active United States presence in foreign affairs is evident in her memoirs. She described the United States in 1979 as continuing to suffer from the ‘Vietnam syndrome,’ a “conviction that the United States was fortunately incapable of intervention abroad since such intervention would almost certainly be inimical to morality, the world’s poor, or the revolutionary tides of history.”³⁰¹ In Thatcher’s view, this debilitating psychology produced a weak foreign policy and limited international presence that allowed the Soviets to invade Afghanistan, deploy new nuclear missiles in Eastern Europe, and build “its conventional forces to levels far in excess of NATO equivalents” without a strong American response other than the boycott of the 1980 Olympic games.³⁰² Britain needed

³⁰⁰ Sharp, *Thatcher’s Diplomacy*, p. 78.

³⁰¹ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 9. Thatcher’s description of the Vietnam syndrome differed from the traditional American understanding of the syndrome. While Americans focused on American military weakness, Europeans like Thatcher understood the Vietnam syndrome in a moral framework, describing it as an inability to intervene in world affairs without causing more harm than good.

³⁰² Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 9.

a strong American government to counter the Soviets in Europe, and to keep Western Europe united in NATO.

Thatcher believed that “nations must co-operate in defense of agreed international rules if they are either to resist great evils or to achieve great benefits.”³⁰³ This internationalism must be based on strong individual nation-states “which are able to call upon the loyalty of their citizens to defend and enforce civilized rules of international conduct.”³⁰⁴ Any international organization that tried to diminish the importance of the nation state would fail as “very few people [would be] prepared to make genuine sacrifices for it.”³⁰⁵ The United States, unlike the Soviet Union, enabled the states of Western Europe to maintain distinct identities and foreign policies while still playing the part of their primary defender and benefactor.

However, the United States’ foreign policy throughout 1982 and 1983 was a policy of dictation rather than real consultation and negotiations with its Western European allies, Britain in particular. Thatcher believed that American interference in European economies during the pipeline embargo and its invasion of Grenada in 1983 caused many in Europe and the UK to believe fully in her version of the ‘Vietnam syndrome,’ viewing any American diplomatic interference as unhelpful. Thatcher recognized the danger Reagan’s actions posed to NATO’s unity and continued existence. The United States risked looking overbearing and aggressive, usually traits assigned to the Soviet Union, on the world stage. Reagan, entirely focused on defeating Communism around the world, could not pass up an opportunity to quickly end a Marxist regime in the

³⁰³ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 11.

³⁰⁴ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 11.

³⁰⁵ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 11.

Caribbean. For the American government, the long-term benefits to both the Grenadian people and the United States outweighed the offended sensibilities of the British. As one of two superpowers in the world, the United States could afford to offend its allies at times. Thatcher's experience as the leader of a "middle-ranking power" caused her to understand alliance diplomacy in a completely different context.

US Secretary of State George Shultz demonstrated the difference in British and American views of international diplomacy through his failure to understand why Thatcher opposed US action in Grenada. He speculated that her rough session in the Commons, being labeled "Reagan's poodle," and her government's misstatements on the likelihood of an American invasion of Grenada had highly embarrassed her.

Additionally, "she may also have had a special sensitivity about a former British colony 'going bad' and the Yanks having to go in there and clean up the mess."³⁰⁶ While the British may have underestimated the impact the memory of the Iranian hostage crisis had on Reagan's decision to invade Grenada, the Americans also misunderstood the impact their invasion of Grenada would have on British and European efforts to deploy INF. In his memoirs, Shultz later admits that "there was a real chance that demonstrations could break the will of allied governments and prevent deployment – or at least pressure NATO so severely as to undermine our resolve to stand up to the Soviets in the future."³⁰⁷ His inability to understand the increased likelihood of protests and efforts to stop the British government's deployment of INF following America's unilateral decision to invade Grenada further demonstrates the difference between how a superpower and a "middle-ranking power" understood alliance diplomacy during the Cold War.

³⁰⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 340.

³⁰⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 373.

Ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick, certainly no Anglophile, acknowledged America's shortcomings in international diplomacy during this era, specifically at the UN, in a speech to the Heritage Foundation on 7 June 1982. She believed America's failure to accomplish its policy goals at the UN was "a direct reflection of what has been a persisting U.S. ineptitude in international relations that has dogged us all our national life," and "is especially manifest in our multilateral politics."³⁰⁸ While the United States often acted unilaterally or resorted to arm twisting in its foreign policy, the British constantly relied on the support of the United States government and Britain's other allies in order to accomplish its goals. The British thrived in a multilateral diplomatic arena such as the UN or NATO, as noted by Ambassador Kirkpatrick's description of their efforts during the Falkland's crisis: "They have made the organization [UN] function in ways that are responsive to their interests and their policy goals, and the fact that they were able to do it means it can be done."³⁰⁹ The United States, on the other hand, struggled to achieve its goals in such an environment.

The Grenada conflict thus reveals both Thatcher's belief in the importance of a strong internationalism in order to accomplish Britain's foreign policy goals, and the reason for this belief: Britain's inability to accomplish its foreign policy objectives without international assistance. While the Americans and Soviets could act unilaterally on the world's stage and remain largely unaffected by the resulting diplomatic backlash, Britain relied on American assistance to provide its nuclear deterrent and European cooperation in deploying this deterrent. Unfortunately for the Thatcher government, the

³⁰⁸ Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "The U.S. Role in the United Nations," in *The Reagan Phenomenon: And Other Speeches on Foreign Policy* (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1983) p. 103.

³⁰⁹ Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "The U.S. Role in the United Nations," p. 103.

conflict in Grenada caused both the Europeans and the British public to doubt America's ability to act within the bounds of international law and to adequately consult with its allies on important issues. Any country unafraid to act boldly and unilaterally posed a threat to international stability.³¹⁰

American action in Grenada thus represented an affront to Margaret Thatcher's core understanding of how foreign relations and the Anglo-American alliance should function. Instead of the United States facilitating the deployment of INF in Europe, the Americans continued to hinder the deployment process through their unilateral and unpredictable decision-making. Despite the headaches caused by American action in Grenada and elsewhere, the British successfully deployed American cruise missiles in the UK, and also encouraged its European allies to maintain their prior commitment to deploy cruise missiles. However, the situation could have been much different without the steady hand of a devout internationalist like Thatcher bridging the gap between American belligerency and European doubt.

³¹⁰ While many pointed to Reagan's actions in Grenada as a sign of warmongering and saber rattling, the President also demonstrated a high level of restraint and control during the international uproar following the Soviet Union's decision to shoot down a Korean passenger jet on 1 September 1983. One of the two hundred and sixty-nine passengers on board happened to be US congressman Lawrence P. McDonald of Georgia. While some in the Reagan administration and the American public called for extreme action, such as the abandonment of INF negotiations in Geneva, Reagan refused to resort to drastic action.

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