

“Hollywood-Style” Foreign Policy: Remembering the 1983 US Military Intervention in Grenada

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Grenada is an independent state, a member of the U.N., located in the southern portion of the Caribbean Sea very close to the mainland of the South America (Venezuela). The state is composed by southernmost of the Windward Islands combined with several small islands which belong to the Grenadines Archipelago, populated by almost 110,000 people of whom 82% are the blacks (2012 estimations). The state of Grenada is physically mostly forested mountains' area (of volcanic origin) with some crater lakes and springs. In the valleys are bananas, spices and sugar cane grown. The country is out of any natural wealth significance but has relatively high geostrategic importance. Economy was and is primarily agricultural with some very limited small-scale industry of the food production nature with developing tourism sector as growing source of the national G.D.P. The state budget is constantly under a high level of foreign debt (a “debt slavery” phenomenon).

As the island, Grenada was discovered by the Europeans (Ch. Columbus) in 1498 and colonized by the French in 1650 becoming a possession of the French royal crown in 1674. During the Seven Years War (1756–1763) between all major European states, Grenada was occupied by the British and according to the Peace Treaty of Paris in 1763 was given to the United Kingdom being a British possession for almost two hundred years with preservation of slavery. The process of democratization of the island started in 1950 when the universal adult suffrage is granted by the United Labor Party. Being shortly a member of the West Indian Federation (1958–1962) and seeking internationally recognized independence, Grenada was granted such separate independence only in 1974 with Matthew Gairy (a leader of the United Labor Party) as the first Grenada's PM. However, only three years later in 1979 Gairy was deposed from the post in a coup d'état lead by Maurice Bishop (1944–1983) as a leader of a Marxist political group under the official title of the New Jewel Movement. M. Bishop proclaimed a new Government under the name of the People's Revolutionary Government that became not welcomed by the U.S. administration like the Socialist (Marxist-democrat) Government in Chile after the 1970 elections formed by Salvador Allende (1908–1973).

The issue is in this case that Allende was the first Marxist in the world's history who became elected by the popular vote as the President of one sovereign and independent state. A new President of Chile was a head of the Unidad Popular that was a coalition of the Marxists (Communists) and the Socialists and therefore faced by hostility of the U.S.A. whose administration supported Chili Congress against Allende. The Congress backed by the U.S.A. heavily opposed Allende's radical program of nationalization and agrarian reform – a program voted by the electorate in 1970. Due to such obstruction, there were inflation, capital flight and balance-payments deficit which heavily contributed to an economic crisis in Chile in 1973: exactly what the U.S. administrated wanted and needed. The crisis became the main excuse for the military coup organized and accomplished by the Chili army

Commander-in-Chief general Augusto Pinochet (born in 1915) – a typical local exponent of the US global politics. As a consequence, there were around 15,000 killed people together with President Allende and about 10% of the Chileans who left the country during the new military dictatorship (1973–1990) which replaced Chile democracy elected by the people and brutally abolished all labor unions and any opposition organizations and groups. The capitalism was fully restored with the economy and social order very depended on the U.S. financial support as a price for transformation of the country into classic (U.S.) colony. Nevertheless, the 1973 military suppression of democracy in Chile was a clear message to the whole Latin America that the Monroe Doctrine of “America to the Americans” (read in fact as “Americas to the U.S.”) is still leading framework of the U.S. foreign policy in this part of the globe. For the matter of illustration, for instance, there was the U.S. direct military invasion of Panama followed by the fall of General Noriega in December 1989: “Operation Just Cause”.

Similarly to the case of Allende Case in Chile, Grenada governed by the President M. Bishop turned to the left in both inner and external policy of the state. Therefore, he encouraged very closer relations with F. Castro’s Cuba and potentially to the USSR. As a result, at the island there were some Cuban military presence composed by the engineers who were repairing and expanding the local airport. This fact became the main reason that political situation in Grenada became of interest of the U.S. administration. However, due to the internal quarrel within the People’s Revolutionary Government, Bishop was overthrown from the post and murdered by another Marxist, Bernard Coard, in 1983 who took control over the Government. There were the clashes of protesters with the governmental troops and soon violence escalated. However, the army troops under the command of General Hudson Austin soon took power and established a new military regime. This new Grenada coup was immediately followed by direct US military intervention in the island on October 23rd, under the order by the U.S. President Ronald Reagan (the “Operation Urgent Fury”), for the very real reason to prevent a Marxist revolutionary council to take power. The U.S. military troops left Grenada in December 1983 after the re-establishment of “democratic” (pre-revolutionary) regime and of course pro-American one transforming Grenada into one more Washington’s client state.

It is of very concern to see what was de jure explanation by the U.S. President Reagan for such military intervention and de facto the U.S. military occupation of one sovereign and independent state. The President, based on the C.I.A. reports on the threat posed to the U.S. citizens in Grenada (the students) by the Communist regime, issued the order to the U.S. Marines to invade the island in order to secure their lives. Here we have to remember a very fact of issue how much the C.I.A. reports have been (and are) really accurate and reliable by only two fresh examples:

In 1999 Serbia and Montenegro were bombed by the N.A.T.O.’s troops (the “Operation Merciful Angel”) exactly based on the C.I.A. information about the organized (the “Operation Horse Shoe”) and well done massive ethnic cleansing of the local Kosovo Albanians (100,000 killed) committed by the Serbian regular army and police forces.

In 2003 the U.S. and the U.K. troops invaded Iraq based also on the C.I.A. reports about possession of the A.B.C. weapons for mass destruction by the regime of Saddam Hussein (1937–2006) (the “Operation Desert Storm 2”).

However, in both mentioned cases the reports are “proved to be unproved”, i.e. very false.

The fact was that in the 1983 Grenada Case, there were really about 1,000 U.S. citizens in the island, majority of them studying at the local medical school. Citing the alleged danger to the U.S. citizens in Grenada, the President ordered around 2,000 U.S. troops, combined by some international forces from the Regional Security System based in Barbados. The White House claimed that it received a formal request for military intervention by the PM's of Barbados and Dominica. If it is true, and probably it is, then any state receiving such invitation by the foreign Governments (second states) has right to invade other state (third state) in order to restore the “democratic” order (in the sense of bringing justice) or at least to protect its own citizens. Nonetheless, the fact was that during the intervention in Grenada, the U.S. troops faced military opposition by the Grenadian army relying on minimal intelligence about the situation in the country. For example, the U.S. military used in this case old tourist maps of the island. Similar “mistake” the N.A.T.O. did in the 1999 Kosovo Case by bombing the Chinese embassy in the wide center of Belgrade using also outdated tourist map on which a new Chinese embassy did not exist. In order to break the Grenadian resistance the “Hollywood” President R. Reagan sent additional 4,000 troops to the island. Finally, an “international coalition” lead by the U.S. troops succeeded to replace the Government of Grenada by one acceptable to the U.S.A.

Regardless to the fact that a great part of the Americans did not support the 1983 Grenada Case that it took place only several days after a very disastrous terror act on the U.S. military post in Lebanon when over 240 U.S. troops were killed, calling into very question the use of the U.S. military force in order to achieve the political goals, Reagan's administration officially proclaimed the case to be the first “rollback” of the Communist influence since the beginning of the Cold War in 1949 (as the U.S. military interventions against the “Communist infection” in Korea and Vietnam have been unsuccessful). A justification of the military invasion was mainly framed within the idea that the U.S. citizens (students) in Grenada could be taken as the hostages similar to the 1979 Teheran Hostage Crisis. However, several U.S. Congressmen, like Louis Stoks (Ohio), denied any real danger for any American in Grenada prior to the invasion (that was confirmed and by the students themselves) followed by unsuccessful attempt by seven Democrats in the Congress, led by Ted Weiss, to introduce a resolution to impeach R. Reagan. Finally, the U.N. General Assembly with majority votes (108, with only 9 against and 27 abstentions) adopted Resolution 38/7 on October 28th, 1983 which clearly accused the U.S.A. for violation of international law (“deeply deplores the armed intervention in Grenada, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that State”).

The 1983 Grenada Case is not for sure either the first or the last “Hollywood-style” violation of the international law and territorial sovereignty of some independent state by the U.S. (or other) administration. But it is sure that it was done by the order of up today the only “Hollywood” cowboy-actor star in the office of White House in Washington.

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