

EDITORIAL

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Grenada . . . what now?

Getting out of Grenada, like getting out of a lot of other places the United States seems determined to enter, may prove more difficult than getting in turned out to be. As in so many other instances, once there, we immediately find ourselves costumed and cast to play a role . . . a role good old Uncle Sam is destined to play again and again.

As the curtain rises, Uncle Sam rushes to the rescue of a beleaguered damsel. In the second act, conflict develops and crises emerge. The third act sees Uncle Sam . . . battered, beaten, and bewildered . . . limping home and wondering why good guys come in last.

Uncle Sam's sorry image is not popular with Americans. Being forced to watch the re-runs (Korea, Vietnam, Beirut) is bad enough; that we may see them repeated in the Caribbean and Central America is an unhappy prospect indeed. Superpowers are supposed to win battles, not be forced to retreat ignominiously. What are we doing wrong? Certainly our intentions are good. . . .

A long time ago someone pointed out that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. We might do well to consider that possibility whenever we feel so motivated. Before we reach out our impulsive helping hand, we might be wise to look at all "worse case" developments and make contingency plans before proceeding with action.

In Grenada, for instance, economic, social, military, and human needs are overwhelming. It is obvious that expectations among Grenadians are that America will solve all their problems. And, in fact, those expectations may well be valid. We can hardly pull out and leave a void to be filled by unfriendly governments and ideologies, can we?

Grenada, one of the Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles, was discovered by Columbus in 1498 and settled by the English in the 17th century. Its people, a mixture of Euro-

pean, African, and Carib Indian stock, have been under British domination ever since. The island's 133 square miles supports an estimated population of over 100,000, a density of 775 inhabitants per square mile.

Political unrest has marked the island's last decade. Queen Elizabeth II, titular head of state (the reason Margaret Thatcher could not support our invasion when the United Nations voted on the question), was represented until 1979 by governor general Sir Paul Scoon. Then Prime Minister Maurice Bishop seized power. A 1980 attempt by a radical group to assassinate and overthrow Bishop failed, but that of October, 1983, succeeded.

Some reasons Grenadians look to the United States for assistance include these facts: the island has fewer than 400 miles of paved roads and only one doctor for every 4,000 people; there are no television sets, only 5,000 telephones, and the only newspaper is a daily which prints 39 copies for each 1,000 inhabitants; per capita income is less than \$700 a year.

In 1982, a \$70 million airport was completed with Cuban aid; we found approximately 1,000 Cubans living and working on Grenada at the time we invaded; most were captured and shipped back to Cuba. The question is: What now?

If we remain on the island, we are duty-bound to assume responsibility for the welfare of its people. Britain, of course, may not be entirely willing to abdicate her role, even though she has played only a titular part for ten years and more. If we were to leave the island, who could be ready, willing and able to repel boarders should Cubans elect to return?

Our role on Grenada for the foreseeable future is only slightly befogged; unless England exercises her prior claim, the United States is on the island for years, not months, to come.