

However, Mr. Knockaert worked out a plan for the evacuation of the Canadians, starting on Friday, October 21, with the existing authorities in Grenada. They again contacted the Canadians to determine who wished to leave, and a charter aircraft was arranged to come to Grenada to pick up the Canadians and a number of other foreign nationals on Monday, October 24. The High Commissioner in Barbados made arrangements for a 48-seat aircraft.

Members will be at least partly familiar with the difficulties experienced with clearance of this aircraft because of the fact that it was one of an airline owned by a number of countries in the Caribbean area and that at the last moment, after permission had been given by Prime Minister Tom Adams of Barbados, other countries objected to it going into Grenada. By the time the confusion in the communications with those far-flung islands was overcome by the helpful intervention of Prime Minister Charles of Dominica and the work of our High Commissioner, Mr. Noble Power, it was too late in the day for the aircraft to fly into Grenada on Monday. As Members of the House know, the invasion occurred early the next morning, and that made evacuation impossible from that time up until the present moment.

In dealing with the events of last weekend, may I say that on Friday, October 21, consultations were initiated with the Commonwealth heads of Government by all four Canadian High Commissioners in the region. These consultations preceded meetings of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States late October 21 and October 22 in Barbados and of the Caricom heads of Government in Port-of-Spain on October 22 and October 23. At the time of these consultations on October 21, while some Caribbean States spoke of the possibility of physical intervention, none indicated any planning that was under way of a firm nature, and there was no indication that United States involvement was contemplated. I might say that at that time some of the Caricom states strongly opposed any idea of military intervention. The result is that they were not consulted further by those who eventually became involved in the invasion.

Also Hon. Members are familiar with the timing of the military intervention. At this point I want to say that after it occurred, when I instructed our High Commissioners in Jamaica and Barbados to contact Prime Ministers Adams and Seaga, they both expressed deep concern that Canada was not consulted. At least one of them spoke on the telephone with our Prime Minister. They indicated—and we have learned it from other sources—that Prime Minister Charles of Dominica had intended to explain the OECS position to the Canadian Government. She said this on television. Apparently it did not happen because of the rapid and dramatic resolution of events.

There was an extremely serious situation in Grenada, a situation of disorder, chaos and violence which caused consternation in adjacent countries and beyond. It was the type of situation which could have endangered the lives of foreign nationals as well as Grenadian citizens. I would be quick to grant that there were many who felt that something had to be done with that existing vacuum.

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The principal questions with which we are all deeply concerned, whatever may be our views in the different corners of this House, are whether the action taken was justified and all other possible solutions of a less dangerous nature had been adequately examined. I hark back to the words of the Leader of the New Democratic Party because whatever the views of any Member, I do not think it is possible to find anyone in the House who disagrees with his description of the horror of war and what it does to young making, sometimes to young womankind, and so often these days to civilians. Only when the situation in Grenada has clarified will we know exactly what sufferings may have occurred there as a consequence of the course that was taken.

We understand the concern of other countries and the concern of the Leader of the New Democratic Party. War is terrible and, what is more, war is contagious. When it is seen that military intervention, no matter how noble the purpose may seem to be in one case, can occur in one location, there may be incentive for other countries under provocation to take that action with less justifiable motives.

We believe that wider consultations should have taken place before this action of military intervention occurred. We believe that it might have been possible—who can know now?—to have found a solution to the existing situation which would not involve the shedding of blood of young people, indeed of anyone.

Sir Geoffrey Howe said in the British House of Commons yesterday:

The United States took one view, the United Kingdom took another. It is no more for me to condemn them than it is for them to condemn us.

The Canadian position has been remarkably similar. We have said that we deeply regret that the Americans found it necessary to take that action. We regret in particular the lack of consultation. Another aspect of our position which needs to be remembered is that we have constantly said that if there is justification, the Americans have not presented it yet. There may be justification of which we do not know. I can only say that President Reagan did not present any new material justifications in his remarks tonight on television.

Mr. Broadbent: We will have to wait a long time for them.

Mr. Regan: I wonder, as we ponder this difficult problem, whether the position of the Opposition Parties might be somewhat different if they had at this moment the responsibility of office.

Again I say that we regret Canada was not consulted. We clearly were not. At seven o'clock on the eve of the invasion we were told by an undersecretary to our Ambassador in Washington, rather than a contact on a Minister to Minister or Chief of State basis, that some sort of rescue operation was under consideration and that possibly it might be of a military type. We were told that these options had to be presented to the President and that other options included an action by the Eastern Caribbean States alone. That hardly was consultation or information that an invasion would take place within hours.