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LESSONS OF GRENADA

Ronald Reagan's rescue of the island of Grenada two years ago this month was the most anti-Communist act our government has taken since the Eisenhower Administration rescued Guatemala from the Communists in 1954. It was also one of the most popular acts of the Reagan Administration despite immediate, universal condemnation by the liberal media.

As the President prepares to go to Geneva, it's good for him and for us to be reminded of the lessons we learned from Grenada. That act was so sudden, so surprising, and so dramatic, that we are still in awe of its success.

Historians will probably look back on the Grenada invasion of October 1983 as a turning point in official American policy toward Communism. Using a minimum of force, the United States was able to prevent the establishment of another Communist state in the Western Hemisphere.

The U.S. State Department recently published a selection from the 35,000 pounds of documents captured when our Marines landed in Grenada. They provide important insight into Soviet actions and plans in the Caribbean. ("Grenada Documents," GPO, $19)

It's clear from these documents that the Soviet Union was arming Grenada to function as a Soviet base supplied by weapons going through Cuba. The documents clearly show the deceitful behavior that is part and parcel of Communist strategy and tactics.

The captured documents prove again (as if anybody needed any proof) that the Soviets consistently mislead us about treaties. In the captured military treaty documents, the Grenadian Communists promised the Soviets that they would lie about the existence of secret agreements to ship arms from the U.S.S.R. to Grenada via Cuba.

The captured documents show that Grenada was becoming a major Soviet-aligned military fortress complete with Soviet military personnel. Grenada was being prepared to be an airbase for Soviet military jets, a port for Soviet ships, and an "invisible aircraft carrier" for the Soviets in the Caribbean if war ever broke out. The documents show that the Soviet master plan includes exporting revolution by guerrilla movements from every

base they can acquire and maintain.

Grenada was a key player in Soviet plans to get other beachheads in the Western Hemisphere. One captured message quotes Soviet military chief Marshal Ogarkov as saying, "Nineteen years ago we had only Cuba. Today we have Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada, and the battlefield is El Salvador -- we are making progress."

The captured documents prove that (to paraphrase Gertrude Stein) a Communist is a Communist is a Communist. The Grenada documents, which include thousands of internal memoranda of a Communist regime in power, detail a police state just like Cuba, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Angola, Vietnam, and every other satellite country. The documents describe how to repress political opponents, the press, the clergy, and the private sector.

The captured documents confirm that the Communists have not changed their ways; they are still a major threat to the Free World, and that what is at stake in this confrontation is freedom itself. Grenada gives hope to anti-Communist freedom fighters all over the world that they, too, may someday defeat Communism.

The Grenada invasion broke the mystique of the Brezhnev Doctrine that, once a country goes Communist, it must always remain Communist. Grenada exposed this for what it really is: just the impudent boast of a bloody dictator.

The Grenada invasion not only proved that Communism is reversible, but it legitimized the use of force to liberate the captive peoples. Grenada demolished the notion that it isn't appropriate for a Western democracy to use any but "political" or "negotiated" means to resolve conflicts.

One final lesson of Grenada was to expose the anti-Reagan and pro-appeasement bias of the national media elite. They thought the invasion would enable them to use Ronald Reagan as a whipping boy, but the media got their comeuppance when public opinion overwhelmingly backed President Reagan.

Congressmen Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and Ike Skelton (D-MO) have introduced a joint resolution in Congress to authorize the President to proclaim the week of October 20 as "The Lessons of Grenada Week." Such a week would be a good current history lesson for the American people and a good reminder to the President, as he prepares for Geneva, that the Communists are, indeed, as he has said, "an evil empire." If he trusts his own instincts, he will do what is right, successful, and popular.