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Reagan: Cuba aimed to occupy island

WASHINGTON — President Reagan said Thursday night in a televised speech that U.S. troops who invaded Grenada Tuesday found clear evidence that Cuba planned to occupy the tiny Caribbean island.

Defending his decision to act against Grenada's left-wing revolutionary council, which came to power in a coup on Oct. 12, Reagan accused the Soviet Union of encouraging violence on the island and in Lebanon.

Reagan spoke a few hours after the White House said the 2,000 U.S. Marines and Army Rangers in Grenada found a major Cuban military buildup patterned after the Cuban presence in Angola and Ethiopia.

Reagan said 600 Cubans described by the Havana government as construction workers had been taken prisoner, "and we have discovered a complete base with weapons and communications equipment which makes it clear a Cuban occupation of the island had been planned."

"We got there just in time," he said.

The White House said earlier that more than 1,000

Cubans were on Grenada and were heavily armed and commanded by a colonel.

Reagan said Tuesday he ordered the invasion of Grenada to meet a request for intervention made by Caribbean countries, to restore democracy and to protect 1,000 Americans there.

"I believe our government has a responsibility to aid of its citizens if their right to life and liberty is threatened," he said. "The nightmare of our hostages in Iran must never be repeated."

Reagan said the events in Grenada and Lebanon, where at least 225 American servicemen with the multinational peacekeeping force were killed by a terrorist bomb Sunday, were closely related even though they were oceans apart.

"Not only has Moscow assisted and encouraged the violence in both countries, it provides direct support through a network of surrogates and terrorists," he said.

Reagan said the United States had "strong circumstantial evidence" the attack on the Marines was directed by the same terrorists who bombed the U.S. Embassy in Beirut last summer.

U.S. officials said evidence points to Iranian terrorists.

He said Moscow has placed 7,000 advisers and technicians and massive weaponry in Syria, which he again blamed for the stalemate in Lebanon. Syria "makes no secret of its claim that Lebanon should be part of Greater Syria," he said.

Reagan said the time had passed when America's national security was based on a standing army in the United States and artillery batteries along its coasts.

"The world has changed," he said. "Today, our national security can be threatened in far away places. It is up to all of us to be aware of the strategic importance of such places and to be able to identify them."

Reagan pledged to get troops out of Grenada as soon as possible.

He also promised to take new steps to assure the security of American forces in Lebanon but rejected brooding calls to bring them home.

"We must not strip every ounce of meaning and purpose from their courageous sacrifice," he said.

First strike philosophy obsolete, Morland says

By Kema Soderberg

"You can't shoot the gun out of the bad guy's hand," said Howard Morland in his address, "The Danger of Nuclear War is Increasing."

Morland, the disarmament program coordinator for the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, explained Thursday night why a first strike military policy is obsolete and he described some alternatives. Morland wrote "The H-Bomb Secret," describing how to build a nuclear weapon in the late 70s. The article was once banned.

Morland said the original purpose of nuclear weapons wasn't to prevent a nuclear war and that our first plan was to attack all our enemy's cities leaving no survivors. Since the Soviet Union started developing its own nuclear arsenal after the Cuban Missile Crisis, this plan has become obsolete. Morland said the only way to destroy the enemy's weapons and "win" a nuclear war is to hit them while they are in the ground. In order to do this, the country must have a first strike system.

Morland said we must look at nuclear strategy when trying to understand "First Strike" nuclear warfare. He explained the rationale behind many missile systems including the MX and Pershing II.

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Staff photo by Craig Anderson

Randi Larence and daughter Katie, of Lincoln, protest the U.S. invasion of Grenada at the Federal Building Thursday.

U.S. invasion of Grenada act of cowardice, protesters say

By Lauri Hopple

The U.S. invasion of Grenada is an act of cowardice and frustration, said protestors in Lincoln Thursday.

About 25 people gathered in front of the Federal Building, 15th and O streets, to protest the invasion of the Caribbean island.

One of the protestors, Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, compared the invasion to a 250-pound boxer who "beats the daylights" out of a little girl. "That is cowardice," Chambers said. "The disparity between the U.S. military capability and Grenada's capability is greater than in that example," he said, adding that the U.S. took little risk when it invaded a country that "has no air force, no army, no navy."

According to an Associated Press article published in the Omaha World-Herald Wednesday, American troops numbered 1,900. They were reportedly supported by 300 troops from other Caribbean countries.

Grenadan troops reportedly numbered 1,200.

UNL associate professor of English and modern language Bruce Erlich said that the point of the invasion "seems to be an act of frustration." He said that since the Marines in Lebanon are in a "completely indefensible place" and the Reagan administration's plans in Nicaragua are failing, Reagan looked for a left wing government that he could strike out against and win.

"Ronald Reagan lives in a strange fantasy land where there are only two things; evil communism and all-good America," Erlich said. "In reality, Marines are dying in Lebanon. In reality, Marines are dying in Grenada."

Chambers said that by invading Grenada, the Reagan administration is trying to show small Central American and Caribbean countries that if they do not comply with U.S. wishes, "they may be in a world of trouble."

Teresa Holder, a Latin American Solidarity Committee member at the demonstration, said that the Grenada invasion is part of the administration's general plan for the Central American and Caribbean area.

Holder said that the Reagan administration's concern about the effects of the Marxist coup and for the safety of American medical students at Grenada is "only an excuse for a military invasion."

"I think he's thinking of doing something like this in Nicaragua," she said. "He's testing the waters in a place where he can have success."

Chambers said he expects the media to give the administration's motives for the invasion a "closer look" because of the ban placed on reporters in Grenada. Chambers said the government is presenting a distorted view of the invasion by banning the media.

The LASC has scheduled another protest for 4:30 p.m. today in front of the Federal Building.

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