Intervention in Grenada: Engaging *Jus Ad Bellum* in U.S. Decision Making

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Introduction

Did the United States’ decision to intervene in Grenada in 1983 meet the criteria of *jus ad bellum*? The role of international law in military intervention is an issue shrouded by controversy — and the United States’ decision to intervene in Grenada in 1983 is no exception. The intervention, code-named *Operation Urgent Fury*, came a week after the overthrow of the government and the murder of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. The United States faced harsh criticism from the international community and from members of Congress, who claimed the U.S. violated both the United Nations’ Charter and basic tenets of international law. Much of the scholarship and critique of the U.S. intervention in Grenada focuses on *jus in bello* and military action while on the ground in the island nation. However, the steps leading up to the decision to intervene had a profound impact on the trajectory of the rest of the conflict. We will explore if, and to what extent, the principles of *jus ad bellum* — including just cause, right intention, the principle of proportionality, as well as war being used as a last resort — affected the United States’ decision to intervene Grenada in 1983.

In this paper, we will argue that considerations of *jus ad bellum* had little practical influence on the United States’ decision to intervene in Grenada. The motives expressed by the Reagan Administration indicate interests independent of the norms that generally constitute a “just war.” However, it is apparent in public statements made by the White House that the Reagan Administration recognized the importance of just war rhetoric in rationalizing their decision and garnering public support for the military intervention. Our research finds an inconsistency between public statements made by the Reagan Administration and the motives expressed in private by senior White House officials. This paper will deconstruct the decision-making process to uncover the primary United States objectives that ultimately spurred the
decision to intervene in Grenada. First, we will separate public motivators from private motivators by examining whether the public arguments for intervention employ just war rhetoric. Secondly, we will determine if publicly and privately expressed motives were consistent and which had a greater impact on the decision to intervene in Grenada. Lastly, we will assess each of the motivators against the pillars of *jus ad bellum* to establish which aspects of the intervention can be considered just. Our research suggests that while public rhetoric surrounding the intervention in Grenada may be consistent with *jus ad bellum*, the United State’s private and genuine goals did not constitute a just argument to go to war. In other words, the Reagan Administration attempted to construe the decision to intervene in Grenada as just, but the concealed objectives of the military action are not consistent with *jus ad bellum*.

We will also explore how the decision-making process leading up to the intervention in Grenada was affected by the political climate and history of Reagan’s previous international policy regarding the Caribbean. We will examine the basic tenets of *jus ad bellum* in relation to the actions of the White House using documents from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. We will specifically use public and private conversations prior to the intervention to conclude whether just war rhetoric was present in the Administration’s private conversations and whether *jus ad bellum* was satisfied. Further findings and the implications of our case study will be discussed at the end of the paper.

**Cold War Tension**

The 1970s and 1980s saw regional instability in the Caribbean as communism began to spread throughout the region. During that time, Grenada seemed to be moving toward aligning with the Soviet Union, which alarmed the Reagan Administration. The New Jewel Movement (NJM), a small political party led by Maurice Bishop, remained a minority until March 12, 1979

Much of the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America were also plagued by conflict (Brands 1987). U.S. policy and attitudes towards Grenada was influenced by this regional instability — particularly because many in the U.S. believed Fidel Castro, president of Cuba at the time, was controlling the political climate of Grenada (Brands 1987, Hooker 1991). When Castro agreed to help fund the construction of an international airport in Grenada in 1979, relations with the United States began to deteriorate (Nguyen 2009, Riggs 1985). In March 1983, President Reagan gave a speech in which he said Grenada posed a significant threat to the U.S. (Nguyen 2009, Riggs 1985). Some scholars suggest that this indicates Reagan had a predisposition to invade Grenada and jumped on the opportunity at the first indication of instability (Riggs 1985, Rubner 1985, Thornton 2009). Because the U.S. viewed Grenada as a temporary hostage situation due to the fact American students were contained at St. George Medical School, a preemptive strike mindset weighed heavily on the decision to intervene (Williams 1997). There was a growing relationship between Grenada and Cuba as well, showing that ideological conflict may have been a more decisive factor than the just war thinking (Brands 1987, Williams 1997).

In any case, the catalyst for intervention was the arrest of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. On October 14, 1983, Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard attacked the authority of the Grenadian government and placed Prime Minister Bishop under house arrest (Nguyen 2009). By
October 19, the People’s Revolutionary Army had taken over military headquarters, implemented a strict 24-hour curfew, executed Bishop, and named Coard the new Prime Minister (Moore 1984). The curfew was officially imposed until October 24, but was lifted on the 21st for several hours to allow civilians to obtain necessary food and supplies (Riggs 1985). On October 23, the United States received formal requests for assistance from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Governor General of Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon. The requests cited violations of human rights, anarchic conditions, and bloodshed as reasons to intervene in Grenada (Nguyen 2009, Riggs 1985, Rubner 1985). The U.S. deployed troops on the evening of October 24, landing in Grenada early in the morning on the 25th, and successfully accomplished all the goals cited for intervention by October 28 (Nguyen 2009, Riggs 1985).

**Legality of Intervention**

Scholars generally identify the request for assistance from the Governor General, the appeal to the United States from members of the OECS, and the fact that 1,000 U.S. citizens were living on the island as the primary motivators for the U.S. decision to intervene in Grenada (Nguyen 2009, Riggs 1985). However, scholars do not agree on the validity of these issues as constituting just cause for intervention. Many argue that because intervention in Grenada did not specifically meet the criteria of just war theory, the war was unjustified (Nguyen 2009, Wheeler 1985). Conversely, the combination of a tradition of flexibility in international law and the belief that the United States was truly acting out of legitimate concern for U.S. citizens and Grenadian nationals leads some scholars to maintain that military intervention was justified (Riggs 1985).

Traditionally, six principles constitute *jus ad bellum*: having just cause, war being declared by a legitimate authority, having the right intention, probability of success, proportionality, and war being used as a last resort. A war is said to have just cause if force is
used only to correct a grave injustice. Governments are the only potential actors with legitimate authority to declare war. Right intention involves reconciliation and restoration of justice to the land and its people. Success must also be probable; arms may not be used in a futile case. Furthermore, to fit the parameters of proportionality, the potential benefits of war must outweigh its harmful effects. Finally, war must only be used as a last resort, after all other peaceful avenues have been exhausted (Butler 2003, Moseley 2009, Walzer 2004).

Michael Butler discusses how framing legitimizes going to war. The framing process is crucial for policy formation, especially foreign policy. Just war has become a central frame in Western policy decisions, but varying theories such as realism, hegemonic power theory, and ideological conflict theory, are all equally valid possibilities when looking at the intervention in Grenada (Butler 2012). A realist frame defines the problem as a shift in the bipolarity of power, wherein the U.S. would step in with force to defend its position at the top (Carr 2001, Morgenthau 1978). Relatedly, hegemonic power theory frames the issue as the U.S. needing to act as a police force in order to maintain the status quo (Gilpin 1988, Mace 2005). Finally, the ideological frame emphasizes the desire to spread liberal democracy (Butler 2012).

Michael Walzer discusses the difficulty in determining when humanitarian intervention is just; sometimes justice requires that a government be replaced, as was the case in the Rwandan genocide. He poses the question of whether or not risk-free war making, most importantly emphasizing protection of civilians, is necessary for humanitarian intervention (Walzer 2004). Waters argues that declarations and treaties authorized by the U.N., OECS, and Organization of American States (OAS) were violated when the U.S. intervened in Grenada (Waters 1986). He cites Article 19 of the OAS Charter of 1948, which prohibits intervention directly or indirectly “in the internal or external affairs of any other state” (Secretariat of Legal Affairs 2012), as well
as the principles and purposes of the U.N., which require members to “make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of their disputes” (Charter of the United Nations 2012) as reason for denying that the U.S. had just cause for intervention.

Nardin and Pritchard examine how human rights violations have provided a basis for intervention which clashes with norms accepted by the international system (Nardin and Pritchard 1988; Riggs 1985; Wheeler 1985). Broadly, the Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance signed in Rio in 1947, of which the U.S. is a signatory, endorses the principle of nonintervention. The question at hand is whether a rescue mission constitutes a humanitarian act or an act of national interest. Furthermore, the discussion of humanitarian intervention is based on the assumption that human rights violations were taking place in Grenada. Many scholars argue that, despite the overthrow of the government, neither Grenadians nor American citizens were at risk of humanitarian violence (Nguyen 2009; Riggs 1985). The strict curfew imposed on the country of Grenada by the Revolutionary Military Council may have actually been an attempt to protect citizens and prevent unnecessary violence (Riggs 1985). However, other scholars maintain that human rights violations escalated following the overthrow of the government, and that citizens were in immediate danger (Moore 1984; Riggs 1985). Moore argues that “people of Grenada were held hostage as the power struggle and political vacuum continued” (Moore 1984: 146).

In addition to human rights concerns, Richard Hooker emphasizes the U.S. anxiety over augmenting communist power. The U.S. was already apprehensive that Marxist insurgents were gaining support in El Salvador and Nicaragua, as well as Castro garnering influence in Caribbean nations (Hooker 1991, Riggs 1985). Thornton goes further, arguing that Grenada was nothing more than a preemptive strike against the Soviet Union. Tracing the history of an arms negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union, he argues that despite rhetoric
pointing to more humanitarian reasons, Grenada was simply a culmination of the negotiations. Reagan needed to make it impossible for the Soviet Union to deliver the twenty missiles it was planning on stockpiling the small island (Thornton 2009).

A point of contention between scholars is whether or not the OECS asked the U.S. for assistance in Grenada. Hooker states, “OECS concern for conditions in Grenada were undoubtedly genuine, but it now seems clear that the U.S. State Department was heavily involved in framing and shaping the formal request for assistance” (Hooker 1991: 65). Other scholarly opinions suggest that the OECS agreed that military action was needed and the logical next step would be to ask the U.S. to help (Moore 1984).

An additional legal issue is the War Powers Resolution. The Resolution was passed after President Richard Nixon vetoed it on November 7, 1973. It was written to lay down guidelines that must be followed by the president and Congress before sending the United States Armed Forces into a hostile situation. According to various members of Congress, President Ronald Reagan and his Administration did not abide by these laws during the intervention in Grenada (Riggs 1985, Rubner 1985). Section 3 of the resolution states, “The President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances” (Turner 1983: 143).

However, if a timeline of this period is examined, it appears that the Reagan Administration skirted around this guideline as they did not inform Congress of the decision that had been made to send the troops to Grenada until three hours after the forces had been deployed (Brands 1985, Hooker 1991, Nguyen 2009, Riggs 1985, Rubner 1985). This fact also goes against Section 4(a), which requires that the president submit a forty-eight-hour notice to
Congress that he will be sending in troops to a foreign country with the goal to attack or invade (Rubner 1985). Hooker suggests that “President Reagan appears to have accepted each recommendation for action without critical comment” (Hooker 1991: 70). Historical events seem to show that the Reagan Administration went behind Congress’s back during the intervention in Grenada; however, according to some scholars, data shows that a majority of Congress and the American public still supported Reagan’s decision (Rubner 1985, Wheeler 1985). On the other hand, seventy-nine other countries expressed public disapproval for the U.S. intervention, claiming the military actions were unjust (Nguyen 2009).

The primary questions of legality concern whether or not the U.S. had just cause to invade as well as if the Governor General of Grenada constitutes a legitimate authority. While there are no universally ratified regulations on military intervention, the U.S. government does have laws dictating proper military procedure. Historical evidence points to the fact that the Reagan Administration’s decision leading up to the military intervention was inconsistent with these laws. Scholarly research indicates a gap in understanding of the reasoning behind the Reagan Administration’s intervention and the morality of the decision.

Hypotheses

We identified the principles of *jus ad bellum* as an appropriate tool to analyze the U.S. military intervention in Grenada. In order to comprehensively explore the process of intervention, we have divided our research into three hypotheses. These hypotheses look at the different spheres of communication, analyzing the justifications for intervention made in separate spheres.
H1: Public Statements. The Reagan Administration recognized the importance and value of just war rhetoric in garnering public support and rationalizing their decision to intervene in Grenada. Speeches made by President Reagan, press briefings, and other public statements released by the White House reflect primary motives for intervening in Grenada that are consistent with the values of *jus ad bellum*.

Our second hypothesis accounts for the fact that White House public relations are not just meant to inform the country and world with facts, but to manipulate a particular image of the administration in power. This hypothesis is meant to both test the consistency between public and private conversations about the decision to intervene in Grenada and to determine which motives played a prominent role in the intervention decision-making process. You may want to read and cite Mearsheimer’s *Why Leaders Lie* and the other literature on political manipulation as a motivator of this hypothesis.

H2: Consistency. Public statements made by the Reagan Administration outlining the motives for intervention do not align with the motives expressed in private by senior White House officials. Public relations attempts to influence public opinion, but the desires articulated in private discussion and debate more accurately reflect the goals of the U.S. government in intervening in Grenada.

If H2 is confirmed, we are then interested in whether the privately expressed motives for intervention adequately satisfy the components of *jus ad bellum*. Since we contend the private motives are the true reasons for intervention, the third hypothesis ultimately determines whether the decision to intervene was justified.
H3: Justification of Authentic Motives. The authentic, privately voiced, motives for the decision to intervene in Grenada do not satisfy the tenets of *jus ad bellum*. The true objectives of the Grenada intervention reflect an emphasis on national interest and other goals that do not correspond with the values of a just war.

While there has been extensive research done on whether the intervention in Grenada was, as a whole, a just war, scholarship focusing specifically on the decision-making process and the role of *jus ad bellum* is limited in scope. Furthermore, we believe our research is unique in its concentration on primary source documents from within the White House and in our isolation of public motives versus private motives. Our study is consistent with the majority of other research findings that the decision to intervene in Grenada did not satisfy the criteria of *jus ad bellum*.

Methods

In order to fully understand the role *jus ad bellum* played in the decision making process, our study looks directly at documents from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. We looked at internal memos, transcripts, notes, comments, and National Security Association (NSA) briefings from inside the White House, as well as speeches, press briefings, and announcements made to the general public. Our research allows us to look directly at the information given to the president and the conversations between senior staffers leading up to the intervention, which we then evaluated against the six primary tenets of *jus ad bellum*. Our goal was to isolate the specific data, discussions, and influences that motivated the Reagan Administration to ultimately make the decision to invade Grenada.
To test our first hypothesis, we looked directly at documents concerned with public perception of the decision to intervene — primarily speeches made by President Reagan and briefings by Press Secretary James Brady — as well as internal memos and interagency documents which discuss the best way to present the United States’ position and purpose for intervening in Grenada. Within these documents, we focused directly on allusions to and specific mentions of goals and objectives in Grenada. After compiling a set of “public motives,” we analyzed these motives against the tenets of *jus ad bellum* — determining whether the public face put forward by the Reagan Administration could reasonably be considered just.

To assess our second hypothesis we analyzed documents dealing with internal conversations by the president and other high-ranking White House officials — again, as in our test of hypothesis one, looking for indications of and references to the motivations for intervening in Grenada. We then compared the motivations expressed privately amongst members of the Reagan Administration to those expressed publicly to the American people and international community — looking to see whether there was an overlap or disconnect between the two spheres of communication.

Our third hypothesis is based on the assumption that our second hypothesis is true — there is a distinction between the arguments made for intervening in Grenada in public and the arguments articulated privately in the Reagan Administration, and that the private motives are the authentic objectives for intervention. To examine this hypothesis, we followed the same procedure as hypothesis one: we looked at the private motivations to intervene (determined in our test of the second hypothesis), and tested these rationales against *jus ad bellum*.

To minimize the subjectivity that is, by nature, a risk of a case study, we compiled the lists of “motivators” for the intervention, used in all three hypotheses, prior to actually evaluating
them against tenets of *jus ad bellum*. This assisted in preventing a conscious or subconscious researcher bias to prove the hypotheses. Process tracing identifies the possible motivations for intervention, but can be subjective. However, we are confident that the objectives we identified are authentic because they align with other scholarly writing on the subject and represent a diverse set of opinions (both “just” and “unjust”) — thus indicating we did not consciously or subconsciously select specific motives consistent with personal opinion in order to substantiate a hypothesis.

Because the research looks only at the 1983 U.S. intervention in Grenada, the study lacks generalizability to other instances of intervention or conflict in which *jus ad bellum* is called into question. However, our goal was not to provide an analysis of all instances in which *jus ad bellum* is called into question, but to look specifically at the rhetoric surrounding the decision to invade Grenada. Due to the specific set of circumstances surrounding each unique instance of military intervention, designing a study that attempts to generalize the influence of *jus ad bellum* would be highly difficult. We saw more value in research with high internal validity, despite a lack of external validity.

Our second hypothesis assumes that private conversations are a more accurate indicator of motivation than public statements. This assumption leaves our study vulnerable to the possibility that a public statement, which differs from a private discussion, may actually be the true motivation behind the intervention. However, because presidential administrations are concerned with image and public support, we maintain that leaders and high level officials are more likely to express their true opinions in private rather than in public. Therefore, if there is a variance between public and private statements, we identify the private discussion as a more precise understanding of the Reagan Administration's beliefs.
Not all documents from the period of time leading up to the decision to intervene in Grenada are available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. There were a considerable number of files, specifically NSA briefings and White House Situation Room reports, which remain classified due to “national security” threats. Despite these threats to our research, we are confident that our findings are reasonably sound and make effective use of the resources available.

Since the majority of our research is drawn from documents at the Reagan Library, our study consists primarily of White House documents — meaning we are limited in our ability to study the role of Congress in deciding to intervene. Theoretically, Congress holds the ultimate decision-making power in deciding to invade a country — which would render our research incomplete. However, historical research shows that Congress did not play any role in the decision-making process leading up to the intervention in Grenada — President Reagan did not involve Congress in the discussion surrounding Grenada until after troops were already deployed. Because of this, our research of the decision-making process remains valid despite the fact it focuses exclusively on White House documents.

Results

Ample evidence supports our first hypothesis that the Reagan Administration used just war rhetoric to rally public support for the military actions taking place in Grenada. Press briefings and statements from public liaisons from various White House departments emphasized the importance of rescuing the Americans on the island and the necessity to restore order to Grenada. In a joint press briefing with Prime Minister of Dominica Eugenica Charles, at 9:07 a.m. on October 23, Reagan expressed,
“We have taken this decisive action for three reasons. First, and of overriding importance, to protect innocent lives...second, to forestall further chaos. And third, to assist in the restoration of conditions of law and order and of governmental institutions in Grenada” (Joint Press Briefing, Oct. 23).

On the first point, Reagan claimed that approximately 1,000 Americans on the island, including medical students and senior citizens, as well as other foreign residents and Grenadians, were in danger (Joint Press Briefing, Oct. 23). Though there is less documentation concerning the well-being of non-American foreigners and natives of Grenada, a NSC telegram to the Department of State from the embassy in Bridgetown on October 23, which most likely reached the eyes of Reagan, states that less than ten percent of medical students wanted to leave Grenada (Telegram, Oct. 24). Despite this information, Reagan expressed concern for the safety of American citizens as the top reason warranting intervention — thus supporting just war theory.

In the talking points of the White House, Faith Whittlesey, director of the office of public liaison, included that “inaction would have aggravated the situation and increased dangers to foreign nationals and regional peace” (Memo, Feb. 21). In letters addressed to family and friends of the servicemen who served in Grenada and Lebanon, Lenas Kojelis, public liaison for the White House, stressed the importance of the action in maintaining the “preservation of true peace and freedom” (Letter, Oct. 28). Thus, public documents suggest that the Administration made a thorough effort to consistently emphasize the need to quell chaos and restore law and order.

In the White House Talking Points, delivered on October 28th, justified that the U.S. constituted a legitimate authority to intervene. In his speech to the American public, Reagan stressed that because the OECS states, which requested military assistance in Grenada, were not signatories of the Rio Treaty, the OECS treaty was their collective security agreement (White
House Talking Points, Oct. 28). Such documents also cite OAS Charter Articles 22 and 28, which demand the maintenance of security and peace, especially in the case that America’s peace is endangered. Tied to this, Reagan asserted on October 27th that America’s national security was threatened by the chaos prompted by the assassination of Maurice Bishop (Speech, Reagan, Oct. 27). Along the same lines, Whittlesey suggested the president highlight that action was not taken with the intention of manipulating Grenada’s political system — this could be seen as analogous to the Brezhev doctrine of perpetuating socialist governments — which the U.S. condemned (Letter, Oct. 28).

Our second hypothesis was constructed to test the consistency between statements made by the Reagan Administration in public and the opinions and motives for action that were expressed in private conversations amongst senior White House officials. The most challenging aspect of analyzing whether or not public and private motivations aligned is identifying what exactly the motives for intervention in Grenada were. In pouring through the massive number of White House documents leading up to the decision to send troops into Grenada, it became apparent there was a lack of consistency not only between public and private statements but also between all the documents in general. Even so, there were four themes that appeared consistently in both public and private documents — prevention of human rights violations, protection of Americans and other civilians, promotion of democracy and the end of anarchic conditions, as well as the pursuit of “national interest.” However, while each of these themes appeared in both the public and private spheres, there was a distinct difference in the emphasis and language used to frame the ideas.

Internal documents show that the Reagan administration certainly had information that pointed towards violence that could have been understood as a violation of human rights. A NSC
cable from the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown detailed the abuse and torture that political detainee Mitchell faced in a Grenadian prison (Telegram, Oct. 1). NSA reports coming from the island indicated that the coup had resulted in the death of a handful of Grenadian citizens. However, speeches made by President Reagan to the American public indicate a level of aggression and violence on the island that do not reflect internal information — calling the situation on the ground a “bloodletting” and an “orgy of murder.” Human rights violations were heavily emphasized to the American public, and while they were certainly mentioned in internal conversations, internal documents reveal that concern for human rights played a minimal role in the decision to intervene in Grenada.

Fear for the safety of the American medical students in Grenada was arguably the most prominent aspect of public rhetoric about the decision to intervene. In speeches made to Congress and the American public, President Reagan continually reiterated that the students’ safety was his “paramount concern” (Telegram, Oct. 24). On the other hand, in internal documents, discussion of the safety of American citizens is limited compared to analysis of Soviet and Cuban control of the island. A handwritten note from a senior White House advisor, on a draft of President Reagan’s address to the American public informing them of the intervention in Grenada, reminds speech writers to add a mention of the American students on the island (Draft, Oct. 23). Prior to this edit, any mention of the safety of American civilians had been absent — adding this motivation as an afterthought indicates that it had not played a significant role in internal decision making.

Whether it actually meant to pursue national interest and bring peace to Grenada was unclear in both public and private White House documents. On one hand, President Reagan publicly stated on several occasions that one of three primary purposes for intervening in
Grenada was to “assist in restoration of democracy” in order to “forestall further disorder,” yet he also makes the argument that American actions were meant to restore order — not dictate a political system (Speech, Reagan, Oct. 24). In a speech to supporters of the Republican Party, President Reagan tried to rally support around the intervention in Grenada by characterizing Americans as “happy warriors out to seize back a country, and a world, to freedom” (Speech, Reagan, Oct. 24). The use of the verb “seize” gets much closer to the reality of internal White House conversations than most other public statements. Dozens of internal memos circulated amongst senior officials discuss a growing relationship between Grenada and the Soviets and Cubans, and the repercussions these relationships might have on the United States. Intelligence officers speculated that a new airport in Port Salines was being constructed to make room for nuclear capable bombers and existing ports would be able to accommodate nuclear ballistic submarines (Memo, Oct. 27). Concerns that Grenada was becoming a “foothold for Soviet activities in the Caribbean” began mounting in March 1983 (Department of State). By August, military officials had begun to develop action plans for the intervention in Grenada. Prior to the coup in August, White House officials were reluctant to take any military action towards Grenada for fear of alienating other Caribbean nations, but internal discussions consistently emphasized the fact that growing Cuban and Soviet presence in Grenada posed a serious threat to American national security (Department of State). Internal conversations revealed that economic interests were at stake as well — as tension in Grenada began to mount, American Airlines began to put pressure on the White House as they feared losing money (Cable, Oct. 21). Discussion of national security and interest were minimal in public statements despite the fact that the crux of internal conversations focused on American benefits.
Because both public and private motivations for intervention are similar, our second hypothesis cannot be concretely supported. However, the emphasis on certain motivators was definitively different in internal conversation than what was presented to the American public. Human rights violations and concern for civilians are portrayed to the public as the primary reasons for intervention in Grenada, while internal documents show that the decision to intervene was rooted in national interest and security. While the same motivations are presented both publicly and internally, a nuanced analysis of the way the issues are portrayed and the way they are discussed reveal a clear inconsistency.

*Jus ad bellum* is used to measure the morality of entering into a war or invading a nation. As stated above its basic tenets are just cause, right intention, the principle of proportionality — whether the methods and means are equal to the ends desired by the act of aggression — and lastly, war being used as the last resort. Hypothesis three (H3) states that authentic, privately voiced, motives for the decision to invade Grenada do not satisfy the tenets of *jus ad bellum*. In addition, H3 suggests that the true objectives of the Grenada intervention display an emphasis on national interests and other objectives that do not agree with the principles of a just war. The documents from the Reagan Presidential Library confirmed this hypothesis. The privately-voiced motives of the Reagan Administration were less focused on the welfare of the American people and human rights violations — this is not to say it had no influence on the decision making process — than on minimizing the spread of communism, gaining more economic power, and furthering American influence within Caribbean nations.

The authentic motives of the landing in Grenada include the concern with the rising spread of communism, the economic benefits that were present in the U.S., and the safety of the American people. With increasing tension brought about by the Cold War, Soviet-American
relations were already strained. Cuba’s communist government also increased U.S. concerns with the spread of communism. During this time communism was becoming a popular choice for governments, particular those that were easily influenced by larger governments.

As revealed by our first hypothesis, the U.S. used just war rhetoric to garner support. This meant putting an emphasis on human rights and getting the Americans home safely — while no one argued the legitimacy of this concern, the focus placed on this issue was unequal in private and public discourse. Internal documents for the Reagan Administration show that the U.S was equally, if not more concerned, about the use and exploitation of Grenada as a military base for Cuba and the Soviet Union (Telegram, Oct. 24). The U.S. Administration had concerns about Grenada and its vulnerability to socialism before the murder of Bishop, therefore when the OECS requested assistance and American lives could have been, or at least were suggested to have been in danger, the Reagan Administration thought the most prudent response would be to invade.

The decision to invade the island of Grenada appears not to have had a just cause or motives of right intention. The concerns regarding U.S. citizens’ lives are valid, however the private conversations emphasize the governments concern with the rise of communism. The U.S. took the invitation from the OECS and invaded the nation without a significant consideration of *jus ad bellum*. The motives for the intervention were based on national interest but they were glossed over by the overdramatized risk of losing American lives. Since the U.S. had national interest to protect Grenada from communist government, furthering their relationships with Cuba and the Soviet Union, and protecting U.S. businesses in that nation, the intervention was made regardless of the *jus ad bellum* tenets.
Another key principle of *jus ad bellum* is that military action taken must be proportional to the disconcerting events. If the Reagan Administration was solely acting based on their concerns about the students, then intervention was the logical next step. Documents were found which showed the new government of Grenada’s willingness to let American students out of the country. In a document, from the government of Grenada to the U.S., the NSC committee stated, “that any U.S. and other foreign citizens who wish to return to Grenada in the future, are welcome to do so, we are for peace, friendship and for maintaining the historical established ties between our countries and hope they would grow and strengthen” (Situation Listing, Oct. 24). Regardless, the U.S. felt it necessary to go into the nation and control the situation — this action is a direct violation of the *jus ad bellum* principles.

In order to better substantiate that the U.S. did not follow the tenets of *jus ad bellum*, documents regarding other nations opinions of the U.S. intervention in Grenada were considered. When the OECS was discussing if it was appropriate to ask the U.S. to invade Trinidad, Guyana and Belize were not in favor of this option. Trinidad was animatedly in favor of other non-violent and less controlling methods. The government of Sweden stated that, “this was done in flagrant violation of the UN Charter and, in any event, must be condemned” (Situation Listing, Oct. 24). Not only was Sweden frustrated with the decision made by the U.S. government but the Nigerian, the Netherlands, Bolivia, Greece, Argentina and Nicaragua, just to name a few, were unsupportive of the U.S. decision. Many other nations including Panama would neither support nor condemn U.S. action in Grenada. Only Haiti, Chile, and South Korea seemed very supportive of the U.S. decision, however those countries had incentive to maintain close relations with the U.S.

**Discussion**
Our research points to a nuanced confirmation of all three hypotheses. There is strong evidence supporting our first hypothesis that the Reagan Administration intentionally used rhetoric that was consistent with just war theory to successfully garner public approval. Furthermore, our second hypothesis — which examined if the publicly shared motivators were inconsistent with the authentic motivators — was substantiated, though not as clearly as anticipated. The Reagan administration did express to American citizens it’s reasoning for intervention in Grenada; however, the evidence suggests that these motivators were framed in a certain way to manipulate the public’s perception of the issue. While the motivators communicated in both public and private may at surface level seem the same, the impact they had on White House decision-making was not candidly discussed. This inconsistency supported our third hypothesis: the motivators for intervention in Grenada were communicated to the public as primarily concern for U.S. citizens on the island while within private conversations the key concern was Communist threats. These private conversations reveal that the Reagan Administration’s true motivation for intervention was primarily national interest — a motivation that conflicts with the core tenets of *jus ad bellum*.

In order to satisfy *jus ad bellum*, military action must have a legitimate authority, a just cause, right intention, and a guarantee that all other possible measures have been tried for a use of force to be just. Whether or not the OECS or Governor Scoon’s plea to the U.S. constituted a warranted authority to intervene is questionable at best. In doing so, they broke the U.N. Charter and angered many European allies. There is debate, however, over what constitutes the concept of “legitimacy.” The notion of legitimacy, within the context of *jus ad bellum*, is defined by international law and treatises, but the United States does not recognize international law as binding. This points to a greater problem: in the modern world, *jus ad bellum* may not be the
most appropriate measure of morality. *Jus ad bellum* is grounded in an understanding of military action that is simplistic, and does not leave room for the unique complexities that accompany every instance of conflict. *Jus ad bellum* essentially disregards the greater Cold War context of the Grenada conflict.

This leads us to the discussion of whether national interests are, in this case, mutually exclusive with just war theory. During this time, national interest revolved around postponing the communist threat. With the rise of the USSR and the spread of communism around the world, the United States found it important to take a strong stance against this governmental ideology and work to prevent its spread. Multiple communist countries — including Cuba, the USSR, and North Korea supported the island of Grenada — where they were thought to have been laying down strong ideological roots in a poor and less stable nation. By invading the country and overthrowing the government led by the New Jewel Movement, the United States had the opportunity to establish an ideological government more in line with what they desired. Before the removal of American troops, the Grenadian people were given the chance to vote for the first time to elect a president and vice president to run their new nation, an example of the democratic rule the United States wished to see in the nation. The national interests of this time almost solely related to the Cold War — and therefore stopping the spread of communism. Promoting democracy in the Caribbean was certainly a legitimate approach to protecting against the potential threat of communism. While the spread of democracy may occasionally coincide with just war conduct, in the case of Grenada, this was not so.

*Jus ad bellum* is a highly valuable and beneficial approach to analyzing the legitimacy of the intervention in Grenada. Unfortunately, in many ways the six tenets that must be considered are more subjective than definitive, decreasing the utility of the theory, particularly in the context
of an academic paper. This is not to say that we disagree with just war theory, only that as it stands, it is difficult to apply in an impartial way. According to *jus ad bellum*, because the intervention in Grenada was unjustified, it was also immoral. While we agree that, by most standards, intervention in Grenada was unjustified, we draw the line at calling the decision immoral. The national interests that the Reagan Administration pursued in Grenada were ultimately meant to protect the sovereignty and freedom of the United States — a pursuit that is difficult to characterize as immoral.

This study only examined *jus ad bellum* in the intervention of Grenada. By examining other wars or invasions during Reagan’s presidency, such as the bombing of Beirut or the raid on Tripoli, we might get better insight into what influenced the Administration’s decisions to use military force. Perhaps other cases did follow *jus ad bellum* and Grenada was a rare exception, or perhaps *jus ad bellum* is simply an ineffective means of analyzing the legitimacy of the use of military force. Further research into other cases may also reveal different framing and rhetoric used to justify combative measures. In looking at other instances of military combat, even beyond the Reagan administration, it may shed more light on the practicality of just war theory. Whatever the case, continuing to look at and pursue the underlying motives and rationale that drive decision makers to the use of force will help to expand on the processes that are used to analyze military action.
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