

Security, Sovereignty, and Public Order in the Caribbean

Ivelaw L. Griffith

Professor of Political Science, Dean of The Honors College
Florida International University

A redefinition of what constitutes a threat to security is in order. Most important, though, is the question of whose security and whose interests are at stake, or, more specifically, of what the connection is between the abstract “public” or “national,” interest and the specific and concrete interests of diverse national and international constituencies.

Jorge Nef¹

The most common sources of insecurity in the Caribbean affect the quotidian experiences of ordinary people.

Jorge I. Domínguez²

Introduction

Viewed cursorily, these two epigraphs seem dichotomous in that the first deals with broad, conceptual issues, while the second is region specific. Yet, they have a certain symbiosis, as they address different but linked elements of the subject of security in the Caribbean. While some scholars would consider the propositions by Nef and Domínguez as undisputed, others would challenge them, as they raise implications for several issues pertaining, among other things, to security interests, sovereignty, resource allocation, and countermeasures, which are the basis of perennial scholarly (and policy) disputes.

This paper addresses some of these issues. It is organized into three sections. The first, Conceptual Context, examines some of the discourse on security in the Caribbean, probing some of the issues raised by Nef. The second, Issues and

¹ *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Global Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*. Ottawa: International Development Research Center, 1999, p. 12.

² “Introduction” in Michael C. Desch, Jorge I. Domínguez, and Andrés Serbin, eds., *From Pirates to Drug Lords: The Post-Cold War Caribbean Security Environment* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 2.

Security in the Caribbean

Institutions, focuses on drugs, crime, and terrorism as key—although not the only—public security issues, and on some of the public security institutions that deal with them. Two sets of discussions ensue in the third section, called Parameters and Future Engagement Areas. The first is an examination of a few issues germane to the establishment of public security as a credible component of security studies in the Caribbean. The second points to some areas that warrant further attention.

Conceptual Context

For the entire post-World War II period until a decade ago there was wide consensus among political scientists that traditional Realist theory provided the appropriate conceptual architecture to examine questions of security. Among other things, Realist theory emphasizes the military and political aspects of security, focuses on the state as the unit of analysis, and views security as “high politics”—power-based, state-centered, and oriented towards the international arena. Moreover, it postulates that states are rational actors pursuing their own national interests, and that military force is the most effective way to cope with threats. However, the vicissitudes of international politics since the end of the Cold War have led many scholars to replace the traditional Realist conceptual lenses used to examine security with other, non-conventional ones.³

Yet, the conceptual adaptation has not been as striking for Caribbean security scholars, as non-conventionality has long been the convention.⁴ In the Caribbean, security has never really been viewed merely as protection from military threats. It has not been just military hardware, although it has involved this; not just military force, although it has been concerned with it; and not simply conventional military activity, although it certainly has encompassed it. Thus, in the context of the Caribbean, security may be defined as protection and preservation of a people’s freedom from external military attack and coercion, from internal subversion, and from the erosion of cherished political, economic, and social values. Included here are democratic choice and political

³ See, for example, Buzan, *Peoples, States, and Fear*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991; Joseph J. Rohm, *Defining National Security*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993; and Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?” *International Security* Vol. 24 (Fall) 1999, pp. 5-54.

⁴ Among the best evidence of this over the past two decades are David Simmons, “Militarization in the Caribbean: Concerns for National and Regional Security,” *International Journal* Vol. 40 (Spring) 1985: 348-76; Alma H. Young and Dion E. Phillips, eds., *Militarization in the Non-Hispanic Caribbean*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1986; Anthony T. Bryan, J. Edward Greene, and Timothy M. Shaw, eds., *Peace, Development, and Security in the Caribbean*. London: Macmillan, 1990; Ivelaw L. Griffith, *The Quest for Security in the Caribbean: Problems and Promises of Subordinate States*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993; Ivelaw L. Griffith, “Caribbean Security: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2 1995: 3-32; Jorge Rodríguez Beruff and Humberto García Muñiz, eds., *Security Problems and Policies in the Post Cold War Caribbean*. London: Macmillan, 1996; and Joseph S. Tulchin and Ralph H. Espach, eds., *Security in the Caribbean Basin*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000.

Security in the Caribbean

stability in the political area, sustainable development and free enterprise in the economic domain, and social equality and respect for human rights in the social arena.⁵

Hence, security in the Caribbean is multidimensional, with military, political, and economic dimensions. Moreover, it is concerned with both internal and external threats. Further, the state is not the only unit of analysis; non-state actors are equally important. Indeed, some non-state actors own or can mobilize more economic and military assets than some states. Jorge Domínguez offers a clear statement on some of the historical continuities in this regard:

Since the sixteenth century, the powers and the pirates have helped shape the international environment of the lands and peoples around the contours of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. In doing so, they have interacted with each other and with “local” actors in and around the American Mediterranean. These local actors have been quite varied as well, ranging from states to individuals.⁶

The following scholarly proposition, reminiscent of the first line of the Nef epigraph, is, therefore, hardly disputable by close observers of the Caribbean,

In the Caribbean, as around the world, security concerns regarding state-based military conflict have been replaced by less institutionalized transnational threats These dangers constitute a new security agenda for the region, and require the revision of traditional concepts of national and regional security with a view to new ones that include but are no longer centered around traditional state-based threats.⁷

Neither can one credibly object to the following observation from a policy maker within the region:

Security can no longer be achieved by merely building walls or forts. The very large and the very small states of this hemisphere have found that security, in an age of globalization, is rather complex. Security includes the traditional notions of yesteryear, but today, security must now be extended, in the case of the small-island state, to encompass several non-traditional aspects. Natural disasters, for example, pose a greater threat to our security than does the loss of national territory to an enemy.⁸

⁵ This definition is developed in chapter 1 of *The Quest for Security in the Caribbean*.

⁶ Jorge I. Domínguez, “The Powers, the Pirates, and International Norms and Institutions in the American Mediterranean,” in Desch, Domínguez, and Serbin, *From Pirates to Drug Lords*, p. 79.

⁷ Joseph S. Tulchin and Ralph H. Espach, “Introduction: U.S.-Caribbean Security Relations in the Post-Cold War Era,” in Tulchin and Espach, *Security in the Caribbean Basin*, p. 5.

⁸ “Statement by Minister Henderson Simon of Antigua and Barbuda to the Third Defense Ministerial,” Cartagena, Colombia, November 1998, available at <http://www.oas.org>.

Security in the Caribbean

Issues and Institutions

With security viewed in this way, the nature of the Caribbean security landscape could be seen as including both traditional and non-traditional concerns. Territorial disputes and hemispheric geopolitics are the core traditional concerns, the former being relatively more important than the latter. The most serious disputes involve Venezuela and Guyana, Guatemala and Belize, Suriname and Guyana, Venezuela and Colombia, and France (French Guiana) and Suriname.⁹ As this list indicates, a few countries are involved in several disputes. For example, Guyana is facing a claim by Venezuela for the western five-eighths of its 214,970km² territory and one by Suriname for 15,000 km² to the east. Drugs, political instability, HIV/AIDS, migration, and environmental degradation are the chief non-traditional security concerns.

There is no uniformity in the importance statesmen and scholars ascribe to these concerns, but a comparison of the two categories—traditional and non-traditional—would reveal that more countries place a higher premium on the non-traditional area. Of course, some states, such as those in the Eastern Caribbean, have no traditional security concerns; some also have no overt external threat from other states. Especially in this context, public security issues are prominent, highlighting the importance of the “quotidian experiences of ordinary people,” to use Jorge Domínguez’s term. Although attention cannot be paid to all the salient security issues, a few deserve some mention.¹⁰

Drugs

What generally is called “the drug problem” in the Caribbean really is a multidimensional phenomenon with four problem areas: drug production, consumption and abuse, trafficking, and money laundering. However, the drug phenomenon does not constitute a security matter simply because of the problem areas. It does so essentially for four reasons.

First, the operations have multiple consequences and implications—such as marked increases in crime, systemic and institutionalized corruption, and arms trafficking, among other things. Second, the operations and their consequences have increased in scope and gravity over the last decade and a half. Third, they have dramatic impact on

⁹ For a comprehensive listing of disputes in the Caribbean Basin, see Raymond Milfesky, “Boundary Relations Among States of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico,” paper presented to the U.S. Department of State Conference on Territorial Disputes in Central America and the Caribbean, Arlington, Virginia, October 10, 2000.

¹⁰ One public health issue with serious economic, political, and other implications is HIV/AIDS. The Caribbean has the world’s second-highest AIDS rate, after sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 60,000 people contracting the disease annually and 2.3 percent of the region’s population affected. For more on this subject see, Pan American Health Organization, *HIV and AIDS in the Americas*, Washington, DC, 2001; Doreen Hemlock, “Caribbean Leaders focus on HIV/AIDS,” *Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* July 4, 2001; the June 2001 *Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* special series by Tim Collie, Michele Salcedo, and Vanessa Bauza; and Michael Norton, “Vodou Doctor pits Traditional Medicine against AIDS Epidemic; Coffin and Human Skull Elixir part of Treatment,” *Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* November 30, 2001.

Security in the Caribbean

agents and agencies of national security and good governance, in military, political, and economic ways. Finally, the sovereignty of many countries is subject to infringement, by both state and non-state actors, because of drugs.¹¹

Two decades ago most Caribbean leaders found it impolitic to accept that their countries were facing a drug threat. But over the years the scope and severity of the threat increased and became patently obvious to observers within and outside the region. Leaders could, therefore, no longer deny it. At the special CARICOM drug summit of December 1996, leaders issued a statement acknowledging that: "Narco-trafficking and its associated evils of money laundering, gun smuggling, corruption of public officials, criminality and drug abuse constitute the major security threat to the Caribbean today."¹²

In June 2000, at a high level multinational meeting on criminal justice in Trinidad and Tobago, that country's Attorney General made the following declaration in speaking on behalf of the Caribbean:

There is a direct nexus between illegal drugs and crimes of violence, sex crimes, domestic violence, maltreatment of children by parents and other evils. ... Our citizens suffer from drug addiction, drug-related violence, and drug-related corruption of law enforcement and public officials. The drug lords have become a law unto themselves. ... Aside from the very visible decimation of our societies caused by drug addiction and drug-related violence, there is another insidious evil: money laundering. ... It changes democratic institutions, erodes the rule of law, and destroys civic order with impunity.¹³

Crime

The statement by Attorney General Maharaj points clearly to the connection between drugs and crime. Indeed, crime is a component of the drug phenomenon. Crime could be viewed in several ways typologically. One study sees two basic categories of

¹¹ For a discussion of the drug threat, see Scott B. MacDonald, *Dancing on a Volcano* New York: Praeger, 1988, Chs. 6-8; Ivelaw L. Griffith, *Drugs and Security in the Caribbean: Sovereignty Under Siege* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997; Gabriel Aguilera Peralta, "Fighting the Dragon: the Anti-drug Strategy in Central America," in Ivelaw L. Griffith, *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean*. London: Macmillan, 2000, pp. 218-229; and U.S. Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, March 2001.

¹² *Communiqué, Fifth Special Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community*, Bridgetown, Barbados, December 16, 1996, p. 2

¹³ *Remarks by the Hon. Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Opening of the Caribbean-United-States-European-Canadian Ministerial (Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement) Conference*, Port of Spain, Trinidad, June 12-13, 2000. Available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ar/islands/maharaj.htm> The conference was attended by Attorneys General from the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, The Netherlands, the United States, the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, Guadeloupe, and the United Kingdom (including the Cayman Islands and Montserrat). Observers also attended from the Organization of the American States, the UN International Drug Control Program, CARICOM, and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force.

Security in the Caribbean

drug crimes: "enforcement" crimes, and "business" crimes. The former involves crimes among traffickers, and between traffickers and civilians and police, triggered by traffickers efforts to avoid arrest and prosecution. The latter category encompasses crimes committed as part of business disputes, and acquisitive crimes, such as robbery and extortion. Another typology posits three types of crime: "consensual" ones, such as drug possession, use, or trafficking; "expressive" ones, such as violence or assault; and "instrumental" or property crimes, examples being theft, forgery, burglary, and robbery.¹⁴

Irrespective of the typology used, there is a wide range of drug-related criminal activity in the Caribbean. There is no firm evidence of region-wide causal linkages between drug activities, on the one hand, and murder, fraud, theft, and assault on the other. However, three things are noteworthy.

First, murder, fraud, theft, and assault these are precisely the crimes likely to be associated with drugs. Second, in a few countries, notably Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago, there is clear evidence of a linkage. For instance, in Jamaica where there were 561 reported cases of murder in 1991, "there was a 75 per cent increase [over 1990] in the incidents of murder linked directly or indirectly to drug trafficking."¹⁵ A decade later the murder rate had doubled: 1,131 murders in 2001, 28 percent more than in 2000, and a significant proportion of them drug related.¹⁶ Finally, the countries with the high and progressive crime reports in the theft, homicide, and serious assault categories are the same ones featuring prominently over the last decade as centers of drug activity. These countries include the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guyana, and St. Kitts-Nevis.

Dudley Allen, a former Jamaican Commissioner of Corrections, once remarked "It is no longer possible to think of crime as a simple or minor social problem ... Mounting crime and violence have been declared leading national problems, and the issue of law and order has assumed high priority in national planning and policymaking. Fear of crime is destroying ... freedom of movement, freedom from harm, and freedom from fear itself."¹⁷ Allen first made this statement in 1976, but it is still relevant in 2002—over 25 years later, now even more dramatically so. He also was speaking mainly in the Jamaican context, but the observation now has region-wide validity, because, for a variety of reasons that cannot be explored here, crime has skyrocketed in most countries.

¹⁴ See Mark A.R. Kleiman, *Marijuana: Costs of Abuse, Costs of Control*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1989, pp. 109-17; and M. Douglas Anglin and George Speckart, "Narcotics Use and crime: A Multisample, Multimethod Analysis," *Criminology* Vol. 26 No. 2, 1988, pp. 197-231.

¹⁵ Planning Institute of Jamaica, *Economic and Social Survey 1991*. Kingston, Jamaica, 1992, pp. 21.3-21.4.

¹⁶ See "1,131 Violent Deaths," *Jamaica Gleaner* December 31, 2001, available at www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20011231/news/news3.html.

¹⁷ Dudley Allen, "Urban Crime and Violence in Jamaica," in Rosemary Brana-Shute and Gary Brana-Shute, eds., *Crime and Punishment in the Caribbean*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 1980, p. 29.

Security in the Caribbean

There is a local-global nexus in the region's drug-related crime, reflected in the fact that the crime is not all ad hoc, local crime; some of it is transnational and organized, extending beyond the region, to North America, Europe, and elsewhere.¹⁸ Groups called "posses" in Canada, the Caribbean, and the United States and "yardies" in Britain perpetrate the most notorious organized crime. They are organized criminal gangs composed primarily of Jamaicans or people of Jamaican descent, but increasingly involving African-Americans, Guyanese, Panamanians, Trinidadians, Nigerians, and Dominicans. Although the posses are known most for the trafficking of drugs and weapons, they also have been implicated in money laundering, fraud, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, prostitution, documents forgery, and murder.¹⁹

Another important aspect of the local-global nexus pertains to deportees. Criminal activity within some Caribbean countries is complicated and aggravated by the activities of nationals who are convicted, sentenced, and later deported from elsewhere. In a July 1993 speech to the Jamaican Parliament, National Security Minister, K.D. Knight, stated, "Nearly a thousand Jamaicans were deported from other countries last year, with over 700 coming from the United States. Most of them, nearly 600, were deported for drug-related offenses."²⁰ That was just the tip of the iceberg. Between 1993 and 1997, over 6,000 Jamaican deportees were returned to the island, mainly from the United States.

Most of the deportees come from the United States. However, the United States is not the only country that sends criminals back to their homelands. For example, of the 1,647 people returned to Jamaica in 1997, 1,213 were from the United States, 257 were from Canada, and 121 were from the United Kingdom. Of course, Jamaica is not the only Caribbean nation to be forced to accept nationals in the Diaspora who have walked on the wrong side of the law. As a matter of fact, Jamaica is not the Caribbean country to which most deportees are returned. That dubious distinction falls to the Dominican Republic. Between 1993 and 1997, deportees to the Dominican Republic from the United States alone numbered 6,582 (while those sent to Jamaica from the United States during the same period numbered under 5,000.)²¹

¹⁸ For a discussion of organized crime in the Caribbean, see Douglas Farah, "Russian Mob Sets Sights on Caribbean," *Miami Herald*, September 29, 1997, p 8A; Anthony P. Maingot, "The Decentralization Imperative and Caribbean Criminal Enterprise," in Tom Farer, ed., *Transnational Crime in the Americas*. New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 143-170; and Anthony T. Bryan, *Transnational Organized Crime: The Caribbean Context*, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center, University of Miami, October 2000.

¹⁹ For more on posse and yardie operations, see Laurie Gunst, *Born Fi' Dead: A Journey Through the Jamaican Posse Underworld*. New York: Henry Holt, 1995; Geoff Small, *Ruthless: The Global Rise of the Yardies*. London: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995; and Serge Kovaleski and Douglas Farah, "Organized Crime Carries Clout in Islands," *Washington Post* February 17, 1998, p. A1.

²⁰ Parliament of Jamaica, *Presentation of the Hon. K.D. Knight, Minister of National Security and Justice*. Budget Sectoral Debate, July 15, 1993, p. 11.

²¹ See Margaret H. Taylor and J. Alexander Aleinikoff, *Deportation of Criminal Aliens: A Geopolitical Perspective*, Inter-American Dialogue Paper, June 1998, available at <http://www.iadialogue.org/taylor.html>. For more on Caribbean deportees, see Ivelaw L. Griffith, "The

Security in the Caribbean

Terrorism

Brian Jenkins calls terrorism “violence for effect.” It is “not only, and sometimes not at all, for the effect on the actual victims of the terrorists. In fact, the victims may be totally unrelated to the terrorists’ cause.”²² Terrorism—and the consequences of state action to cope with it—has become an unwelcome, but undeniable, reality for citizens of the United States and elsewhere, including the Caribbean.

The terrorist attack against the United States on September 2001 has affected the Caribbean in several ways, both as a direct consequence of the economic and military fallout from the impact on the United States and as a result of region’s security vulnerability as a subordinate area in global terms. For one thing, according to the U.S. Department of State, some 160 Caribbean nationals were victims of the actions against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Moreover, the domino effect on tourism has been deleterious to the economic security of the region. A few examples should suffice.

In Jamaica, where tourism earns some US \$1.2 billion a year and employs over 30,000 people, the impact has already been very dramatic, with Air Jamaica losing US\$ 11 million in the week following the attack. In Barbados, where tourism contributes about US\$ 1 billion to the economy, the authorities anticipated a US\$30.3 million decline in receipts, a 30-35 percent reduction in the cruise enterprise, US\$ 857,000 less in the head tax, and a drop in tourist spending of US\$9.2 million.²³ Indeed, the tourism impact is expected to be so far reaching that the Second Caribbean Tourism Summit, held in The Bahamas on December 8-9, 2001, decided on a package of special measures to salvage the industry, which in 2000 provided gross foreign exchange earnings of US\$ 20.2 billion and employed an estimated 1 in 4 persons in the Caribbean.²⁴

The impact goes beyond tourism, though. As the Caricom leaders noted at the special summit held in October 2001:

“We are concerned that the attacks and subsequent developments have been especially devastating to our tourism, aviation, financial services, and agricultural sectors, which are the major contributors to our GDP, foreign exchange earnings and to employment in our Region. We are particularly conscious that our ongoing efforts to combat money laundering must now take specific account of the

Drama of Deportation,” *Caribbean Perspectives*, No. 5 (January) 1999, pp. 10-14; and “Caricom Working on Regional Deportee Policy,” *New York Carib News* December 18, 2001, p. 22.

²² Brian Jenkins, *International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict*. Los Angeles: Crescent Publications, 1975, p. 1.

²³ Anthony T. Bryan and Stephen E. Flynn, “Terrorism, Porous Borders, and Homeland Security,” *North-South Center Update* October 22, 2001, p. 5.

²⁴ See “Meeting the Challenge of Change: Address Delivered by the Secretary General of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, Mr. Jean Holder, at the Second Caribbean Tourism Summit, Nassau, December 8-9, 2001,” p. 1. Holder provides a comprehensive analysis of the travails of tourism.

Security in the Caribbean

potential for abuse of financial services industries by terrorists, their agents, and supporters in all jurisdictions.”²⁵

Indeed, although some effects are already being felt,²⁶ it is still too soon for a meaningful assessment of the economic, political, military, and other impact and implications for the Caribbean.

Still, it should be remembered that although the Caribbean was not the target of the dramatic September 2001 terrorist operation, the region is not immune to terrorism. On October 6, 1976 a Cubana Air flight from Guyana to Cuba was detonated shortly after departing Barbados, where it had made a transit stop. All 73 people on the flight—57 Cubans, 11 Guyanese, and five North Koreans—were killed. Anti-Castro exiles based in Venezuela later claimed responsibility for the action. (On August 1, 1998, while on a visit to Barbados, President Fidel Castro dedicated a monument to the victims of the incident.)²⁷ Moreover, Cuba suffered a dozen bombings of tourist locations during 1997, allegedly perpetrated by anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Miami and Central America.²⁸

Institutions

As is the case elsewhere, in the Caribbean there are institutional efforts to deal with these clear and present dangers to national and public security. These are reflected in policies and practices pursued by armies/defense forces and police forces as the primary agencies for state and citizen protection. Generally, there is a certain institutional division of labor with security institutions: armies/defense forces have primary responsibility for national defense, and police forces have the primary mandate for law enforcement or internal security. However, for several reasons, this distinction is not strictly honored in parts of the Caribbean.

First, several independent Caribbean countries—notably Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—do not have military forces. Hence, police forces become *the* security agency. In some of those countries a key component of the police force is the Special Service Unit (SSU)—elite police with paramilitary training and light weapons. They are designated to deal with crises beyond the capacity of the regular police, or with military contingencies. As well, some Caribbean entities with

²⁵ *Nassau Declaration on International Terrorism: The Caricom Response Issued at the Conclusion of the Special (Emergency) Meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, 11-12 October 2001, The Bahamas*, p. 1.

²⁶ See, for instance, “Caribbean Drug Traffic up 25%: U.S. Law Enforcement Focusing on Terrorism,” *The Baltimore Sun*, October 18, 2001; Greg Fields, “Caymans to Share Information on Bank Customers with U.S.,” *Miami Herald*, November 28, 2001.

²⁷ For an examination of the incident, see Dion E. Phillips, “Terrorism and Security in the Caribbean: the 1976 Cubana Disaster off Barbados,” *Terrorism* Vol. 14/4, 1991, pp. 209-19. On the 1998 dedication, see “Castro to Dedicate Monument to Cubana Crash Victims,” *Barbados Nation* August 1, 1998, p. 1.

²⁸ See Larry Rohter, “Cuba Arrests Salvadorean in Hotel Blasts,” *New York Times*, September 12, 1997; and Ann Louise Bardach and Larry Rohter, “Bombers Tale: A Cuban Exile Details a ‘Horrendous Matter’ of a Bombing Campaign,” *New York Times* July 12, 1998.

Security in the Caribbean

dependency relationships of one kind or another—such as the Cayman Islands and Puerto Rico—have no military as national defense is the responsibility of the controlling state.

A second reason why the distinction described above is not observed relates to the capability limitations of police forces to cope with threats and challenges presented to them, usually related to drug-related crime. In such situations defense force personnel are deployed in joint army-police operations, playing key, but secondary roles. All Caribbean defense forces have aspects of internal security as part of their legal missions. Indeed, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, both the number (11) and specificity of the mandate related to public security are noticeable. The mandate includes internal security; control of terrorism and religious fundamentalism;²⁹ assistance in times of natural disaster; assistance in the maintenance of essential services; and support of the police in maintaining law and order.³⁰

Hence, over the years, defense forces have been deployed for a variety of public security operations in Barbados, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti (before the army was abolished in 1995), Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Even in some places with no armies because of their dependency relationships with other entities there has been the deployment of the surrogate army—the National Guard. Examples are Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Some joint operations are conducted on an ad hoc, need basis, while others are run on a structured, long-term basis. One such operation in the latter category is Operation Intrepid in Jamaica. Jamaica's National Security minister explained:

“Operation Intrepid was introduced on July 7, 1999. The objective of the joint police military [exercise] is to specifically target communities in which there was an upsurge of criminal activities and violence and implement law enforcement strategies to bring the situation under control. Since its inception the operation has conducted a total of 100 curfews, 358 cordon and search actions, 2,272 snap raids, and 5,055 road blocks, 9,612 joint foot patrols, and 4,900 joint mobile patrols.”³¹

Police action in the Caribbean—in both single and joint operations—often has involved acts of impunity. For instance, in 1999 security forces in the Dominican Republic killed some 200 people. The *Policía Nacional* did most of the killing, but some was done by the *Fuerzas Armadas de la República Dominicana*, and many of them were reported

²⁹ This, no doubt, is related to the efforts of a Black Muslim fundamentalist group—Jamaat al Muslimeen-- to seize power in July-August 1990. The six-day coup attempt left 31 people dead, 693 wounded, some 4,000 people unemployed, and over \$US 120 million worth of damage. For more on this, see Selwyn Ryan, *The Muslimeen Grab for Power: Race, Religion, and Revolution in Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Imprint Caribbean, 1991.

³⁰ See Dion E. Phillips, “The Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force: Origin, Structure, Training, Security and Other Roles,” *Caribbean Quarterly* Vol. 43 (September) 1997: 13-33.

³¹ Parliament of Jamaica, *Presentation of the Hon. K.D. Knight, Minister of National Security and Justice*. Budget Sectoral Debate, June 13, 2000, pp. 29-30.

to be extra-judicial executions. The impunity by the security forces continued into the following year to the point at which, in May 2000, the United States Department of Justice suspended a \$US 1 million aid package from the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to the *Policía Nacional*.³²

In the case of Jamaica there were 151 police killings in 1999, and 140 in 2000. A July 1999 report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) detailed frequent and credible allegations of police abuse in lock-ups, including severe beatings, mock executions, and rape. Interestingly, the government did not deny the allegations. The HRW report also criticized the conditions in which juveniles are held, detailing many cases in which juveniles were detained improperly, not given access to legal representation, and held in adult lock-ups where adult prisoners assaulted them. Moreover, although Jamaican law requires the police to present a detainee in court within 48 hours of detention, the authorities often detain suspects, especially those from poor neighborhoods, without bringing them before a judge within the prescribed period.³³

Needless to say, while defense and police forces are the main security institutions maintained by the state, they are not the only ones. Important too are courts, intelligence agencies, prisons, and other entities. In addition, as the capacity of the State is severely challenged in many places, public security is increasingly being outsourced to the private sector, particularly in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago. In one case—Jamaica—231 private security companies with some 15,000 guards were registered in 1994 under the Private Security Regulation Act, adopted in 1992 to regulate the growing private security business. By mid-1996, the number of guards had exceeded 20,000.

The increase in private security has several implications: for the capacity of the State to provide law and order, economic and cost factors, the regulation and management of such outfits, and the false sense of security that some of them provide—false because of poor training, and poor and unreliable equipment used. Cost, for example, creates a certain security class-differentiation. But, high cost does not necessarily guarantee security. Empirical work has shown that private security can have at least two effects: it can deter some potential criminals; but it also can simply divert criminals towards other potential victims.³⁴

The jury is still out on how the use of power by state (and private) security institutions is reducing insecurity in Caribbean countries, especially since a decade-old observation by one respected University of the West Indies scholar still rings true in most places: “Challenges to the established order have been met with appeals for law and order and by increased coercion. Jails are full, but the level of violence and crime does

³² See Amnesty International, *Dominican Republic: Killings by Security Forces*, Amnesty International Report AMR 27/01/00, August 2000, p. 2.

³³ For more on impunity by the security forces in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and other Caribbean countries, see U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000*, February 2001.

³⁴ See, for example, Koo Hui-Wen and I.P.L. Png, “Private Security: Deterrent or Diversion?” *International Review of Law and Economics* Vol. 14 1994, pp. 87-101.

Security in the Caribbean

not diminish. More and more repression simply begins to undermine the very values it was intended to protect, and a sense of failure is promoted.”³⁵

Indeed, one highly regarded University of Puerto Rico political scientist suggests that a “use of force” approach to fighting drugs could have a deleterious effect on democracy itself. Moreover, what he posits in relation to Puerto Rico has a relevancy that extends to many other parts of the region:

“Policies that place undue, or even almost exclusive emphasis on ‘law-enforcement’ or military solutions, are bound to fail, while posing new challenges to democratic institutions. More than a decade of steadily escalating ‘war on drugs’ has not significantly reduced the availability of drugs, drug consumption, or the very high level of violence.”³⁶

Parameters and Future Engagement Areas

Defining Areas

In general, scholars and statesmen concerned with security issues tend to focus on national security, which covers both military defense and law enforcement issues. This has been partly because the major issues facing the region have spanned both the traditional and non-traditional spectrums. Moreover, although military defense was not part of the national discourse in many places, given the absence of external territorial threats, the discourse was cast in terms of national security rather than public or internal security, partly to emphasize the coincidence between internal threats and national survival.

Irrespective of the reasons, the interchangeability and conflation of the terms “national security,” “national defense,” “public security,” “human security,” and “citizen security” by both scholars and policy makers³⁷ have been such that meaningful future

³⁵ Neville C. Duncan, “Political Violence in the Caribbean,” in Ivelaw L. Griffith, ed., *Strategy and Security in the Caribbean*. New York: Praeger, 1991, p. 55.

³⁶ Jorge Rodríguez Beruff, “‘Narcodemocracy’ or Anti-drug Leviathan: Political Consequences of the Drug War in the Puerto Rican High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area,” in Griffith, *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean*, p. 179.

³⁷ See, for example, Michael J. Kelly, “Legitimacy and the Public Security Function.” In Robert B. Oakley, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Eliot M. Goldberg, eds., *Policing the New World Disorder: Peace Operations and Public Security*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1998; “Remarks by the Hon. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Opening of the Caribbean-United States-European-Canada Ministerial Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Conference;” Gen. José E. Noble Espejo, “A Call for the Redefinition of Regional and National Interests,” Tulchin and Espach, *Security in the Caribbean Basin*; Organization of American States, “Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Saint Lucia on Human Security,” 30th Regular Session of the General Assembly, Windsor, Canada. June 5, 200; Dion E. Phillips, “The Increasing Emphasis on Security and Defense in the Eastern Caribbean,” in Young and Phillips, *Militarization in the Non-Hispanic Caribbean*; “Human Security in the Americas: Presentation by the Canadian Delegation to the 30th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the OAS,” Windsor, Canada. June 4, 2000; and “Address by Ambassador

Security in the Caribbean

research and policy endeavors require a clear definition of terms, both to avoid future conceptual minefields and guide empirical research.

In this respect, mindful of my own definition of security outlined above, I support the approach that views national defense as pertaining to the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the national state, largely from threats by foreign state and non state actors; public security as pertaining to the maintenance of internal law and order; and citizen security as relating to the protection of the civil and political rights by people resident within the nation, both citizens and non-citizens.³⁸ Understandably, sometimes the lines between public and citizen security will be blurred. For me, national security encompasses all the other three—national defense, public security, and citizen security.

Beyond the definitional clarification, other aspects should be addressed

- The issue boundary of public security, mindful that both conceptual parsimony and practical utility require us to guard against throwing every socio-political or socio-economic problem into the public security grab bag. In determining the issue set, consideration should be given to those matters with high security salience, with this judged based on
 - The actual or potential danger to the physical safety of large numbers of individual and corporate constituencies,
 - The nature and scope of intra-state conflict or violence that is precipitated,
 - The actual or potential detriment presented to key public institutions and cherished social and political values.
- The nature of the actors—national and international; state and non-state—whose engagement is not just desired, but necessary in consideration of both public security challenges and ways of coping with or resolving them.
- The nature of the techniques and instruments that are appropriate or necessary to pursue public security countermeasures, conscious that (a) all public security challenges are not amenable to military solutions, (b) the use of force has implications for the pursuit of democratic values and resource allocation, among other things.

Patrick Lewis on the Security of Small States to the OAS Conference on the Special Security Concerns of Small Island States,” Washington, DC, February 29, 2000.

³⁸ This approach draws on A. Douglas Kincaid and Eduardo A. Gamarra, “Disorderly Democracy: Redefining Public Security in Latin America,” in Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and William C. Smith, eds., *Latin America in the World Economy*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996, pp. 12-13.

Security in the Caribbean

- Although the vicissitudes of domestic politics often make it necessary to question to veracity of some political declarations, the “definition of the situation” by national political elites should be taken under advisement, for as Kenneth Boulding rightly reminded us, “We must recognize that the people whose decisions determine the policies and actions of nations do not respond to the ‘objective’ facts of the situation, whatever that may mean, but to their ‘image’ of the situation. **It is what we think the world is like, and not what it is really like, that determines our behavior.**”³⁹
- Especially in relation to policy pursuits, practicality is highly recommended. Barry Buzan’s advice bears remembering: “Complete security cannot be obtained in an anarchic system, and therefore to hold that goal as an aspiration is to condemn oneself to pursuit of an operationally impossible objective.”⁴⁰

Agenda for Future Action

The nature of the public security landscape in the Caribbean presents the opportunity—because of needs—for considerable policy oriented research. Yet, the pursuit of policy oriented endeavors, with a certain immediacy about them, should not result in the subordination of field-based empirical work, which takes time for adequate data collection and analysis.

The following areas deserve further attention, both in relation to research for intrinsic academic value and for policy application. This list does not constitute a totality of public security issues, but among those this writer considers in need of further examination.

1. More (and better) empirical work on the nature and impact of crime, notably the political economy aspects and the larger criminal justice connections. In spite of the work recently by Maureen Cain’s team⁴¹ and by scholars such as Klaus de Albuquerque, Anthony Maingot, Bernard Headley, Gary Brana-Shute, Karen Ramoutar, Ken Pryce, Cynthia Mohabir, Ramesh Deosaran, Dora Nevárez, and this writer, the assertion by Robert Ayers still holds true: “In seeking to assess the extent of crime and violence and its increase in the [Latin American and Caribbean] region in recent years, we confront an immediate problem: the data are grossly in adequate ... Thus, the first priority on the emerging agenda for dealing with crime and violence in the region is the need to enhance the knowledge-base about the nature, extent, and evolution of these pathologies.”⁴²

³⁹ Kenneth Boulding, “National Images and International Systems,” in James N. Rosenau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy*. New York: The Free Press, 1969, p. 423. The emphasis on the last sentence is mine.

⁴⁰ Buzan, *Peoples, States, and Fear*, p.330.

⁴¹ I’m referring here to the top team of scholars that Maureen Cain assembled for the study that resulted in a special issue of *Caribbean Quarterly* Vol. 42 Nos. 2-3 (June-September) 1996. This writer had the pleasure of being part of that team.

⁴² Robert L. Ayers, *Crime and Violence as Development Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1998, p. 3.

Security in the Caribbean

2. The implications of public security countermeasures for resource allocation, public accountability, and the use of power by state power brokers. There is more than just a mere modicum of relevance to the Caribbean of the general observations by Jorge Nef: "Almost as fast as military demobilization is taking place and public expenditures in social services are shrinking everywhere, internal security allotments have soared. So has been the institutional empowerment of enforcement agencies, both public and private, and vigilantism."⁴³ Apart from the concerns raised by Rodríguez Beruff about Puerto Rico noted above, there has been concern about practices elsewhere in the Caribbean, by both local and international actors.⁴⁴
3. The nature and scope of private security operations and their implications for public security, including the capacity of the state provide for general public security.
4. The national security implications of HIV/AIDS, with attention to the economic, political, and institutional capacity challenges and implications for state and society in the region.

Conclusion

Although it seems obvious, it bears emphasizing that security scholars should pay attention to both state sovereignty and public order. As Barry Buzan reminds us, "...security cannot be achieved by either individuals or states acting on their own. ... Just as security cannot be created by individual actors, neither can it be created by concentrating all power and responsibility at the upper levels."⁴⁵ Ultimately, as Jorge Domínguez suggests, it is the citizens who matter.

⁴³ Nef, *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability*, pp. 81-82.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Amnesty International, *Dominican Republic: Killings by Security Forces*; and Rachel Neild, *From National Security to Citizen Security: Civil Society and the Evolution of Public Order Debates*, available at <http://www.ichardd.ca>.

⁴⁵ Buzan, *Peoples, States, and Fear*, p. 378.

Select Bibliography

- Aguilera Peralta, Gabriel. 2000. "Fighting the Dragon: the Anti-drug Strategy in Central America," in Ivelaw L. Griffith, The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean. London: Macmillan.
- Allen, Dudley. 1980. "Urban Crime and Violence in Jamaica," in Rosemary Brana-Shute and Gary Brana-Shute, eds., Crime and Punishment in the Caribbean. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida.
- Amnesty International. 2000. Dominican Republic: Killings by Security Forces. Amnesty International Report AMR 27/01/00, August.
- Ayers, Robert L. 1998. Crime and Violence as Development Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Bryan, Anthony T. 2000. Transnational Organized Crime: The Caribbean Context, The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center, University of Miami, October.
- Bryan, Anthony T. and Stephen E. Flynn. 2001. "Terrorism, Porous Borders, and Homeland Security," North-South Center Update October 22.
- Buzan, Barry. 1991. Peoples, States, and Fear. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Desch, Michael C., Jorge I. Domínguez, and Andrés Serbin (Eds.)1998. From Pirates to Drug Lords: The Post-Cold War Caribbean Security Environment Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Duncan, Neville C. 1991. "Political Violence in the Caribbean," in Ivelaw L. Griffith, ed., Strategy and Security in the Caribbean. New York: Praeger.
- Griffith, Ivelaw L. 1993. The Quest for Security in the Caribbean: Problems and Promises of Subordinate States. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- 1995. "Caribbean Security: Retrospect and Prospect," Latin American Research Review, Vol. 30, No. 2 1995: 3-32
- 1997. Drugs and Security in the Caribbean: Sovereignty Under Siege University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- 1999. "The Drama of Deportation," Caribbean Perspectives, No. 5 (January), pp. 10-14.

Security in the Caribbean

- Gunst, Laurie. 1995. Born Fi' Dead: A Journey Through the Jamaican Posse Underworld. New York: Henry Holt.
- Hui-Wen, Koo and I.P.L. Png. 1994. "Private Security: Deterrent or Diversion?" International Review of Law and Economics Vol. 14: 87-101.
- International Development Research Center. 1999. Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Global Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment. Ottawa: International Development Research Center.
- Jenkins, Brian. 1975. International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict. Los Angeles: Crescent Publications.
- Kincaid, A. Douglas and Eduardo A. Gamarra. 1996. "Disorderly Democracy: Redefining Public Security in Latin America," in Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and William C. Smith, eds., Latin America in the World Economy. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Kovaleski, Serge and Douglas Farah. 1998. "Organized Crime Carries Clout in Islands," Washington Post February 17, p. A1.
- MacDonald, Scott B. 1988. Dancing on a Volcano New York: Praeger.
- Maingot, Anthony P. 1999. "The Decentralization Imperative and Caribbean Criminal Enterprise," in Tom Farer, ed., Transnational Crime in the Americas. New York: Routledge.
- Milfesky, Raymond. 2000. "Boundary Relations Among States of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico," presented to the U.S. Department of State Conference on Territorial Disputes in Central America and the Caribbean, Virginia, October 10.
- Pan American Health Organization. 2001. HIV and AIDS in the Americas, Washington, DC.
- Phillips, Dion E. 1991. "Terrorism and Security in the Caribbean: the 1976 Cubana Disaster off Barbados," Terrorism Vol. 14/4: 209-19.
- . 1997. "The Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force: Origin, Structure, Training, Security and Other Roles," Caribbean Quarterly Vol. 43 (Sept.): 13-33.
- Rodríguez Beruff, Jorge and Humberto García Muñiz (Eds.) 1996. Security Problems and Policies in the Post Cold War Caribbean. London: Macmillan.

Security in the Caribbean

- Rodríguez Beruff, Jorge. 2000. "Narcodemocracy' or Anti-drug Leviathan: Political Consequences of the Drug War in the Puerto Rican High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area," in Griffith, The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean.
- Rohm, Joseph J. 1993. Defining National Security. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.
- Ryan, Selwyn. 1991. The Muslimeen Grab for Power: Race, Religion, and Revolution in Trinidad and Tobago. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Imprint Caribbean.
- Simmons, David. 1985. "Militarization in the Caribbean: Concerns for National and Regional Security," International Journal Vol. 40 (Spring): 348-76.
- Small, Geoff. 1995. Ruthless: The Global Rise of the Yardies. London: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Taylor, Margaret H. and J. Alexander Aleinikoff. 1998. Deportation of Criminal Aliens: A Geopolitical Perspective, Inter-American Dialogue Paper, June.
- Tulchin, Joseph S. and Ralph H. Espach (Eds.) 2000. Security in the Caribbean Basin. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- U.S. Department of State. 2001. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, March.
- . 2001. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000, February.
- Young, Alma H. and Dion E. Phillips (Eds.) 1986. Militarization in the Non-Hispanic Caribbean. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.