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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
CSC 33 / CCEM 33

EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

**BUILDING DEFENCE CAPACITY IN THE CARIBBEAN TO COMBAT THE  
THREAT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

By /par Lt Col Kenrick Maharaj

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the terrorist attacks on United States soil on 11 September 2001, there has been a significant shift in the dynamics of the global security environment. Across the international community, including the Caribbean, there is concern for the effects of the now constantly evolving international terrorist threat that can potentially reach countries and regions previously considered to be free from these transnational dangers. Against the background of terrorist concerns emerging in the Western Hemisphere, specifically in the Caribbean and Latin American region, this essay looks at the cause for building collective defence capacity in the Caribbean Community's armed forces. This need is even more critical given the security focus of the major world powers on the global terrorism hot spots and also on weak and failing states in other parts of the world. In the context of U.S. and European interests in the Caribbean such as tourism, major exports of oil, natural gas and chemicals, there is strong justification to strengthen capacity across the air, land and maritime environments, to detect, deter or defeat the threat of international terrorism in the region.

## INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., United States of America on 11 September 2001 (commonly referred to as the 9/11 attacks) brought about a dramatic change in the global security landscape. As described by Gus Martin in *Understanding Terrorism*, since the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, “journalists, scholars and national leaders repeatedly described the emergence of a new international terrorist environment.”<sup>1</sup> The deafening wake-up call constituted in the 9/11 attacks resonated across the globe sparking a heightened concern for addressing national vulnerabilities to threats from non-State actors.

The Caribbean region is arguably least threatened by international terrorism. Yet, as far back as October 1976, a Cuban airline was bombed by terrorists in Barbados. Seventy-three persons were killed.<sup>2</sup> In July 1984, a Venezuelan commercial jet carrying 87 passengers was hijacked by two gunmen and forced to land in Trinidad. They threatened to blow up the aircraft if any attempts were made to storm it. After five hours of negotiations they departed and landed in Aruba where Venezuelan Special Forces successfully dealt with the situation.<sup>3</sup> On 27 July 1990, in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, a radical Islamist group, the Jamaat al Muslimeen, stormed the Parliament

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<sup>1</sup> Gus Martin. *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives and Issues*. (California: Sage Publications Inc., 2006), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Rickey Singh, “Cubana Bomb Tragedy – New Focus on USA,” *The Jamaica Observer*, (May 2005), Available from [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/html/20050430T220000-0500\\_79660\\_OBS\\_CUBANA\\_BOMB\\_TRAGEDY\\_NEW\\_FOCUS\\_ON\\_USA.asp](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/html/20050430T220000-0500_79660_OBS_CUBANA_BOMB_TRAGEDY_NEW_FOCUS_ON_USA.asp) Internet accessed 27 March 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The New York Times, “Gunmen Hijack Plane to Trinidad and Aruba,” (1984) Available from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DE5D71F39F933A05754C0A962948260> Internet accessed 24 April 2008.

building and held members of Government (including the prime minister) hostage for six days before surrendering to the military.<sup>4</sup> Twenty four persons were killed during the insurrection.<sup>5</sup> In 2005, three incidents of explosives being detonated in different parts of the capital city in as many months sparked serious concerns for national security and the specific threat of terrorism.<sup>6</sup> In 2007, three Caribbean citizens were arrested in relation to the unearthing of a terrorist plot to detonate explosives in the fuel lines around the John F Kennedy International airport in New York.<sup>7</sup>

The Caribbean is the “tenth largest trading partner of the United States, a major regional source of migration and visitors to the United States, and an important destination for both North American tourists and business investments.”<sup>8</sup> On the industrial side, Trinidad and Tobago is home to “more than 100 companies that produce the majority of the world’s methanol, ammonium phosphate, and 40 percent of the U.S. imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG).”<sup>9</sup> In more specific security terms, the Caribbean Community entered into a formal partnership for cooperation with the United States contained in the “Third Border Initiative” declared during the Summit of the Americas in

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<sup>4</sup> Raoul A. Pantin, *Days of Wrath: The 1990 Coup in Trinidad and Tobago*, (New York: iUniverse Inc., 2007), ix.

<sup>5</sup> CBS News, “Trinidad Islamic Group Under Scrutiny,” (2007), Available from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/06/03/world/main2879733.shtml> Internet; accessed 23 April 2008.

<sup>6</sup> BBC News Online. “Explosion Rocks Trinidad Capital,” Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4673879.stm> Internet; accessed 29 March 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Denyse Renne, “Big Legal Bill for JFK Trio,” *Trinidad and Tobago Express*, March 2008. Available online at <http://www.trinidadexpress.com>. Accessed on 21 March 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen E. Flynn and Anthony Bryan, “Terrorism, Porous Borders, and Homeland Security: The Case for U.S.-Caribbean Cooperation,” (University of Miami, 2001) Available from [http://www.cfr.org/publication/4844/terrorism\\_porous\\_borders\\_and\\_homeland\\_security.html?breadcrumb=%2Fbios%2F3301%2Fstephen\\_e\\_flynn%3Fpage%3D5](http://www.cfr.org/publication/4844/terrorism_porous_borders_and_homeland_security.html?breadcrumb=%2Fbios%2F3301%2Fstephen_e_flynn%3Fpage%3D5) Internet; accessed 26 February 2008.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*,

Quebec City in April 2001.<sup>10</sup> A joint commitment was made to “protect our region from terrorists and criminals who would destroy our way of life, and by a belief that terrorist acts...represent a serious threat to international peace and our hemispheric security and require our governments to continue efforts to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism.”<sup>11</sup>

Based on the above, this essay will illustrate the need for building capacity among the CARICOM regional defence forces in order to efficiently and effectively combat the threat of international terrorism. One of the objectives of this work is to promote regional appreciation for, and awareness of, the need to attain a level of collective defence and security competence so that CARICOM can make its own contribution to a secure global environment in confronting the international terrorist threat. This proposal is further made in the context of the broader strategic global war on terrorism and the need for ensuring that CARICOM can, without the reliance on extra-regional actors, meet the challenge of its own security issues. Additionally, and critical to the success of any strategic plan for regional collective defence, is the need for greater integration within the broader global strategies.

In pursuing this, I will first examine the definitions and dynamics of international terrorism in order to present a commonly accepted view of the contemporary international security environment. I will undertake a general overview of the Caribbean

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<sup>10</sup> Washington D.C. “Joint Statement by the United States of America, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic on the Third Border Initiative.” (U.S. Department of State, 2004). Available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/28136.htm> Internet; accessed 23 April 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Washington D.C. “Joint Statement by the United States of America, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic on the Third Border Initiative.” (U.S. Department of State, 2004). Available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/28136.htm> Internet; accessed 23 April 2008.

region followed by an analytical study of the regional security/threat environment within a hemispheric context. The justification for building a specific counterterrorism capability will be fashioned through an assessment of the current collective defence capacity in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and their roles. I will then identify areas for building this capacity across relevant operational functional lines, as well as proposing the development of a regional mechanism for optimizing the utilization of regionally available assets.

While this study focuses on military capacity building, recognition is given to the need for a whole of government approach as the appropriate strategic choice in building overall capacity across a multi-agency sphere. For defence as a concept to take meaning, it is imperative that it be guided by the principle of inclusion. Additionally, it is noted that any defence capacity building plan to counter the threat of international terrorism, must necessarily be in alignment with a broader national or regional security strategy that places it in the context of other regional security/threat concerns. Finally, there is not a vast range of reference material which provides current military data and general security information on the Caribbean. However, the delimitation of the study through its focus on international terrorism mitigates the speculative approach that is oftentimes required to fill the information gaps otherwise.

## **DEFINING THE THREAT**

Despite the philosophical and legal variations in definitions worldwide, terrorism is proscribed by most countries. Although in democratic states such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) definitions of terrorism are expressed

differently, they are conceptualized similarly. Most definitions allude to the commission of violent acts that are intended to instill fear in governments and societies pursuant to self-determined objectives in order to influence the behaviour of the targeted audience. For example, US Code Title 22, Section 2656f(d)(2) defines terrorism as the “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents.”<sup>12</sup> In accordance with the United Kingdom’s Terrorism Act 2000, Chapter 11, Part 1, terrorism means the use or threat of action where “the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.”<sup>13</sup>

International terrorism as defined in the US Code Title 22 “means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.”<sup>14</sup> In this legislation, the terms “territory” and “territory of the country” mean the land, waters and airspace of the country.”<sup>15</sup> “International terrorism occurs when the target is an international symbol and when the political-psychological effects go beyond a purely domestic agenda.”<sup>16</sup> Gus Martin further explains that “international terrorism is, in other words, a tactical and

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<sup>12</sup> Cornell University Law School, “U.S. Code Collection: 2656f. Annual Reports on Terrorism,” Available from [http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/22/uscode\\_sec\\_22\\_00002656---f000-.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/22/uscode_sec_22_00002656---f000-.html) Internet accessed 24 April 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Office of Public Sector Information, “Terrorism Act 2000 (c.11), Part 1, Introductory (1) (b), (c),” Available from [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_20000011\\_en\\_2#pt1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000011_en_2#pt1) Internet; accessed 12 March 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Cornell University Law School....Internet accessed 24 April 2008.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Gus Martin. *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives and Issues*. (California: Sage Publications Inc., 2006), 273.



strategic instrument of political violence as well as a category of terrorism.”<sup>17</sup> The 9/11 attacks in the US serve as an example of the success of an international terrorist organization’s ability to strike targets halfway across the globe. With the consequential intensification of national and international security measures to detect, deter, and defeat terrorist networks through an American-led “Global War on Terrorism,” it is reasonable to expect that terrorist organization’s strategies, operational plans and tactics will change to adapt to this new global security environment. Many observers and analysts have already expressed concerns about the convergence of international terrorism and transnational organized crime. Thomas Sanderson writes that “transnational organized crime and international terrorism increasingly share both organizational characteristics, and at times even partner with one another.”<sup>18</sup> Louise I. Shelley, Professor of Public Policy, George Mason University, explains that “organized crime groups and terrorists function where the controls of the central state are least, where there are porous borders and weak law enforcement.”<sup>19</sup> She further reveals that in some instances, “a cooperative or/even symbiotic relationship exists between the crime group and the terrorist group operating within the region.”<sup>20</sup>

These observations signify rather clearly, that the CARICOM region will continue to be faced with a potentially more complicated security challenge. CARICOM citizens themselves may not necessarily be the primary targets of attacks from international

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Sanderson, “Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines,” *SAIS Review* vol. XXIV no. 1 (Winter-Spring, 2004), 49.

<sup>19</sup> Louise Shelley, “The Nexus of Organized International Criminals and Terrorism,” *International Annals of Criminology* vol. 40, no. 1-2 (2002), 85-92.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*,

terrorists, but rather the tourist industry, since visitors to the Caribbean region mainly originate from locations considered to be terrorists' high priority targeted countries.

## **BACKGROUND – OVERVIEW OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**

The post-World War II period witnessed the weakening colonialist influences of the British from Asia and Africa across the Atlantic to the Caribbean – the latter seen as an anachronism at this time.<sup>21</sup> With the gradual disengaging from the region, the British pursued the option of a unified independent Caribbean region – the West Indian Federation. This political grouping of a total of ten English speaking islands was established in 1958.<sup>22</sup> However, with the withdrawal of Jamaica in 1961, it collapsed by January 1962 and was finally dissolved in May of the same year.<sup>23</sup>

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as it exists today, grew out of that earlier political arrangement – the Caribbean Free Trade Association – and was officially established in 1973.<sup>24</sup> It is a political/economic union of fifteen Member States (mainly from the English speaking Caribbean). This regional group of nations continues to evolve and is currently in the process of transition to the CARICOM Single Market and

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<sup>21</sup> Jan Rogozinski, *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and Carib to the Present*. (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1999), 310

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 321

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 323

<sup>24</sup> Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. "Community," Available from <http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/carifra.jsp?menu=community> Internet; accessed 12 March 2008.

Economy (CSME). The Member States are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. There is an additional five Associate Members: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands.<sup>25</sup>

The current transformation in the Caribbean proceeded from “the recognition that the political and economic philosophies which underpinned its original structure are no longer applicable and could not accommodate the forces released by globalization.”<sup>26</sup> As far back as 1963, one of the regions prime ministers, Dr. Eric Williams (Trinidad and Tobago) asserted that the Caribbean was about to “enter a world dominated increasingly by regional groupings, both economic and political...Small countries like ours encounter great difficulty in establishing their influence in a world dominated by power and Regional Associations.”<sup>27</sup>

## **THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

In his master’s thesis on Caribbean security cooperation issues, Lieutenant Colonel Colvin Bishop presented some key questions relating to the regional security dynamics post 9/11. He raised the issue of defining security and identifying contemporary threat concerns. “What are the likely current and future threats to the Caribbean? How have the events on 11 September affected security in the Caribbean?”

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<sup>25</sup> Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. “Community,” Available from <http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/carifta.jsp?menu=community> Internet accessed 28 March 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Hall. *Re-Inventing CARICOM: The Road to a New Integration*. (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000), ix.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, ix

Can the military provide a credible response to these threats? Is there any impetus to change the present military arrangements in this present context and that of the foreseeable future? Are the current arrangements adequate?”<sup>28</sup> Answers to these questions, I suggest, remain to a large extent unanswered in the current operations environment especially as it relates to terrorism.

Notwithstanding the history of terrorist activities mentioned earlier in some of the Member States, additional pertinent questions nonetheless arise. Is there a need for CARICOM political leaders to concern themselves with building a defence capability to counter this international terrorist threat? Is this threat discernible enough to arouse the concern for its potential impact on Caribbean peace and security? Moreover, is the capital expenditure involved in acquiring additional resources for capacity building in the areas of land, maritime and air operations justified? I assert that it is critical that the region prioritizes this aspect of collective regional defence. In support of my stated position, I will examine the regional security environment of the Caribbean specifically, but also the wider Central and South America area.

The historical, socio-political, economic, geographical and demographic factors all impact on the regional security environment of the Caribbean Community. The relative free movement of persons, goods and services, among the islands, the numerous sea ports of entry combined with the challenges in policing littoral waters, the need for robust intelligence sharing mechanisms among the Member States, are issues that demand unity of effort from a regional standpoint. The much debated phenomenon of globalization is one of the primary aspects of the evolving threat. Boris Saavedra asserts

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<sup>28</sup> Lieutenant Colonel C. Bishop, “Caribbean Regional Security: The Challenges to Creating Formal Military Relationships in the English-Speaking Caribbean” (master’s thesis, U.S Army Command and General Staff College, 2002), 10.

that “globalization has contributed to a reduction of restrictions on the international movement of almost all goods and services, including stockpiled and newly produced small arms.”<sup>29</sup> This global expansion of markets and trade, Saavedra points out, has paralleled a “reduction in state capacity to maintain regulatory and oversight functions over their borders.”<sup>30</sup>

It is prudent though, before examining the intricate details of the regional security environment, to undertake a brief overview of the wider relevant hemispheric factors that have impacted, or potentially can impact on the regional security issues especially in respect of terrorism. Cope and Hulse in their writing on hemispheric security issues assert that “there is an undeniable threat of terrorism in the Western Hemisphere and a determined effort to combat it.”<sup>31</sup> “With symbiotic ties to the region’s transnational criminal organizations, international and domestic terrorists have gained in sophistication and capability.”<sup>32</sup> In this neighbouring Central and Latin American region there are known organized crime hotspots. Cope and Hulse point to the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay as one of these thriving criminal hot spots in the hemisphere. It is identified as an area that is a “rich source of Islamic sympathizers who, in recent years, have legally raised or illegally laundered more than \$50 million that

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<sup>29</sup> Boris O. Saavedra, “Transnational Crime and Small Arms Trafficking and Proliferation,” in *Transnational Threats: Smuggling and Trafficking in Arms Drugs and Human Life*, ed. Kimberley L. Thachuk, 64-76 (London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 65.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 65

<sup>31</sup> John Cope and Janie Hulse. “Hemispheric response to Terrorism: A Call for Action,” in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, ed. Ivelaw L. Griffith, 413-434 (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 420

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 420

ultimately went to support terrorist groups.”<sup>33</sup> Both Hezbollah and Egypt’s Islamic brotherhood are believed to “use the area as a safe haven.”<sup>34</sup> Even more troubling, in 2002, “a map of the tri-border area was recovered from an al Qaeda safe house in Kabul.”<sup>35</sup>

Within the Caribbean region itself, analysts and observers have been keeping track of the changing trends in international terrorism. Chris Zambelis, a policy analyst, applies a number of examples of activities and indicators to support the apparent increase in movements of undesirable terrorist-linked person in the region. He refers to a known al Qaeda operative, Adnan G. El-Shukrijumah who allegedly was spotted in Honduras in June 2004, as well as an alleged “tie to the *Darul Uloom*, an Islamic institute in Trinidad.”<sup>36</sup> Zambelis further refers to the arrest of Ashraf Ahmad Abdullah, an Egyptian, who was accused of “running a prolific smuggling ring,”<sup>37</sup> and who “was able to smuggle illegal migrants originating from countries of special interest into the US via Latin America and the Caribbean Basin.”<sup>38</sup>

It is reasonable to deduce from these observations that the Caribbean region, a tourist’s haven, is not immune from international threats. Yet, it is arguable that in accordance with the definition of terrorism outlined earlier, and the political motivations

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> John Cope and Janie Hulse. “Hemispheric response to Terrorism: A Call for Action,” in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, ed. Ivelaw L. Griffith, 413-434 (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 420

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 420

<sup>36</sup> Chris Zambelis. “Al-Qaeda’s Inroads into the Caribbean.” *Terrorism Monitor*, vol. III, issue 20, 2005, 4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

on which violence is anchored, the Caribbean is not truly faced with this threat as it obtains in the Central and Southern Asian regions. Even with the widespread occurrence of narco-trafficking across the region and the vulnerability to narco-terrorism, Stephen Vasciannie argues that in difference to suggestions about narco-terrorism in Jamaica, he does not see related criminal action in this context pursuing political objectives and hence, drug-related violence should not be misconstrued as narco-terrorism.<sup>39</sup> My difference in perspective however, lies not in combating an absent threat, but rather preparing for the eventuality of one that is evidently emerging. It is imperative therefore, that a greater focus be placed on enhancing security especially in the context of a highly interconnected global environment.

Map 1 shows the countries of the Caribbean, with their geographical relative positions in respect of the Central and South American region to the South and West as well as the proximity to Continental United States to the North. This serves as an appreciation for the dynamics of both air and sea movement on one hand and the strategic position of the region in relation to the United States on the other.

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<sup>39</sup> Stephen Vasciannie, "Security, Terrorism and International Law: A Skeptical Comment," in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, ed. Ivelaw L. Griffith, 52-71 (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 63.



**Map 1. The Caribbean Region**

Source: Caribbean Property Magazine<sup>40</sup>

## CARIBBEAN DEFENCE FORCES – ROLES AND CAPABILITIES

Generally the roles of the various defence forces in the Caribbean mirror each other as they function in a similar social, political, cultural and ideological environment where laws are similar. A brief look at the established roles and functions of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force therefore, will serve as a credible guide to the primary and

<sup>40</sup> Caribbean Property Magazine, “Map of the Caribbean,” Available from [http://www.caribpro.com/Caribbean\\_Map/Caribbean\\_Map.html](http://www.caribpro.com/Caribbean_Map/Caribbean_Map.html) Internet accessed 24 April 2008.



secondary roles of the region's military forces. Some of these roles, as entered in the Freedom of Information Act in Trinidad are as follows:<sup>41</sup>

- To defend the sovereign good of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- To cooperate with and assist the civil power in maintaining law and order
- To assist the civil authorities in times of crisis or disaster
- To provide Search and Rescue services in keeping with national requirements and under international agreements
- To assist in the prevention of trafficking in narcotics and other illegal goods
- To monitor the safety of shipping in national waters

Given the above roles among others that are performed by these defence forces it is beneficial to take a cursory glance at the force sizes for most of the CARICOM States. The following Table 1 indicates these components. While the strengths indicated are not necessarily the exact figures at this time they are fairly accurate and do give a very good idea of what these forces look like against the background of this discussion. The information entered in this table has been collated from Jane's Sentinel Security Risk Assessment for Central America and the Caribbean.

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<sup>41</sup> Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Public Statement of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. Available online at

**Table 1. – Personnel Strengths of Defence Forces in the CARICOM Region**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>LAND</b>	<b>AIR</b>	<b>MARITIME</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Antigua and Barbuda	125	Nil	50, 5x Ptl Cft, 2x Launch	<b>175</b> (approx)
Bahamas	150	Nil	922 6x Coastal Ptl Cft, 7x Inshore	<b>1075</b> (approx)
Barbados	800 (Part-time)	Nil	96, 1x lg Ptl, 7x Inshore	<b>900</b> (approx)
Belize	1000	50,	56, 8x Inshore	<b>1100</b> (approx)
Dominica	50 (SSU)		32	<b>85</b> (approx)
Grenada	80 (SSU)	Nil	30	<b>110</b> (approx)
Guyana	2300	100	150	<b>2550</b> (approx)
Jamaica	2500	140,	224, 3xOPVs, 9x Inshore	<b>3000</b> (approx)
Saint Lucia	100 (SSU)	Nil	49	<b>150</b> (approx)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	200	Nil	45, 2x ptl cft	<b>250</b> (approx)
St Vincent and the Grenadines	50 (SSU)	Nil	56	<b>100</b> (approx)
Trinidad and Tobago	3000	66, Fixed wing x4	1500, 2xOPVs, 11x Inshore	<b>5000</b> (approx)

**Source:** Jane's Sentinel Security Risk Assessment for Central America and the Caribbean.<sup>42</sup>

An analytical study of the collective defence capacity of the regional defence forces admittedly does not reveal a security posture that is comforting for the idealist. Any attempt at a regional fortress concept will come up woefully short when one considers the weaker links in the Caribbean Community's defensive chain. In fact there are Member States that do not possess defence forces and the form of security forces they

<sup>42</sup> Jane's. "Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Central America and the Caribbean," Available from [http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/central\\_america.jsp?refreshSession=true&SORT=PostDate+desc&ResultCount=20&CONTENT=CURRENT&SubscribedSelection=CACS&branchNo=20?refreshSession=true&SORT=PostDate+desc&ResultCount=20&CONTENT=CURRENT&SubscribedSelection=CA](http://sentinel.janes.com/docs/sentinel/central_america.jsp?refreshSession=true&SORT=PostDate+desc&ResultCount=20&CONTENT=CURRENT&SubscribedSelection=CACS&branchNo=20?refreshSession=true&SORT=PostDate+desc&ResultCount=20&CONTENT=CURRENT&SubscribedSelection=CA) Internet accessed 23 March 2008.

maintain are rather small police forces and special service units (paramilitary). The countries of Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica are examples of the latter. The inventories for many of these forces do not go beyond “assault rifles, light machine guns, small caliber mortars and handheld antitank weapons.”<sup>43</sup>

The regional security architecture came into focus during the Cricket World Cup Tournament 2007. In support of this major event, certain critical assets and capabilities were required such as a counterterrorism (CT) capability and other technical competencies. The latter included areas such as, a Direct Action Team (for surgical offensive operations), hostage negotiations experts, detection and response capabilities in respect of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, surface and underwater Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) detection and defusing and other areas of specialist skills. Given the deficiencies in the regional CT capability, CARICOM political heads of government were forced to look extra-regionally for assistance in specialist areas of military operational competencies.<sup>44</sup> This support came from countries such as the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, Australia, Colombia and Brazil.

Bishop and Khan propose that “the antiterrorism effort...has to be a priority national and regional security concern, and as such suggest the need for an expanded and

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<sup>43</sup> Colvin Bishop and Oral Khan, “The Antiterrorism Capacity of the Caribbean Security Forces,” in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, ed. Ivelaw L. Griffith, 391-412 (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 405.

<sup>44</sup> Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), “International Forces Happy With CWC Security Arrangements,” Press Release. Available from [http://www.caricomimpacs.org/index.php?com\\_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=2](http://www.caricomimpacs.org/index.php?com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=2) Internet; accessed 24 April 2008.

obligatory role for the militaries in the region.”<sup>45</sup> They further assert that “the delivery of security requires that the region’s military forces become intimately familiar with their potential battle space. This battle space is not only the physical arrangements but also the systems and processes intended to ensure that the inter-agency challenges are identified and worked through to a point where mutual trust...exists.”<sup>46</sup>

## **BUILDING DEFENCE CAPACITY**

In pursuance of building a collective regional counterterrorism capability, it is beneficial to review historical attempts at regional security arrangements. Regional security cooperation was initially attempted when the British established a West Indian Regiment in support of the West Indian Federation. This Regiment however, was disbanded in 1962 upon the collapse of the Federation.<sup>47</sup> In 1983 the Regional Security System (RSS) was formed, with the Treaty officially signed in March 1996.<sup>48</sup> The membership of the RSS however, was limited to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Barbados, a total of seven countries. Success was also achieved recently in the Treaty for Security Assistance signed by all CARICOM Member States in

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<sup>45</sup> Colvin Bishop and Oral Khan, “The Anti-terrorism Capacity of Caribbean Security Forces,” in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, ed. Ivelaw L. Griffith, 391-412 (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 407.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>47</sup> Edmund Dillon, “Regional Security Cooperation: Traditional and Non-traditional Areas,” in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, ed. Ivelaw Griffith, 462-484 (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 466.

<sup>48</sup> Regional Security System, “Background To The Formation Of The RSS,” Available from <http://www.rss.org.bb/rss1.htm> Internet accessed 24 April 2008.

2007.<sup>49</sup> Notably though, there have been several challenges in pursuing regional security cooperation as CARICOM member states naturally place primacy on their sovereign integrity. Inherent in this are the jurisdictional nuances.

At the operational level, and in the context of joint, combined and multi-agency requirements, a comprehensive assessment of the operational capacity of the key security agencies such as police, customs, and immigration is mandatory as it would impact on the roles of the military forces in the region. As Ivelaw Griffith notes, the capacity challenges of law enforcement agencies in the Caribbean is expectedly rectified by augmentation with military forces.<sup>50</sup> Naturally, multi-agency cooperation will be a crucial factor in enhancing overall value of the security apparatus required to combat terrorist threats.

Furthermore, those other elements of national power such as the diplomatic, informational and economic are critical to the success of any security strategy. Operational capacity enhancement of military forces to combat international terrorism can become an exercise in futility if not aligned to other strategic efforts. In the final analysis, the military is just one element of national power in a mutually supporting arrangement designed to achieve appropriate regional security effects.

An important facet of regional defence capacity building is the development of mechanisms which can serve to optimize the utilization of already scarce resources available within the region through well established, understood and sanctioned systems and procedures that fall under the auspices of various political agreements and Treaties

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<sup>49</sup> Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, "Treaty for Security Assistance Among Member States (2006)," Available from [http://www.caricom.org/jsp/secretariat/legal\\_instruments.jsp?menu=secretariat](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/secretariat/legal_instruments.jsp?menu=secretariat) Internet; accessed 24 April 2008.

<sup>50</sup> Ivelaw L. Griffith, "Security, Sovereignty and Public Order in the Caribbean," *Security and Defence Studies Review* vol. 2 (Summer 2002), 10.

currently in existence in the region. Regional strategic leadership has already entered into a number of new arrangements for security cooperation. These include the appointment of regional political posts such as the Minister with the responsibility for regional security, a regional committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff, Commissioners of Police, a Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council among others.

As has been previously mentioned, terrorism is considered a criminal offence and is provided for in the various Member States' Terrorism Acts/Legislation. Defence Forces therefore, will not conduct counterterrorism operations autonomously, but rather will function in support of the police. Nevertheless, the military, in this context, can be an operational force multiplier on the one hand or a specific response capability on the other. On a regional response level, military forces normally comprise the main effort since they are fashioned along more expeditionary lines in terms of structure, operational posture, readiness, logistic support and the like. Political leaders are inclined therefore, as in the past, to deploy their respective military forces to provide assistance across the spectrum of operations. Under the ambit of international terrorism therefore, it is logical to expect the burden of regional operational preparedness to be borne by the defence forces (air, land and maritime components).

In this monograph, two key areas of defence capacity building will be highlighted, the need for robust, highly trained and equipped Special Operations Forces to be maintained by the larger CARICOM defence forces and a regional response mechanism to facilitate regional counterterrorism operational support whenever required. The need for enhancement in other key areas must be underscored however, and can be the subject of a wider security needs assessment in CARICOM. Some of these areas should include

strategic intelligence, maritime security, regional air capability, and air and sea ports security.

### **Military Counterterrorism Capability – Special Operations Forces**

Counterterrorism operations have been conducted by Special Operations Forces (SOF) for some time now. For example, the “SAS Princes Gate hostage rescue in London in 1980 demonstrate vividly the role of military forces in domestic counterterrorism.”<sup>51</sup>

“In Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, SOF provide the primary national counterterrorist armed response.”<sup>52</sup> I am proposing that the CARICOM region

should establish this capability in the context of a regionally available responsive asset.

Given the geographical dispersion of the CARICOM states, it would become necessary to

consider the option of establishing a capability in at least three locations (possibly

Jamaica in the West, Antigua and Barbuda in the North and Trinidad and Tobago in the

South) with an air capability to deploy to a threat situation rapidly. Some of the

capabilities required in these forces should include but not be limited to the following:

- Information collection and intelligence sharing with special police units and other national security agencies in order to ensure familiarization with the threat dynamics
- A quick response capability for possible deployment to any part of the CARICOM region – this is to be supported by the relevant air lift capability for the movement of small platoon (thirty-member) strength sub-units and equipment.

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<sup>51</sup> Jamie W. Hammond, “Special Operations Forces: Relevant, Ready and Precise,” in *Casting Light in the Shadows: Canadian Perspectives on Special Operations Forces* ed. Colonel Bernd Horn and Major Tony Balasevicius, 209-233 (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 222.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

- Ability to conduct day or night raids/attacks on a range of targets in the land and maritime environments
- Capability to detect Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats
- Capability to detect and defuse Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in both land and maritime environments

Deployment of this force would necessitate the identification of a trigger, as well agreed lines of authority for its operational activation.

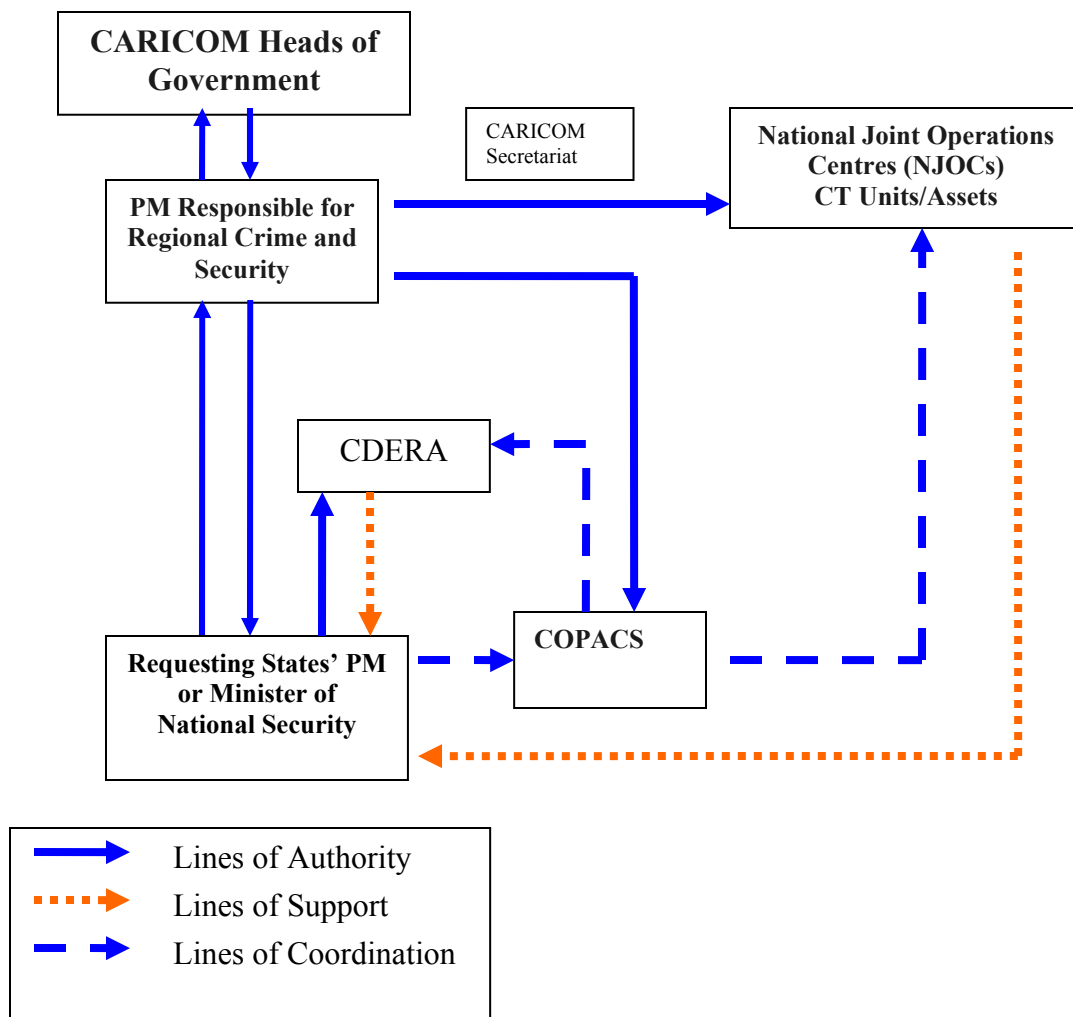
### **Regional Response Mechanism**

The essence of this proposal is to achieve a regional capability and in the process reduce the overall costs involved in attempting to develop competencies in all the individual member states. The proposed mechanism is intended to address the instance of an existing threat situation in a Member State such as a hostage situation or the detection of a high explosive device/CBRN threat as well as the response to an attack that may have occurred and which requires both a surge in operational capacity combined with the need for an direct action (tactical) response.

The threatened Member State would, through its respective prime minister or minister responsible for national security communicate with the regionally appointed political leader with that respective responsibility. Given its operational role as established in the Treaty for Security Assistance, the CARICOM Operations Planning and Coordinating Staff (COPACS) would commence the communications, coordination functions. In an emergency, this process is essentially about crisis and/or consequence management. COPACS would immediately establish links with the CARICOM Member



States' National Joint Operations Centres (NJOCs) who possess the respective operational capabilities (information already held by COPACS). The communications flow and the lines of authority are depicted in Figure 2. This is the author's design and is not a mechanism currently utilized in CARICOM.



**Figure 2. A Proposed Mechanism for a CARICOM Counterterrorism Response Capability**

The solid lines are communication links between decision-makers and the respective authority for executing operations, as well as the entities providing support. The broken lines represent the functional lines of communication and coordination carried out between CARICOM Member States and the CARICOM Operations Planning and Coordinating Staff (COPACS). Included in this mechanism is the disaster response role of the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). The inclusion of CDERA is in the event there is a major terrorist incident in any part of the Caribbean, the coordinating staff, COPACS, would be the central operations coordinating centre in what can potentially become a complex security and humanitarian operation.

### **Challenges Involved in Building Defence Capacity**

It can be argued that there are several challenges which can militate against the pursuit of defence capacity building or establishing mechanisms for strengthening the collective operational readiness of available forces and assets. Issues such as funding, legal hurdles and political impediments can nullify these proposals. But CARICOM has in the past collaborated successfully on regional arrangements such as in disaster response or in deploying military forces on peace operations as undertaken in support of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).<sup>53</sup> CARICOM Contingency funds have been established in the past for strategic regional efforts such as post-hurricane relief or security operations as occurred in 2007.

Proposals made in this essay will certainly require similar collective agreements and arrangements. It is to the benefit of drafting legislation however, that CARICOM

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<sup>53</sup> United Nations, "United Nations Mission in Haiti (September 1993-June 1996)," Available from [http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/co\\_mission/unmih.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/co_mission/unmih.htm) Internet accessed 25 April 2008.

States are signatories to many of the International Conventions and Agreements such as those on terrorism, nuclear and chemical weapons. These would prove effective enablers in situations where neighbouring states may need to intervene to assist militarily. In the case of CARICOM, additional Memoranda of Understanding and other supporting legislation would be required.

## CONCLUSION

When the US responded to the crisis in Grenada in 1983, during Operation Urgent Fury, it did so in recognition of the Monroe Doctrine which was a strategic choice for intervention in areas of the Western Hemisphere considered a threat to US interests.<sup>54</sup> Today, the US has switched focus and is engaged in a global war on terrorism in the Middle East and Central Asia. The consequential emerging situation in the Caribbean Community is a need for self reliance in so far as regional security is concerned. The threat of international terrorism as previously outlined is a clear and present one that necessitates a regional response. CARICOM is a relatively resource-strangled region and so must look to strategies that maximize the available collective capabilities in the region.

This study was aimed at identifying these challenges in regional security and has shown that capacity building should be embarked upon to address the evolving threat that arguably is on the Caribbean region's doorsteps. Isolated incidents of terrorist attacks in places such as Kenya, Tanzania and Bali should instruct us on the unpredictability of the international terrorism and its ability to strike anywhere. Using Sun Tzu's philosophical

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<sup>54</sup> Dorith Grant-Wisdom, *United States-Caribbean Relations: The Impact of 9/11*, in *Caribbean Security in the Age of Terror*, 252-272 (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004), 255.

teaching, “thus what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy’s strategy,”<sup>55</sup> is to take the proactive step and intercept the potential threat rather than deal with its destructive effects reactively. Ultimately, the salvation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) resides only in the region.

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<sup>55</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 77.

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