

A collection of historical artifacts including a chessboard, medals, a compass, and a quill pen. The chessboard is in the top left, with several pieces visible. A red ribbon with a circular emblem is in the top center. A silver star-shaped medal is in the middle left. A blue ribbon with a circular emblem is in the bottom left. A silver star-shaped medal is in the bottom left. A compass is in the bottom left. A quill pen is in the middle right.

Conversation about Conventional & Health Geopolitics in the Caribbean



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William J. Perry Center for
Hemispheric Defense Studies
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Salutations

- ❖ Thanks to Director Rudesheim & Dean Tollefson for invite; 2nd webinar this year.
- ❖ Kudos to Kara for great prep & outreach
- ❖ Thanks to Bill for agreeing to moderate
- ❖ Delighted to be reconnecting with Center after years; admin duties limited this.
- ❖ Still recall founding confab; Sept 1997, and early years in Coast Guard HQ building
- ❖ Thanks to all near & far for joining session





Conversation about Conventional & Health Geopolitics Ref CB

- ❖ Will begin conversation with thoughts on:
 1. Conventional GEO with Q about value-added of the contemporary Caribbean
 2. Health GEO, with Q about impact of COVID-19 pandemic on region
 3. Opportunities for Team Biden to Build Back Better in relations with region
- ❖ Framing notions: CB as Pivot; Age-defining

Caribbean as Pivot

*Geopolitical pivots are the states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behavior of geostrategic players. Most often, geopolitical pivots are determined by their geography, which in some cases, gives them a special role either in defining access to important areas or in denying resources to a significant player. – Z. Brzeziński, **The Grand Chessboard***



Geography is Key

*“If one were to choose a single word to encapsulate Caribbean history, that word would have to be “geopolitics,” the relationship between geography and international relations. The most important part of Caribbean geography has been the sea, which has historically served less as the cliched “inner lake” than as a series of maritime highways linking the Caribbean to the rest of the world.” A. Maingot, *The United States and the Caribbean**



Age-defining Pandemic >Q1



COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University

10/7/2021, 9:21 AM

Total Cases

236,635,576

Total Deaths

4,831,361

Total Vaccine Doses Administered

6,383,333,830

Cases | Deaths by

Country/Region/Sovereignty

US

28-Day: **3,485,038** |

53,709

Totals: **44,061,036** | **707,799**

United Kingdom

28-Day: **916,794** | **3,695**

Totals: **8,044,480** | **137,694**

Turkey

28-Day: **760,779** | **6,460**

Totals: **7,327,317** | **65,373**

India

28-Day: **754,331** | **8,107**

Totals: **33,894,312** | **449,856**

28-Day Cases
13,839,992

28-Day Deaths
230,703

28-Day Vaccine Doses Administered
764,058,336



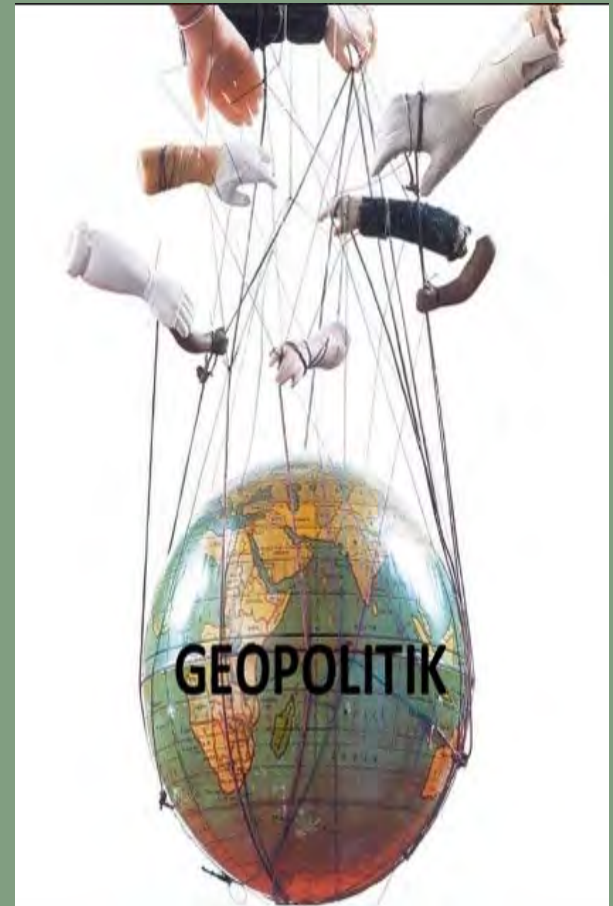
Esri, FAO, NOAA

Powered by Esri

- ❖ WHO D-G: COVID-19 pandemic has caused more 'mass trauma' than WW II
- ❖ Pandemic > tectonic shifts within states and societies & upended global affairs
- ❖ Affected every conceivable aspect of human endeavor and has GEO implications for states large and small & has been defining content and context of national actions & international interactions worldwide
- ❖ All indications are that pandemic implications will be deep and long-lasting.

Conventional Value Added

Region's geopolitical value revolves mainly around its strategic materials, such as oil, bauxite and, nickel; strategic waterways like the Panama Canal and the Mona Passage; and military installations operated by the U.S.

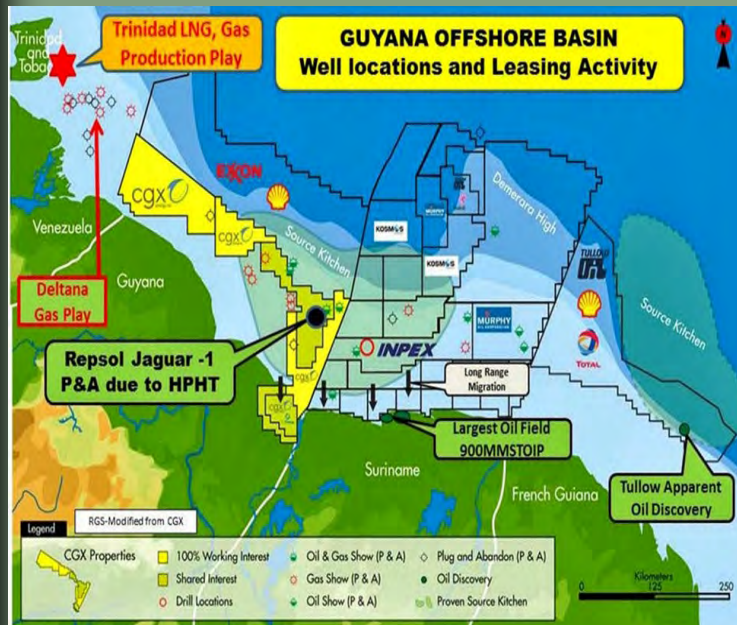


Strategic Materials



- ❖ Bauxite (DR, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Venezuela)
- ❖ Nickel (Cuba, the DR, Venezuela)
- ❖ Diamonds (Fr. Guiana, Guyana, and Venezuela),
- ❖ Manganese (Guyana and Venezuela)
- ❖ Silver (Cuba and the DR)
- ❖ Gold (Cuba, DR, Guyana, Haiti, Fr. Guiana, Suriname, and Venezuela)
- ❖ Uranium (Guyana and Venezuela).
- ❖ LNG from TNT; oil in Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela

Petro Powers-in-the-Making



- ❖ Guyana: 21 finds between May 2015 and today (10/7)
- ❖ Reserve: 10 billion barrels; 120,000 barrels per day > 750,000 barrels by 2025
- ❖ Suriname 16,000 barrels in 2020; January 2020 major discovery by Apache and Total SA
- ❖ Since then, Apache & Total; 4 more discoveries

Panama Canal Connectivity

Connectivity

Panama's maritime hub:

- 144 trade routes
- Over 1,700 ports
- In more than 160 countries

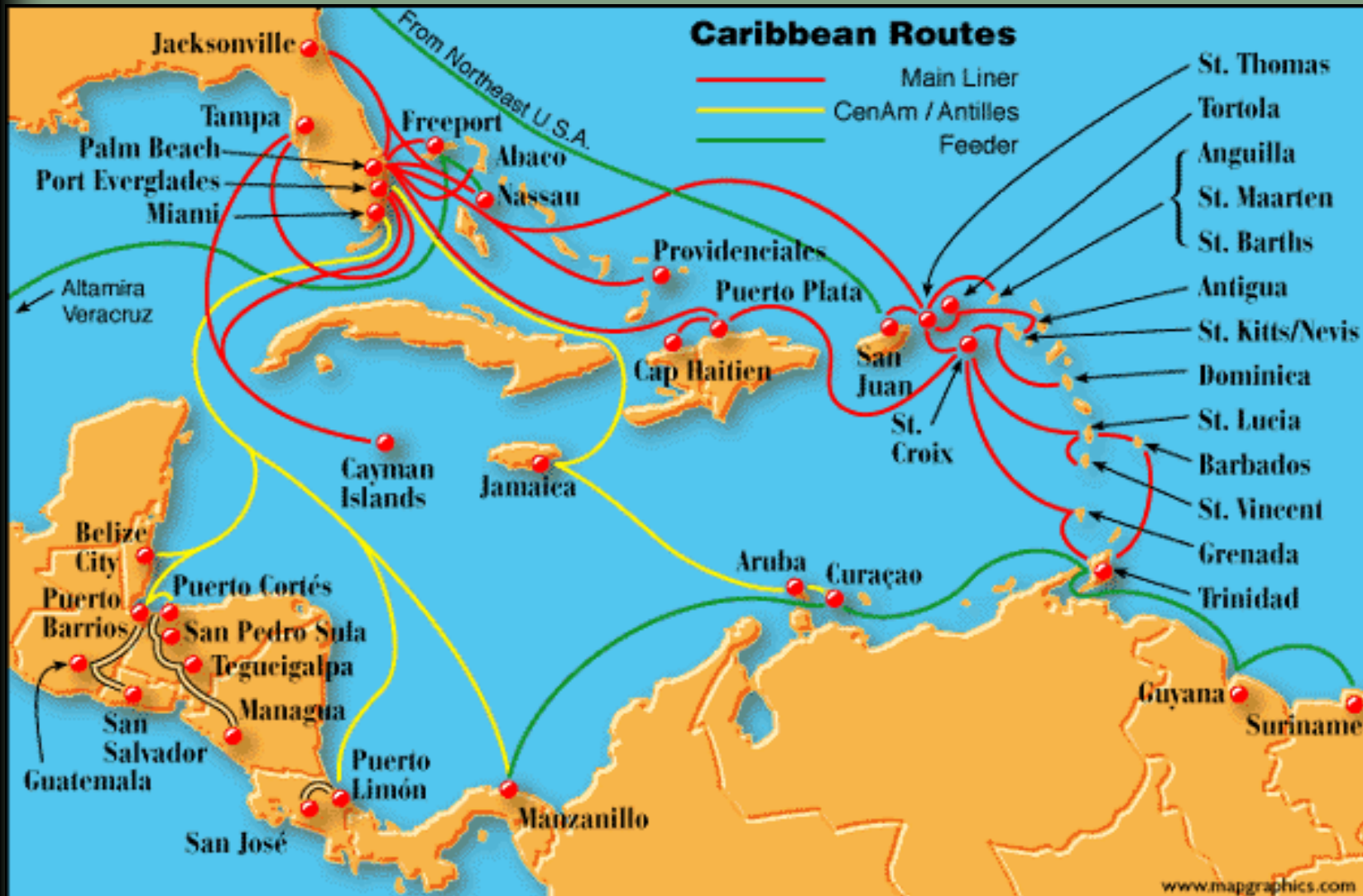
Panama's air hub:

- 85 direct destinations in America and Europe
- 35 countries

Panama: Logistics Hub and Transportation of the Americas
Reaching the Maximum Potential from our Geographic Location



Vital Sea Lanes



US Base in Bahamas

The mission of AUTECH is to support the full spectrum of undersea warfare by providing accurate three-dimensional tracking, performance measurement, and data collection resources to satisfy Research, Development, Test and Evaluation requirements, and for assessment of Fleet training, tactical and material readiness.



Changing GEO Dynamics

- ❖ Changing dynamics
- ❖ Decline of European powers
- ❖ Monroe Doctrine and rise of US as hegemon
- ❖ Venezuela's reliance on Doctrine in dispute over Essequibo
- ❖ Region key roles in WW I, WW II, CW



Competitors Changing, China Rising

- ❖ Caribbean key to China's global strategic designs
- ❖ strategic waterways & materials: **in 2018, China had 2nd highest usage of Panama Canal for LNG imports, after South Korea; 2016-2018 it had 2nd highest usage for total cargo movement, after USA**
- ❖ Investment and market access: **trade with CB ballooned from US\$1 billion in 2002 to US\$8 billion in 2019. China also runs a substantial trade surplus with CB, exporting US\$6.1 billion worth goods to it and importing only US\$1.9 billion from it in 2019**
- ❖ Increasing security engagement
- ❖ PRC-Taiwan diplomatic rivalry: PRC: 12: Taiwan: 5
- ❖ Win in Guyana: March 2021
- ❖ Soft/smart Power pursuits through Confucius Institutes—548 worldwide, 8 in Caribbean
- ❖ Belt & Roads Initiatives—140 countries, 9 in Caribbean



Russia and Iran .. > Q2

- ❖ Unlike China, Russia not placed similarly high premium on Caribbean pivot space as part of strategic design to deal with unipolarity
- ❖ Insular Caribbean: dip presence limited to Cuba & Jamaica: Greater Caribbean: in Venezuela, Columbia, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rico, Guyana, and Guatemala
- ❖ Except with Cuba and Venezuela, trade and investment are miniscule.
- ❖ Venezuela is main locus of engagement: oil, minerals, security, nuclear power pursuits;
- ❖ Adm Fuller: doubled naval visits from 5 in 2008-14 to 11 in 2015-2020; offered security training; sold US\$2.3 billion in weapons & military
- ❖ Iran factor” main actors involved are Iran, Venezuela, and Russia
- ❖ Four factors: (1) presence of uranium in Venezuela & Guyana and Iran’s interest in accessing it; (2) Venezuela’s interest in partnerships to develop nuclear power; (3) global-level competition involving USA & Iran, on one hand, and USA & Russia, on the other; (4) sanctions management by Iran & Venezuela
- ❖ Iran’s Guyana uranium pursuit



Health Geopolitics

- ❖ Conventional Geo: primacy of geography and of the state
- ❖ In health GEO: geography yes, but broader mix: state & non-state actors, egs. pharmaceutical companies and multilateral orgs, such as WHO and PAHO



COVID-19 Manifestations

- ❖ First COVID-19 cases: March 1, 2020>St Martin in couple who returned from France & in DR in 61-year-old man visiting from Italy
- ❖ Head of CB Public Health Agency reported to Sept 13, 2021 CARICOM pandemic special emergency meeting that since March 2020 CARICOM countries had endured 300,000 cases & more than 6,700 deaths.
- ❖ Summit communique: “deep concern at the increase with more than 100,000 new cases and 1,400 deaths between July 2021 and September 12, 2021.”

Latest Status Report

“Since the previous report on September 27, 2021, an additional 35,000 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in 32 countries within the Caribbean, bringing the region’s total confirmed cases to 1,913,808 in 35 countries/territories (including the 26 CARPHA Member States). The new total represents a 1.9% increase in the number of confirmed cases. There were 23,905 deaths recorded in the Caribbean Region as of September 30, 2021. The risk of further cases occurring in the Caribbean remains Very High.”

CARPHA SITUATION REPORT NO. 197

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic



Scarring Continues

“COVID-19 has literally scarred 2020 in ways that will forever be remembered throughout the annals of history. We did not expect to shut down our borders to ourselves as a family, [and] to the rest of the world.” –

PM Mia Motley of Barbados, July 2020





Recovery Rates Plus

- ❖ Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago all managed to secure recovery rates upwards of 90 percent.
- ❖ Jamaica has had lowest recovery rate—44.6 percent—while Grenada has highest—98 percent.
- ❖ Initially, Jamaica's response won high praise, from WHO & US Amb
- ❖ But several factors caused a change: already overwhelmed public health system; lackluster response to pandemic control measures; transmission from tourists after the borders were reopened in July 2020 to facilitate tourist arrival.

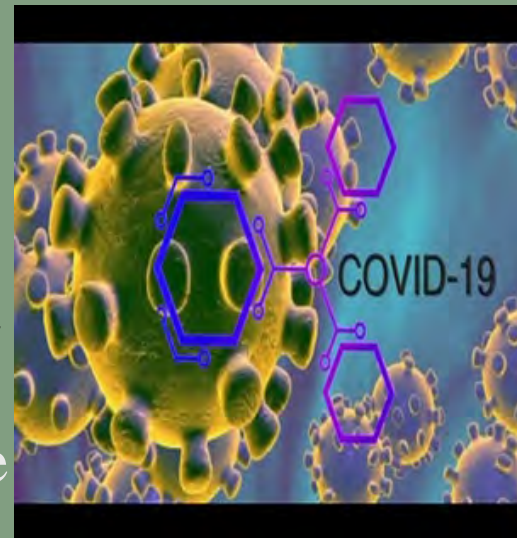


Scope & Impact

- ❖ UN study: highlights 2 sets of factors manifesting themselves as consequences of COVID-19: (1) region's high indebtedness, economic fragility, social vulnerability and exposure to climatic shocks, and (2) cascading effects of health crisis elsewhere in the world on global trade, tourism, and transportation.
- ❖ Consequently, Soc & Econ impacts are exacerbating the existing vulnerabilities of CB countries, as well as the underlying risk factors: poverty, inequality, informality
- ❖ ECLAC: COVID-19 impact on tourism > resulted in employment decline by 7% in 2020, contributing to GDP losses across region, with St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados suffering the steepest losses: 26 percent, 18 percent, and 16 percent, respectively.

Sobering JA Situation

- ❖ “During the 9-11 terrorist attacks tourism earnings declined by 14%. In the global financial crisis, tourism earnings declined by 5%.
- ❖ **“Madam Speaker, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jamaica’s foreign exchange inflows from tourism are projected to fall by 74% or US\$2.5 billion in 2020/21.**
- ❖ **“In 2019/20 we earned US\$3.4 billion from tourism but in 2020/21 we are expected to earn only US\$874 million or approximately one quarter of 2019/20 earnings.” – Min Nigel Clarke**



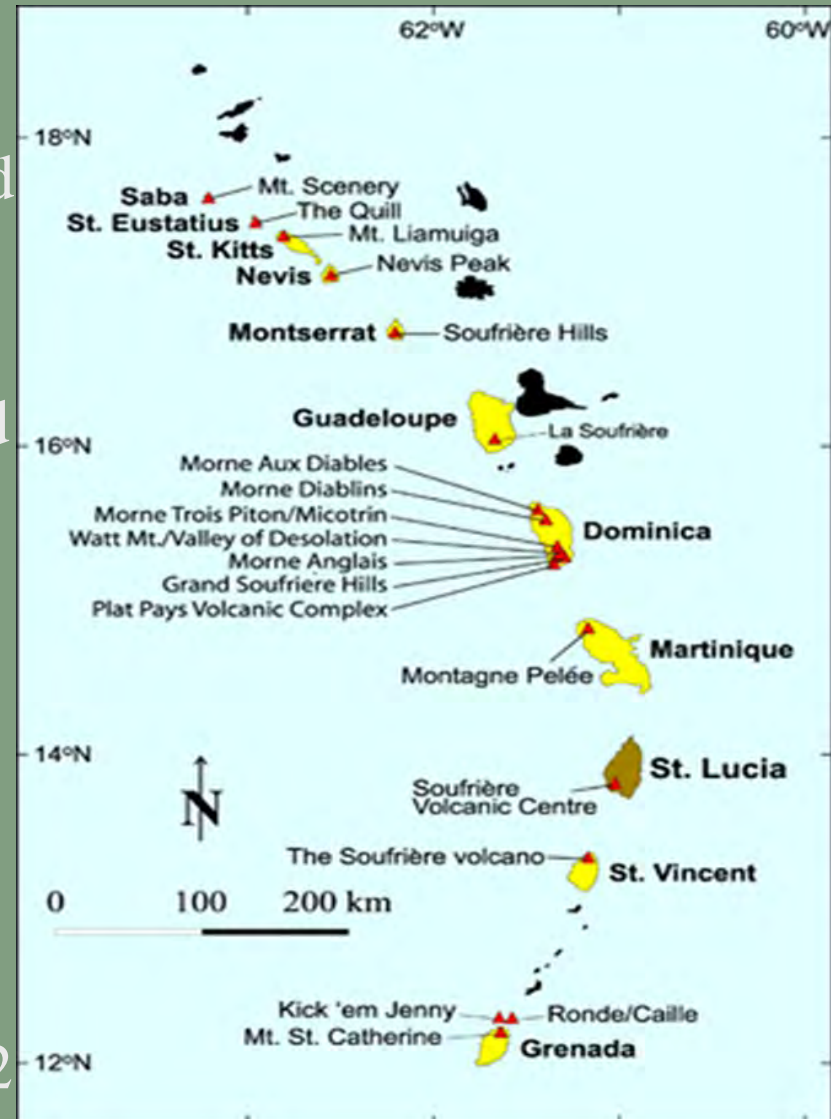


Health GEO Realities

- ❖ COVID-19 dramatizes import of health GEO.
- ❖ Also reminds us of region's multiple vulnerabilities, some from physical geography; esp. hurricanes and volcanoes.
- ❖ HG related to COVID-19 manifests—and will continue to manifest—both competition & cooperation actions, in relation to medical supplies, testing, research, vaccines, technical personnel, financial stabilization funds, etc.
- ❖ Response support, perhaps, allows greatest manifestation of geopolitical competition and leveraging of pandemic support for non-pandemic geopolitical benefits.
- ❖ Is assistance provided driven by humanitarianism or geopolitics, using soft power instruments?
- ❖ ILG: 2 not mutually exclusive; generally, both involved, even by small but influential actors, such as Cuba.

Multiple Vulnerabilities

- ❖ COVID-19 reminds us of region's multiple vulnerabilities, some related to physical Geo; notable: hurricanes and volcanoes.
- ❖ La Soufrière, which erupted on April 9, is reminder: Eastern CB has 19 active volcanoes, 17 on 11 of the islands; remaining 2 are underwater near Grenada.
- ❖ One of the 2—Kick 'Em Jenny—active recently
- ❖ DR has 3 volcanoes, Haiti 2





Pandemic Diplomacy

- ❖ CB pivot space arena for great power Geo positioning, aiming to solidify friendships/win new ones, garner dip support as donors pursue interests unrelated to region.
- ❖ E.g. less than six months into the pandemic, Russia had given pandemic aid to 46 countries around the world, including the United States
- ❖ Within same timeframe China had offered Latin American & Caribbean countries US\$ 1 billion in loans for pandemic relief; since then, China has extended bilateral assistance to several countries in the region
- ❖ **India: initial bold PD moves, with “Vaccine Friendship” program: > vaccines free & on discount basis to 49 countries in developing world; up to February 2021: had distributed 22.9 million doses under the program.**

India Acted, US Lagged

- ❖ India > 500,000 AstraZeneca doses to CARICOM
- ❖ Barbados received 100,000 of the vaccines, 1,500 of which it gave to Guyana, 2,000 to Trinidad and Tobago, 1,000 to St Lucia, 500 to Grenada, and 1,000 to Belize.
- ❖ 70,000 vaccines to Dominica, which, in turn gave 2,000 to St Lucia, 5,000 to Antigua & Barbuda, 5,000 to St Vin /Grenadines, 2,000 to St Kitts & Nevis: 500 to Grenada.
- ❖ India: 30,000 to DR and 80,000 to Guyana; **April crisis**

United States Donation

- ❖ US has given considerable pandemic support, but at one time lagged behind China & India in vaccine donations
- ❖ This prompted calls for bold leadership from within CB & in US; April 21 meet with SoS Blinken and CARICOM FMs
- ❖ In August, as part of Global Vaccine Sharing initiative, U.S. announced donation of 5.5 million doses of Pfizer vaccines plus ancillary kits to CARICOM members

COVAX and Cuba

- ❖ CB countries also had received vaccines through COVAX facility. (US is largest COVAX donor)
- ❖ CB states not only recipients of aid & objects of geo-political positioning; some also donors within CB family.
- ❖ Plus, Cuba > practicing pandemic diplomacy globally; country-wide protests in July 2021.
- ❖ Cuba only CB nation able to produce vaccines; 1 of only 2 in entire LAC to do so; other is Brazil.
- ❖ Argentina and Venezuela plan to produce Cuban vaccines

.. > Q3

Build Back Better Opportunities

❖ Keep in mind:

1. Team Biden alone doesn't determine nature and trajectory of engagement in CB (or any other region).

2. Nature and trajectory influenced by national strategic interests, values, developments in region



Whirlpool Proposition

3. *“One pattern that stands out is the way in which U.S. attention to the region fluctuates between obsession and disinterest. I have referred to this pattern as a “whirlpool,” a whirling eddy, which occasionally sucks the United States into a vortex of crisis where it becomes preoccupied by small Caribbean nations or their leaders. U.S. Presidents react to the crises with security, political, and economic programs that have historical antecedents even if the policymakers of the time are not aware of them.”*—

Robert Pastor



BBB Areas for Engagement

- ❖ Variety of areas exist in dealing with whirlpool
- ❖ Important to set priorities
- ❖ Candidates; no rank order
 - ❖ Climate resilience
 - ❖ Energy security
 - ❖ Health geopolitics
 - ❖ Cybersecurity
 - ❖ Cold War holdover issues—
Cuba, Venezuela
 - ❖ CB Basin Security Initiative

“
GOOD THINGS
HAPPEN WHEN
YOU SET YOUR
PRIORITIES
STRAIGHT

SCOTT GAAN

Embrace Missouri (Show me)

Table 1. CBSI Funding By Foreign Aid Account, FY2010-FY2021 (U.S. \$ millions)

Fiscal Year	ESF	DA	INCLE	NADR	FMF	Total
FY2010	14.000	6.000	27.300	—	14.500	61.800
FY2011	17.000	—	37.500	6.400	16.500	77.400
FY2012	17.000	—	30.000	2.000	15.000	64.000
FY2013	18.802	—	30.000	2.000	9.494	60.296
FY2014	29.200	—	25.000	1.800	7.500	63.500
FY2015	27.000	—	25.000	1.500	5.000	58.500
FY2016	25.000	—	25.221	—	7.500	57.721
FY2017	25.000	—	25.200	—	7.500	57.700
FY2018	25.000	—	25.200	—	7.500	57.700
FY2019	25.250	—	25.250	—	7.500	58.000
FY2020	27.300	—	25.200	—	7.500	60.000
FY2021 (est.)	32.300	—	35.000	—	7.500	74.800
Total	282.852	6.000	335.871	13.700	112.994	751.417

Sources: U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Annex: Regional Perspectives, FY2012 to FY2021; Explanatory Statement (Division K) to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, P.L. 115-141; Conference Report to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (H.Rept. 116-9 to P.L. 116-6); Explanatory Statement (Division G) to the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94); Explanatory Statement (Division K) to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260).

Notes: ESF = Economic Support Fund; DA = Development Assistance; INCLE = International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; NADR = Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, De-mining and Related Programs; and FMF = Foreign Military Financing.

Final Thoughts

1. CB continues to be an important pivot space for United States, China and other big powers and for countries, such as Iran and India, aiming to enhance their global heft.
2. COVID-19 testing political & diplomatic nimbleness of leaders in navigating GEO high seas where US, China, Russia, India have been jockeying to enhance their GEO market share using COVID-19 vaccine and other pandemic aid, not only for humanitarianism.
3. Delicate horizons ahead, ref. both conventional & health GEO. For instance, petro power pursuits in GSB will provide basis for enhanced GEO positioning by US, China, Britain, Israel, Canada, Spain.
4. Team Biden opportunity to manage whirlpool with region by Building Back Better in areas of mutual benefit, including climate resilience, cybersecurity, CBSI