Covid, Crime, and Climate Change in the Caribbean:

Perspectives from the Participants of the Caribbean Defense and Security Course (CDSC) 2021

William J. Perry Center *for* Hemispheric Defense Studies

25 Years Empowering Defense and Security Professionals in the Americas

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Introduction

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William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies

Early in 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic just began, the Perry Center had to make the tough decision to cancel the in-residence Caribbean Defense and Security Course (CDSC) for that year. This was particularly unfortunate as CDSC is the Perry Center's primary academic platform for engaging military officers and civilian defense and security officials from the English-speaking Caribbean. Thanks to the online technology that we have all become well accustomed to, the Perry Center was able to organize a virtual CDSC in August 2021 bringing together 48 participants from eleven Caribbean countries for a week of online learning and dialogue.

Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic permeated many of the academic sessions. Pandemics had been another bullet point on a long list of real and potential threats to the security of the region, but COVID-19 took these phenomena out of the realm of the theoretical and/or marginal (Zika, SARS, Ebola, etc.) and placed them right at the center of global politics and national security. As was the case in other regions, in the Caribbean the armed forces were called upon to provide support to public health efforts in addition to fulfilling more traditional missions. The institutional capabilities honed after years of responding to hurricanes and volcanoes came very much in handy during the slow rolling disaster of the pandemic.

During five days of virtual lectures and working group discussions, CDSC participants explored a range of issues including vaccine geo-politics; climate change; the metamorphosis of organized crime; human trafficking; cyber security; deep fakes; illegal fishing and the maritime domain; and women, peace and security, as well as the important roles played by sub-regional organizations such the Regional Security System (RSS) and Caricom Community's Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS). Often, people forget that the United States is a Caribbean nation including the U.S. Virgin Islands, the southern keys of Florida, and the connection between the American states on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. These geographic links combined with historical, cultural, and linguistic links through the Caribbean diaspora give real life to the academic exchanges between Perry Center professors and course participants.

In addition to the academic exchange and learning on specific subjects that takes place in CDSC, Perry Center activities always seeks to a) strengthen the capabilities of civilians in the defense and security sectors as well as bridge the military-civilian divide; b) cultivate a community of practice of dynamic defense and security professional throughout the Western Hemisphere; and c) communicate the contours and logic of U.S. policies towards the region as well as learn about partner nations' policy approaches and concerns. As the U.S. government reviews the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), the primary policy framework towards the region, these insights and perspectives are as

important as ever.

Each CDSC participant was required to write a short essay, an Op-Ed of sorts, on a relevant topic of their choosing to complete the course. Here, we share a selection of eighteen of those 48 essays, chosen by Perry Center professors and written by soldiers, police officers, members of parliament, representatives of regional organizations, civilian government officials and journalists from the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. These essays cover the entire gamut of defense and security issues relevant to the Caribbean. We hope they provoke some thought among readers and help us all think more deeply and creatively about how our governments and institutions can work together as we emerge from the pandemic and move towards the new normal. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and are not an official policy nor position of the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University, the Department of Defense nor the U.S. Government.

Part I - COVID-19

Vaccine Hesitancy – Human Rights versus the Greater Good
By Robyn-Kay Deleon (Jamaica)

The novel coronavirus has had a fundamental impact on all Caribbean countries. The virus continues to spread seemingly with no plans of ceasing anytime soon. As of August 2021, Jamaica is facing its third wave of the pandemic, having recorded over 1,000 deaths thus far. With Jamaica's population at approximately 2.9 million, with a mere 4.5 percent (approximately 132,000) being fully inoculated, a low percentage when compared to the Latin America and Caribbean states. Concerning attributors are the short supply of vaccines, the rising culture of vaccine inequity and vaccine hesitancy. There is a greater concern for the increasingly high rate of vaccination hesitancy of the populace to include the security forces as their inability to take the vaccine presents a clear and present danger to the protection and security of the state.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Jamaican government embarked on an implementation of an inoculation strategy, positioning its security forces as the priority in its first phase. The armed forces and police received a "lifeline" during this enduring crisis which was only extended to the most vulnerable portions of the population. Disappointingly, where national interest had driven this priority, independent thought, self-interest, fear, doubt, and distrust have caused many to remain in the high vulnerability group.

As of August 2021, the current vaccination rates of the Jamaican police and military personnel stand at approximately 20 percent and 90 percent respectively. Whilst the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) seems to have a positive compliance of their military population; the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) stands in opposition as the resistance of the country's law enforcers is more than evident.

This has forced deep consideration of measures to force compliance, placing the country's government in a precarious position. The ripple effect of hesitancy by this elite group within our society is bound to set the stage for a "follow-the-leader" play. Whilst there are no measures in place to take disciplinary actions, arrangements are being made for administrative penalty. Some consider this an infringement on their constitutional rights regarding freedom of discrimination.

There is a clear and present constitutional dilemma, not only for Jamaica, as more discussions and considerations are being commandeered by world leaders to have our police and military populaces to become vaccinated. The vaccination terms have been dissected to argue against mandatory inoculation of the JCF and JDF populations. However, within a democratic world in addition to the respect for human rights, I believe that the state should take the necessary measures to *"ensure the survival, security and protection of its interests"*. The amendment of the Disaster Risk Management Act 2015 should be an option for the state to create a requirement for the mandatory inoculation of its law enforcers. This would send a clear message to those seeking to oppose stemming further outbreaks of the virus and an increase in our death toll.

Rated as one of the most violent countries, having the highest homicide rate in the world pre-covid, Jamaica is faced with an insurmountable challenge in balancing the current health crisis and the nexus of criminalities, with an already stretched financial economy.

In an effort to maintain law and order within the scope of our borders, the JCF members' hesitancy to the vaccination efforts poses an additional threat to the Jamaican society. It is one less internal threat we could do without. Since the pandemic, the security forces have been tasked to take on more non-traditional roles, paving the way for criminal enterprises to also widen their reach. The effect of having a downturn in the numbers of our security personnel due to contracting the virus, whether by quarantine, turnover periods, or possible death poses a grave problem for maintaining law and order by an already stretched force.

"National security may be described as the measures taken by a State to ensure the survival, security and protection of its interests. In the Jamaican context, national security takes on a broader meaning beyond military defence from external threats. It encompasses civil defence measures, including emergency preparedness, and the maintenance of law and order internally, through the police and other arms of the justice system" (Government of Jamaica, 2007). The state's national security is highly dependent on the ability, readiness and wellbeing of the country men and women who have vowed to serve and protect, at all means necessary. It cannot be a case where our highly regarded compatriots take matters in their own hands and oppose the only light to the end of a dark tunnel, when there is a health crisis affecting all aspects of our nation.

Vaccination of our police and military personnel is a critical responsibility of the men and women who serve in the capacity of our protectors, as the health of our national security is at the realm of a vulnerable COVID-19 society. The security forces should be held at a higher level of accountability as they made a vow to their country to serve and protect, at all cost.

Although there should be some common effort amongst world leaders and human rights organizations leading on mandatory vaccination, a country should make the call despite the possible backlash from international partners and organizations. Jamaica need not lose hope in the fight for mandatory vaccination as the United States Security of Defense intentions to have all members within the U.S. security defense populace vaccinated is a step in the right direction, one that we may consider of course with a sensitization regime.

It is a thin line between democracy and violation of the fundamental rights of citizens as freedom, religion and privacy rights are stripped away. However, in the midst of a health crisis threatening not just Jamaica, but the entire human race, the great sacrifice is sometimes warranted for a greater good.

In closing, JDF's Chief of Defense Staff, Lieutenant General Rocky Meade alluded to the importance of taking the covid-19 vaccine stating that "by taking the vaccine we are protecting others by first protecting ourselves." The JCF's motto is in line with this statement as JCF members have vowed to "Serve, Protect and Reassure the people of Jamaica."

The Demilitarization of the Armed Forces during the Covid-19 Pandemic
By Claudene Hammond-Lea (Jamaica)

In recent times, the military has been required to pivot its roles in order to adapt to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The traditional roles and capabilities of the military was poised towards defending the status quo and sovereignty of a nation. The military did this by planning for and mobilizing to attack if any such actions were perceived. In essence, the military's main role was to defend and protect its citizens and sovereignty. As a result, traditional military roles included combat, war, counter terrorism operations, maritime patrols and disaster relief.

Photo caption: Service members from several different partner nations patrol the streets as part of Tradewinds 2016 in Jamaica.
Photo Credit: U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Justin T. Updegraff, via DVIDS.

In December 2019, the role of the military has become blurred with the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The military was forced to perform more non-traditional roles which were once reserved for internal/local security and civil society organizations. The Congressional Research Service in an article published in April 2020 distinguished that "traditional security is synonymous with the mitigation of military risk and the effective deterrence or prosecution of warfare between states." On the other hand, Fawzia Gibson-Fall identified a blended civil-military response to the pandemic which pushed the military into the national health apparatus.

The military took on tasks which sufficiently matched their capabilities and resources. In Jamaica, the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) engaged in the keeping of public order. Soldiers were dutied to conduct temperature checks, managed quarantined communities, enforce social distancing protocols

and curfews among other activities which were far different from the combat and operational training received. A causal effect of the increased interactions and visibility with the public led to tensions and oftentimes misunderstandings between civilians and military personnel. Although public ratings and respect for the armed forces has become strained in certain instances, the job of supporting public order has demonstrated the readiness of adaptability of the JDF. The JDF adapted quickly and stepped up in showcasing their logistical and engineering expertise. The JDF played a significant role in Jamaica's Covid-19 response as they were trained to set up logistical operations and build infrastructure quickly. With the use of these capabilities, the JDF built field hospitals and even used their medical doctors and orderlies to administer vaccines in the vaccination program. The Covid-19 Pandemic can really be considered "the bringing out of all the guards."

It must be highlighted that the pandemic placed the JDF as an important player and introduced them to a new role in the public health system. Experts in the health system are required for fighting a public health crisis but the military has now cemented its place at the table for supporting all sectors in a pandemic.

The pandemic has taught us that the military can no longer be considered as a distinct entity in the national security realm. The military has morphed into a multifaceted organization with global and national public health importance. Policy makers must come to the understanding and policies must now reflect this inclusion of military – civilian cooperation. A national strategy is paramount for quick mobilization of the troops and must speak to their distinct role and duties in a public health crisis which could ultimately progress into a national security issue. On the other hand, policies are also needed to ensure that the core values of the military are preserved and that the militarization of domestic and global problems are not normalized (Klarevas and Clarke, 2020).

In order to avoid the risk of undermining military capacity to perform critical functions in external defense, the defense budget should be adequately funded and provisions made for contingencies. The opportunities for training and education must continue especially for specialized units so as not to negatively affect the military's operational capacity and inoperability.

The Covid- 19 pandemic and all its impacts have highlighted that the defense and protection of a nation's citizens cannot be the sole responsibility of the security forces. A collaborative approach by civil groups and other government agencies is needed and must be implemented. To achieve a favorable approach to any national crises, the inclusion and advice of subject matter experts like epidemiologists, medical doctors, chemists, economists, and engineers will be needed. These experts can provide guidance and insight on areas that the political directorate and the security forces are not equipped to do and at times incapacitated by. In a public health crisis, experts provide a piece of the puzzle that defense institutions may not possess.

With the military playing a greater role in public health matters, it is important to uphold its reputation of being disciplined and offering a high standard of service. The good public perception of the military must be protected especially with the securitization of civil liberties and basic human rights during the pandemic. The public perception, trust and integrity of the military must not be compromised

or sacrificed by the increasing interaction of the military in the civic space. This was true for Jamaica where in the past two years (2019-2021) there were frequent complaints against soldiers.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has exponentially caused the JDF to explore non-traditional defense roles and to engage in more civil-military collaborations. By diving into the public health realm, the JDF like many armed forces around the world has faced numerous challenges as they try to pivot and make space in this new world order. The pandemic stands as an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate the ways in which the military should navigate through the civil - military arena.

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COVID-19, Guyana's Biggest Champion of E-Commerce and Cybersecurity
By Tamika Henry-Fraser (Guyana)

The terms 'silver lining' and COVID-19 typically don't go together but hear me out.

With all its negative, devastating impacts such as crippling health care systems around the world and causing unprecedented loss of life and human connection, in the context of Guyana, COVID-19 has also revolutionized how we do business. With that in mind, it has also changed how we think about cybersecurity, and if we didn't think about it before, we certainly do now.

Photo caption: Authorities from Guyana and international partners receive a shipment of Covid-19 vaccines in August 2021. With a population of under 800,000, the country has experienced almost 1,200 deaths from the virus.
Photo Credit: Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO).

Even with its recent oil boom, before the novel coronavirus, Guyana's local business climate was somewhat unfavorable when compared to that of other economies in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 Report which was published on October 24, 2019, and "provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies," Guyana was ranked at number 134. With an overall of score of 55.5 on the report's ease of doing business index, Guyana's economy was below the region's average 59.1 (on a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 represents the best performance). The ease of doing business score in turn captures the "gap of each economy from the best regulatory performance observed on each of the indicators across all economies." Some of these indicators include registering a business, accessing credit, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, supply chain efficiency and other business logistics. Guyana's major "shortcomings included a weak judicial system, lack of intellectual property protection, corruption, and bureaucracy" (U.S. Department of State Investment Climate Statement, 2020).

I would therefore propose two arguments for Guyana: (i) that COVID-19 has increased the ef-

ficiency of critical business services, i.e. the indicators, by forcing these services online; and (ii) COVID-19 has underscored the need for a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy and citizen involvement by increasing the local relevance of and demand for e-commerce.

Like most other countries, once COVID-19 landed on our shores, non-essential activities were halted for public safety, including government services which were either partially or fully suspended as workers were forced to stay home. Many of these services affected the business community so for the sake of continuity and preventing an economic collapse, they were eventually migrated to a digital space. This resulted in faster processing, shorter lines and more efficient systems of tracking and feedback. For example, the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) launched its Optimal Revenue Management System (ORMS) in February 2021, which makes it easier for business owners to honour their tax obligations by allowing online submissions and providing real time updates on their tax status and payment deadlines. While the GRA's ORMS was conceptualised before COVID-19, the pandemic certainly increased the demand for the initiative, the pace at which it was implemented and the public's awareness and acceptance of it. Similarly, many other Government websites have been improved since the pandemic with citizens being able to conduct various levels of transactions online, or at the very least, download and complete applicable forms at home, whereas previously an additional trip to that agency would have been required to uplift the forms. For a business owner travelling long distances into the city to wait hours in a queue, this simple convenience is a much-appreciated boost in efficiency.

The pandemic also demanded the physical closure of many small businesses such as restaurants, salons, retail outlets, gyms, resorts and other tourism-based companies. Similarly, in a push to be sustainable, these businesses evolved into the new digital landscape by diversifying how customers access their services and receive their products. There was an exponential increase in local e-commerce websites and delivery services – from gyms moving their Zumba sessions to Zoom, to restaurants sharing menus via WhatsApp and exclusively offering delivery. Indeed, these changes were occurring around the world at the same time, but in Guyana, a country that pre-COVID had only ~37 percent of its population on the internet based on the most recently available World Bank data, the impact of this online rush is even more significant. Furthermore, culturally in Guyana there was resistance to and distrust of the intangible nature of e-commerce. But COVID-19 has made it impossible to hold on to these inhibitions and so we comply, albeit under duress, to be able to access needed products and services online in lieu of the usual flocking to brick and mortar entities.

In Guyana's post COVID landscape we are also experiencing an improvement in ICT services, particularly as internet service providers, such as GTT and E-Networks, are battling to provide connectivity to remote areas, precisely because *everything is online now*. So, while the nationwide lockdown did initially decelerate the business sector, we must acknowledge that it also rapidly forced innovation –which is a silver lining!

But now what? Well, now that we are all online, cybersecurity takes center stage.

Now that we are sharing our personal identification details and preferences with a digital community, conducting financial transactions online and possibly opening backdoors to our hard-earned sav-

ings in our bank accounts, signing into multiple websites with the same password because who wants to memorize 100+ unique passwords – the once impalpable issue of cybersecurity feels closer to home. When Guyana passed its cybersecurity bill in 2018, there was little fanfare, except that human rights activists rightfully took issue with its clauses on sedition and their impact on freedom of expression. I argue that now, in a post COVID-19 *digital* Guyana, each citizen needs to take a closer look at the bill in an effort to better understand the protections it offers or doesn't offer.

More importantly, each citizen must take ownership of their individual security online because entire identities and livelihoods are at stake. Apart from the massive and wildly sensationalised mishaps like social engineering in political campaigns, data mining and breaches in conglomerates like Facebook, and ransomware holding critical services like fuel and healthcare hostage, in Guyana we must now accept that because we also dwell heavily in this digital space, we, the small men and women, have become equally vulnerable. Hackers who access private corporate data from our less secure home networks as we work remotely; scammers who steal our identities as we expose ourselves online and shop on unsecure websites; extortioners who access our photos or read our unencrypted messages to use them for blackmail; etc. – these risks must be considered by each citizen as the COVID-19 lockdown continues to necessitate that we conduct business digitally.

Amid all the angst though, we can still see this new cybersecurity hyperawareness as a silver lining of COVID-19. The issue of cybersecurity in Guyana and its impacts on both national security and individual security have been simmering in the background for years and would have eventually boiled over, perhaps in more devastating ways. At least because of COVID-19, we are finally moving with the rest of the world and paying attention today.

The Restructuring the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force to Treat with the Realities of a Post COVID-19 World

By Peter Garnesh (Trinidad and Tobago)

The Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) must restructure itself if it is to cope with the increased missions and tasking of the post COVID-19 world coupled with the significant reduction of resources that is likely to occur.

Like most former British colonies within the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago have a shared history, where independence was not won through blood but rather through the peaceful transition from Colony to newly minted independent nations. One of the pre-requisites for the granting of this new-found freedom, by the former colonial masters, was the establishment of a Defense Force to provide a token force against external aggression until support from Britain could arrive.

Photo caption: Senior government officials open the new Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) facility, one that will permit police to hone their investigative skills. In the photo, Deputy Commissioner of Police McDonald Jacob, Commissioner of Police Gary Griffith, Minister Stuart Young and U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Shante Moore cut the ribbon to open the new $750,000 building during the turnover ceremony on March 3, 2021. The donation was part of a $10 million assistance package provided to Trinidad and Tobago over the past five years.
Photo Credit: U.S. Embassy Trinidad and Tobago.

From its humble beginnings in 1962, the TTDF has grown into the largest military force within the English-speaking Caribbean. The TTDF is currently configured with a Headquarters and four distinct Units, the Regiment, Coast Guard, Air Guard, and the Reserves. The organization has also evolved from just providing ceremonial duties and token defense to a professional organization that have adopted the mission statement: " *To defend the sovereign good of The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, contribute*

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to the development of the national community and support the State in the fulfilment of its national and international objectives."

In addition to traditional military functions such as combat readiness, disaster relief, maritime patrols, and peacekeeping operations, the TTDF have also been integrated into several so-called non-traditional mission sets, including but not limited to support to the police and public order, national development, critical infrastructure protection, and border security.

The ease at which the TTDF is thrust into more and more non-traditional roles has been a major challenge for military leaders, who are unable to contend with the significant demand for resources and are forced to accept higher risks by allocating tasks to units that are not properly staffed, trained, or equipped to deal with the varying mission sets.

Unlike its counterpart in the U.S. military for example where there are distinct legislative safe-guards that clearly defines the roles of the military and that of other internal security units, such as the police, no such safeguard currently exists within Trinidad and Tobago. Accordingly, it is highly con-ceivable that additional responsibilities will be placed on the shoulders of the TTDF by the political directorate which sees the TTDF as a more competent, capable unit that offers less industrial relations resistance and has a higher level of goodwill with the population.

Within recent years, the government of Trinidad and Tobago, have simultaneously increased the amount of non-traditional and traditional missions. A current example is the latest addition of two new Cape Class Patrol Vessels in May of 2021 to improve security around the nation's borders in direct response to the mass migration crisis unfolding in real-time in Venezuela. With the current strength of the Coast Guard as well as its existing operational commitments, it is hardly likely that new operational missions would be able to be effectively accomplished without compromising its existing operations.

Given the current negative public perceptions of the government's strategic border security plan, it is unlikely that existing missions will be reduced to accommodate additional ones. Accordingly, the overall strength and composition of the Coast Guard may have to be adjusted to facilitate the achieve-ment of the much-touted political mandate, to secure the nation's borders. Support for the increase in the operating capacity of the Coast Guard can be founded in both National Security Strategic Priorities and public opinion.

The TTDF recently conducted a comprehensive internal audit of its operating Units and identi-fied significant doctrinal and competency gaps that have hampered its operations. At present, a feasi-bility study is underway to ascertain the potential benefits to be attained through the streamlining and standardization of the various disparate doctrine and training departments under a central organization similar to the approach adopted by the Jamaica Defence Force in the establishment of the Caribbean Military Academy.

Although the feasibility study is admittedly still in its embryonic stage, likely, the adoption of a centralized repository for training and doctrine development within the TTDF will not only meet with international best practices but also best fit the unique requirements of the organization. The effective functioning of this strategic imperative is best served by the creation of an independent Unit within the TTDF.

The country's economic dimension would also act as a significant catalyst to restructuring the organization. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy was very much in a state of depression with multiple years of negative growth. The pandemic, therefore, accentuated an already bad situation. Like most Caribbean states contending with first surviving the Pandemic and then re-starting their economy, Trinidad and Tobago had to increase its borrowing, which has inflated its debt to GDP ratios. Quite recently, the country was downgraded by international rating agencies which further complicates the matter.

Notwithstanding, the compelling case to increase the overall strength of the TTDF to achieve its additional mandates, it may not be feasible given the acute fiscal constraints facing the country. In fact, given the prolonged continuation of the pandemic, it is more likely that the TTDF will be confronted by a series of budgetary cuts across all categories of funding.

Given the zero-sum nature of the national fiscal pie, the TTDF will be thrust into a position where it would be compelled to fund the additional priorities from within its coffers. Ultimately, less-essential military programs and departments must be streamlined or eliminated to be able to fund the key priorities moving forward.

TTDF leaders should move quickly to comprehensively study the problem of restructuring within austere conditions, devise suitable courses of action and select the most appropriate one. Whatever the final structure is decided upon, it is likely to be transient as the organization navigates these turbulent times.

Ultimately the choice is clear, the TTDF must adapt, change, or die.

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Reigniting the Relevance of Security as a Risk Management Tool: Lessons Learned from the Covid 19 Pandemic,

By Audrey McNeil (Jamaica)

There have been tremendous gains in the maritime security program since the introduction of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code in 2004; however, there is concern that an emerging trend may derail the gains. Increasingly, security managers are reporting a growing misconception within senior management that their role is simply to resolve conflict, while managing existing physical security structures, inclusive of the guard force. The once highly valued ISPS-undergirded security architecture and structure is now seen as imposing unnecessary financial burdens. There is a move for the reallocation of funds to finance the more generic growth of the organization. Therefore, security divisions are experiencing budget cuts, staff reductions, a lack of engagement in organizational strategic planning, and a paucity of resources committed to improved security structures. The fact that there have been no major security incidents since the ISPS inception (instead of highlighting the program's success), it has played into a narrative that security is no longer an area of concern requiring significant budget allocations.

The complexities of the current Covid-19 pandemic landscape have successfully discredited that theory and reaffirmed the value of security professionals, bringing them back into the conversation at the executive level. These professionals utilize risk management to plan for unexpected eventualities (like pandemics, natural disasters, and man-made phenomena) by identifying all the variables that can

Photo caption: Security forces participating in riot control exercises members from several different partner nations fend off role players acting as rioting villagers as part of crowd control training the final exercise during Tradewinds 2016 in Jamaica.
Photo Credit: U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Justin T. Updegraff.

change the landscape. They identify the risks and threats, analyze the effect, and plan accordingly. They employ a four phased approach to planning- mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, placing significant emphasis on mitigation and avoidance. Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on economies and businesses, and the security professionals have stepped in, and are now being sought after to manage the current devastation unfolding worldwide.

What are some of the relevant principles and practices in security that are being adopted to manage the fallout of pandemics? Here are three:

1. **Security Principle 1**. There is no one size fits all solution in security, but layers together protect people and assets.
   Pandemic management application: One method of protection for the pandemic is not sufficient. All must work together to provide solid protection i.e. vaccines, masks, physical distancing etc. will provide the ultimate protection.

2. **Security Principle 2**. Security awareness is an important tool in keeping all port users invested and informed of relevant risks and threats to the security of our borders. This forms a part of the surveillance, as security is everyone's business.
   Pandemic management application: In the management of the pandemic, this principle should be applied, as information regarding vaccine efficacy would have been ahead, of vaccine conspiracy theories, since awareness training is done regularly. The population would also be engaged as a part of the pandemic surveillance.

3. **Security Principle 3**. There is a collaborative approach as Port Security Committees are comprised of all stakeholders who have an interest in the port being part of the security architecture and solution.
   Pandemic management application: Pandemics require 'all hands on deck'; an all-stakeholder approach around the table. In Jamaica for example although the Ministry of Health has been the driver, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Local Government, Tourism, and several private sector organizations have combined expertise and resources to tackle the pandemic. The 'all hands on deck' approach ensures collaboration and cooperation.

Despite the undoubted relevance of the security professional in the pandemic scenario, there is the other side of the equation. Security professionals must take ownership of the waning confidence in their value to the organization. They too must accept responsibility for failure to adequately make their case in the language of Chief Executive Officers and Chief Financial Officers, who are primarily focused on business growth, profits, and resilience. The Security Executive Council online magazine provides a range of articles, giving guidance on how to make a case for the department's importance and relevance to the organization. An excerpt from one of the 2019 articles entitled "How to Get the Traction Security

Needs to Influence the Organization" states:

> *"The first step in gaining traction and influence is to know what your business does, what it values, how it works, its risks and opportunities, what management expects, and what their priorities are."*

Once security managers align their goals and relevance to that of the organization, and present their case, their value to the organization will be undeniable.

The important role of security in this current pandemic environment is irrefutable and its greater role in planning for future disruptions must be embraced. The principles embedded in this discipline can help prepare the population for other unexpected disasters and avoid repeated mistakes. The onus is now on the security professional to resurrect its cadre of professionals and elevate them to a position that tangibly contributes to each enterprise's profitability. In preparation for this new role, it is time for these professionals to develop their skills and brand themselves as risk management professionals who are important to the successful navigation of future challenges. This is the moment for all security professionals to justify why they deserve their place at the executive table.

Part II - Crime and Security

The Need for Greater Consideration of Non-Traditional Threats in National Security Assessments
By Zeke Beharry (Trinidad and Tobago)

Security threats can be both traditional and non-traditional. A few prominent non-traditional threats that are being faced by States during the 21st century include environmental insecurity (e.g., climate change), human insecurity (e.g. public order, irregular migration/refugee crisis), and cyber insecurity (e.g. disinformation, informational wars). Pandemics are also recognized as a non-traditional threat. Often these non-traditional threats have not and do not prompt significant national and international mobilization because other 'hard' issues of concern (e.g., organized crime, terrorism) attract the scarce attention of the decision-makers. Unfortunately, COVID-19's proliferation has not only exposed woeful inadequacies in the national and collective global response, despite being duly acknowledged as a transnational challenge, but it also caught many nations wholly unprepared. Given that COVID-19 pandemic continues and will continue to be an influencing factor, for the Governments of the Caribbean, in particular, it should be an indicator for needed change not only in the economic and health sectors but also in the overall national security (from practitioner to policy maker) in their conceptualization, preparation, planning, resourcing and implementation.

Globally for years, experts have been warning about the potential emergence of a severe pandemic and calling the attention of the international community to the dangerous impacts that such an outbreak could have on various national sectors.[1] Notwithstanding, COVID-19 caused both the developed and developing countries' healthcare systems to become severely overwhelmed and only until recently (a year and a half later) were able to treat many of the infected. Fatalities rose exponentially around the world—leapfrogging in some regions, resulting in national economies being challenged by disruptions and restrictions in commerce, trade and travel. Given its debilitating effects, this pandemic should be seen as an indicator of the extensive impact, complex, and compound nature that a non-traditional threat can have on the economy, society and security of a country and the world at large. Consequently, there is a need for the national security sector as well as its main stakeholders to pay greater focus on non-traditional threats (not just simply listing it as a threat) with the aim of actively and comprehensively integrating these into the national security discourse, as well as within its national security policy or strategic documents.

The case of COVID-19 - Between late November 2019 and early January 2020, it was reported

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[1] Deutsche, 2020, World Unprepared For Pandemic, Panel Warns, DW, *DW.com*, https://www.dw.com/en/world-unprepared-for-pandemic-panel-warns/a-50471785, [Accessed June 7, 2020]

that the intelligence agencies in United States of the America,[2] United Kingdom,[3] and others submitted briefs to their respective consumers on a virus, now known as COVID-19 and advised of its devastating potential and need to prepare for same. These intelligence reports were based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) global notifications to health departments in each member state and were subsequently verified by their collective human assets (Five Eyes)[4] in China. In a U.S. intelligence report it was stated that *"the country must then take comprehensive and extreme countermeasures to halt transmission…and to avoid potential economic fallouts."*[5] However, while early warnings, such as this were given, these countries' leaders were either not persuaded by the evidence and analysis, or did not seriously think that a non-traditional security issue such as a pandemic could result in such shocks to inter alia, the agricultural, economic, educational, financial, health, political, geopolitical, social, trade and travel sectors.

In addition to the high death count and increasing infection rate (health security), COVID-19 has impacted other dimensions of security in countries around the world. For example, with respect to economic security, the pandemic has increased market volatility such that the price of assets (e.g., crude oil) has fallen sharply with economies both large and small recording a significant drop of at least 30 percent of domestic revenue.[6] Volatility has spiked, in some cases to levels last seen during the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, amid the uncertainty about the economic impact of the pandemic. Economic security (e.g., financial, housing, employment, livelihoods) concerns are paramount for both the public and government alike as such a situation creates an atmosphere of public agitation against governments which can trigger mass protests and activism.[7]

As is the case with traditional security matters, there should be regular assessments on non-traditional security issues (such as on environmental and public health issues) especially conducted by Caribbean Governments (which are Small Island Developing States or SIDS), and it should be subjected to the intelligence cycle.[8] In the case of COVID-19, according to the Canadian Security and Intelligence (S&I) Community, collecting and analyzing such information would contribute to three (3) necessary capacities as a pandemic develops:

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[2] Matt Perez, 2020, Report: U.S. Intelligence Officials Warned About Coronavirus In Wuhan In Late November, Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattperez/2020/04/08/report-us-intelligence-officials-warned-about-coronavirus-in-wuhan-in-late-november/, [Accessed June 11, 2020].

[3] Karim El-Bar, 2020, UK Government Accused of Complacency Over COVID-19 Report, Aa.Com.Tr. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/uk-gov-t-accused-of-complacency-over-covid-19-report/1811011, [Accessed June 11, 2020].

[4] Intelligence collection, and access to the collection from Five Eyes partners — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America.

[5] Matt Perez, 2020, Report: U.S. Intelligence Officials Warned About Coronavirus In Wuhan In Late November, Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattperez/2020/04/08/report-us-intelligence-officials-warned-about-coronavirus-in-wuhan-in-late-november/, [Accessed June 11, 2020].

[6] Erin Duffin, 2020, COVID-19: Impact on The Global Economy, *Statista*. https://www.statista.com/topics/6139/covid-19-impact-on-the-global-economy/.[Accessed June 17, 2020].

[7] BBC, What's Behind The Anti-Lockdown Protests In US?, 2020, *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52359100, Accessed June 11, 2020.

[8] The Intelligence Cycle traditionally involves six steps: (1) planning and direction, (2) collection, 3) processing, (4, analysis, (5) production, and (6) dissemination.

- "It would increase the possibility of detecting and providing early warnings of an outbreak, in instances where a country fails to report its emergence to the WHO.
- It can supply insight into whether a foreign government is taking the steps that will halt domestic and global transmission.
- Intelligence analysis on latent issues will help foresee the possible national and geopolitical consequences of a major disease outbreak."[9]

Preparing for the Next Global Crisis

Although non-traditional threats garner attention through discussion, the focus of many of the world's major powers remain on enhancing military and security strength. States which possess some of the most destructive and advanced technologies in nuclear weapons and intelligence systems suffered from a lack of ventilators and intensive care units. This may be because traditionally preparing for war, addressing crime, and hard security issues have been based on building the law enforcement and military might. However, COVID-19 has shown the need for the rethinking, revalidating, or reprioritizing of national security strategic policies.

The nature of security is changing and countries such as those in the Caribbean Region need to be more prepared for a plethora of contemporary non-traditional threats such as climate change (a threat multiplier[10]), public disorder, natural disasters, and major cyber-attacks. All must be equally or more perilous than the COVID-19 pandemic. Many critical lessons are being learnt, but none more important than the possibility that another devastating crisis could materialize.

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[9] Greg Fyffe, 2020, A Post-Pandemic Review of Security and Intelligence Is Essential, *Policy Options*. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2020/a-post-pandemic-review-of-security-and-intelligence-is-essential/, [Accessed June 11, 2020].
[10] A threat that intersects with other factors to contribute to additional security problems.

Citizen Investment Program (CIP) & the Free Movement of People:
A Threat to Regional Security?

By Derrick Ferguson (Bahamas)

Photo caption: Damage from Hurricane Dorian is apparent in this photo taken from a U.S. Coast Guard aircraft in September 2019.
Photo Credit: U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Adam Stanton, via DVIDS.

In 2017, the Caribbean region was severely impacted by the brutal impact of climate change and the debilitating effects of an over-active hurricane season. The 2017 Hurricane Season was labelled as one of the recently extremely active season with seventeen named storms for which ten becoming hurricanes inclusive of six major hurricanes. The Caribbean was ravished by four major hurricanes that transited the region in rapid succession, with one following the other in quick timing. These major hurricanes, Hurricanes Harvey, Maria, Irma, and Jose, did not permit Caribbean countries to demonstrate resiliency. The hurricanes did not allow impacted countries the opportunity to rebuild and restore from the destruction and damages before the next storm struck. More than twelve Caribbean countries were affected by the 2017 Hurricane Season.

The Caribbean is a region consisting of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The economy of the Caribbean is not only heavily reliant on the tourism market, but for most of the Caribbean and the Bahamas in particular, the economy is undiversified. Whilst many in the region have accepted the need to engage in economic diversification, not many substantive advances have been made in this regard. The 2017 hurricane season significantly impacted the tourism industry resulting in Caribbean govern-

ment seeking alternate avenues of revenue generation to offset the loss in tourism due to the impact of the hurricanes.

With the economic fallout of hurricanes impact on the Caribbean region in 2017, governments in the region grappled with means and ways of revenue diversification and generation. Several Caribbean countries launched the Citizen Investment Program (CIP) to meet the economic demands of their states. CIP (also called economic citizenry) enabled several of the Caribbean countries to cope with the economic crises by allowing foreign nationals from around the world to invest in a specific amount of money ranging from $100,000 - $250,000 in exchange for citizenship. There are concerns that several Caribbean jurisdictions are using this scheme to enable foreigners to purchase real estates for citizenships. Some of the CIP in various jurisdictions does not have a requirement for the national to reside in the country.

The Caribbean is a region with an inter-governing body known as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM seeks collaborations and coordination through government agreements to promote economic integration and cooperation within the region. Additionally, CARICOM and the Treaty of Chaguaramas enables member state citizens free movement throughout the region with no visa requirement and it provides for a single market economy with a regional acceptable currency. Subsequently, the CIP presents a security concern for governments in the region.

Since the expansion in the number of Caribbean countries utilizing the CIP as a method to generate revenue and economy diversification, the region is seeing increased numbers of foreigners now becoming citizens. In the past five years, there were significant amounts of foreigners who have applied through the CIP and are now citizens in the Caribbean, such as Syrians, Russians, Chinese, and Iranians. These new citizens of the Caribbean are now able to move throughout the region just like the native Jamaican, St Lucian, or Barbadian. Moreover, with other international agreements, these new citizens now have 'visa-free' entry into more than one hundred countries around the world. Another concern is that foreigners are enrolling in the CIP and using their new citizenship to evade political and economic obligations creating safe havens from their countries of origin.

Canada and the U.S. have communicated concerns in the international community about the use of the CIP in some countries in the Caribbean. These concerns have resulted in some Caribbean countries being placed on restricted and watch list as their citizens transit international borders. For example, St. Kitts & Nevis was one of the Caribbean countries that Canada issued visa requirements for its citizens and subsequently St Kitts & Nevis amended their passports to include place of birth. Also, the U.S. Treasury Department warned U.S. banks that some Caribbean passports could be used for illicit financial activity resulting banks taking precaution on how they engage Caribbean passport holders in conducting financial transactions and activities.

The CIP in the Caribbean is a 'growing-concern' that the region needs to address collectively. Among the economic concerns is the fact that foreigners could use the CIP as a means of changing their identities to circumvent border management systems. Caribbean countries must take the necessary steps to mitigate some of the worrisome gaps that exist in the CIP. There were several member states that were

cited for not doing due diligence in the processing of foreigners who applied for citizenship through the CIP or their processing were too "relaxed" in the issuing of citizenships. The resultant actions taken by countries such as Canada and the U.S., while limited to those specific countries, could have wider effect with impactions for the Caribbean as a region. While one could appreciate regional governments seeking means and ways to generate and diversify its economy, authorities must also be able to strike a balance. CARICOM member states must be able to engage in the CIP, just like other countries such as the U.S. and Canada who both have similar citizenship programs. However, CARICOM member states must also be able meet international obligations in suppression of the ability of persons, who may be financiers and actors of transnational criminal or even terrorism activities, to evade border management mechanisms.

**Defragging the Dilemma of Caribbean Development
– A Perspective on Caribbean Security"**
By Kiran Maharaj (Trinidad and Tobago)

The Caribbean region faces new existential threats in the face of Covid-19.

While climate change and issues of climate justice are still being deliberated, the vision for the future is blurry with new threats on the horizon. In reviewing some of the main issues, they are inter-related and feel like a sticky web. But it is evident that to find solutions we need to address the myriad challenges.

Food security will be a major predicament. According to the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA, April 2021), *"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities across the board... there are now 2.7 million "food-insecure" people in the English-speaking Caribbean ...the burden is disproportionately felt by low-income householders: 68 percent reduced their food consumption, ...this part of society is "much more likely to meet their food needs ...cutting spending on other priorities such as health and education."* The region lacks a safety net and attempts at diversification have not been sufficiently intertwined with the notion of Caribbean integration to make it a formidable trade block with bargaining power. There is capacity to provide attractive business opportunities with potential to make us globally competitive - the creative arts sector, entrepreneurship hubs, cyberspace start-ups, or venture capital initiatives. Is there political will?

Caribbean nations need to quickly reexamine their security agendas which lack inward views of internal threats. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) launched by the United States, with thirteen Caribbean beneficiaries, "seeks to reduce illicit trafficking in the region, advance public safety and security; and promote social justice" while fostering stronger alliances. Some members of the CBSI are considered "secrecy jurisdictions" which means that the region still lacks the rigors of necessary transparency which can improve regional ratings on the Corruption Index. Kleptocracy is a challenge with the propensity to tarnish investment confidence and cripple sustainable development.

The 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report showed an increase in domestically trafficked persons and a decrease in detection rates. Homicide rates per 100,000 people (2020) in Latin America and the Caribbean have Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago in the top five countries along with Venezuela, Honduras, and Mexico. It's a fact that firearms are used in approximately 70 percent of the homicides in our region. The consequence of slumped economies with a dim light on the region's main revenue generator of tourism ultimately translated to an increase in illicit activity as a means of survival.

As the world evolves in the new normal, digitization and digitalization set the trends. The lack of internet access in communities is a stain on the ambition of progress. Those who suffered the most are children and those in at-risk communities. Lack of remote work opportunities and the closure of businesses resulted in a displaced labor force. For small island developing states, the consequences of the digital divide alongside the pandemic translates to mental displacement and financial struggles. In a study by Kairi Consultants (released on cijn.org on August 8, 2021) "poverty is a mega shock for

the region." This decay of the social fabric will also result in public resentment for authority. Have we attempted to address the situation with stakeholders from civil society including non-governmental organizations and members of the private sector? A whole of society approach needs to be adopted for a positive impact to be made.

The issues are vaccine injustice and vaccine education injustice are at the forefront of the fight against Covid19. Regionally, vaccine hesitancy is high and the vicious cycle of outbreaks is imminent. The recent regional spates of anti-vaccination protests alongside the assassination of Haitian President, Jovenel Moise, causes chatter among neighboring islands. There is an echo of the necessity to stand up for what you believe in. It is a sentiment not sociologically unfamiliar owed to a colonial past.

One cannot ignore the threat of terrorist activity in the region where Trinidad holds the record for the highest number of Islamic State (IS) recruits in the Western Hemisphere. The radical ideology of this group preys on the existence of weak social infrastructure and economic gaps. The legacy of radicalization is the invasion of the psyche: mind space. Is the region equipped to deal with the tributaries that may spring up?

There are mixed sentiments about COVAX. Some feel as though they are last in line with dependence on the facility. The geopolitical landscape will change. Buying vaccines is a crippling expense for many countries. In Trinidad and Tobago, the announcement of a USD $ 15 million loan from China for Sinopharm vaccines came with unanswered questions of details of the arrangement due to non-disclosure agreements. This response in too familiar in the region. There is a lack of effective Freedom of Information and procurement legislation, no consequences for late fiscal reporting from state entities, and an overall lack of accountability and transparency precedents. It is a defiance of the public's right to know. The regional legislative agenda needs an upheaval.

While pyramid and ponzi schemes pop up and new criminal ecosystems take root, cybercrime in the region is rising. The Paradise Papers and Panama Papers gave sufficient evidence that the region is ripe for illicit financial activity. There should be closer investigation of probable shell companies, cybercrime, and cryptocurrency schemes. Is there a cohesive plan to address the underground economy?

The region is at a crossroads where survival will depend heavily on a redefined view of security. It's no longer a case of natural disasters being the only existential threat. The issues can best be described as a Rubik's cube of interlocking elements which need to be addressed within the context of existing alliances with partners who defend democracy, Caricom agendas, and national mandates via multi-strategy approaches. Transnational crime exists but internal security threats with new regional threats combine to what can be considered existentialist unless proactive long-term measures are implemented where the reinvention of economies and social well-being of citizens are the foundation of this new normal. It means a defragging of the dilemma to secure a safe future and move towards Caribbean sustainability.

Our Complicity in Inefficient Intelligence and Information Sharing

By Volmer Chesley Ollivierre (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

The 'good old days' are not always the fondest of memories as some would have us believe, because whenever I misbehaved in school, I was disciplined by my teachers, and again at home. Thanks to effective and efficient information and intelligence sharing (intel sharing), news of my delinquency always arrived ahead of me, despite being the first to scamper out the school gates. I could never fathom how the news ran faster than I did, especially in the absence of a telephone at home.

What I did not account for was someone hearing of or witnessing my misconduct, and in passing it was conveyed to others or directly to my guardian. Thus, the news would reach my grandmother's ears soon after and confirmed several times by different sources before I even left the school yard.

Though it was an informal information sharing mechanism it worked. It was a well-oiled system, very successful, and cost effective. Yet today, even with clearly established protocols intelligence practitioners less effective today in the intel sharing component of security architectures; inter alia, information and intelligence sharing MOUs and MOIs and Cooperation Agreements with regional and international states and organizations.

Additionally, the brightest academics and professionals are employed, and several expensive tools and technologies utilized to securely disseminate information, and still there is need to improve the flow of information to enable the development of strategic and operational intelligence to guide safety and security initiatives of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Western Hemisphere.

Global security is constantly evolving as the modus of transnational criminal networks change, spurred in part, by greater access to advances in technology and fragmentation of the social structures which drive social cohesion. Illicit entities exploit these conditions to challenge authority, prey on the most vulnerable and secure economic gains. Evidence of this is seen in the expansion of organized crime groups, cybercrime threats, human trafficking and smuggling, diversification in the methods of money laundering, illicit firearms and narcotics trafficking and resurgence of terrorist networks globally.

Law enforcement capabilities have advanced considerably over the last decade with specialized units working to target and disrupt transnational crime groups and actors, seizing instruments and proceeds of crime and arresting perpetrators. Intel sharing among partners is therefore critical to the success of our collective security and cannot be achieved by hoarding information.

Despite significant investments, the region continues to be a strategic transit corridor for illicit narcotics, with growing demand for traditional drugs marijuana and cocaine, but also increasing potential for the demand, supply, and production of new psychotropic substances. Concurrently, there is the consistent demand for high-powered firearms by gangs and radical individuals/groups.

Accordingly, within the parameters of intelligence sharing mechanisms, partners are expected to efficiently share information on persons of interests and illicit activities to stakeholders. Notably, with timely intel from various sources an effective system is designed to provide partners with regional,

international, and strategic trend assessment to complement national trend analyses and threat areas of concern, thus allowing partners adequate time to effectively prepare for and address current and emerging threats.

However, it appears the desire for self-aggrandizement and media highlights of personal seizures and arrests are prioritized above the immediacy of information sharing with stakeholders. Further, access to critical information is often time-sensitive and should be employed for maximum expediency. In too many instances we have failed to cultivate symbiotic relations, acknowledging that each other's security complements and enhances the partners. The sooner credible intel is shared the greater our collective security.

Some stakeholders are extremely tardy in responding to time-sensitive requests, rendering information useless when finally sent or received. There is very little mutual intelligence sharing between some partners, and there are those who regularly request and receive information but seldomly if ever reciprocate. So, the current culture does not foster a spirit of mutual trust and respect in an environment requiring a bi-directional and opportune information flow. Far too often information remains at the national or agency level and is not filtered through the relevant structures to appropriate stakeholders.

Economic and technological crimes are also evolving with the use of smart technologies facilitating the growth of sophisticated fraudulent schemes, attacks on banking and information systems and a host of online activities threatening vulnerable groups and protecting the perpetrators' identities. Hence, the need for effective intel sharing is greater now more than ever.

Consequently, there are several urgent questions intel practitioners need to consider when information is not shared with alacrity: (1) Does withholding relevant information or intelligence from stakeholders make us complicit in the proliferation of illicit activities? (2) Should we take some responsibility for contributing to the increase of transnational organized crimes within jurisdictions. (3) Do we ostensibly have blood on our hands from corruption, murders and abuse of women and children, youths, and at-risk populations? (4) Should charges be proffered against entities for dereliction of duty for not sharing pertinent info and intel? (5) Is it state or agency endorsed policy to only take info/intel without reciprocating? (6) Should upstanding entities continue to engage and fulfill agreements, or should they also act selfishly? (7) Are we no longer our brother's keeper or are there certain limits and conditions? (8) Is collective security a myth? (9) What's In It For Me (WIIFM)? (10) Is there mistrust between partners? (11) Last, on which side of the law are we?

ALL stakeholders must acknowledge their deficiencies and take urgent action to promote efficient intelligence and information sharing or the system will become even more disproportionate and eventually collapse. Mutually beneficial intel sharing is critical and must be encouraged and strengthened as part of an effective early warning system to address the scourge of crime, security threats, current and emerging issues to CARICOM and the Western Hemisphere. This will improve communication and understanding of the needs and limitations of partners and help build capacity to address inadequacies and enhance product delivery among stakeholders

The Changed Shape of TCO Dynamics in Central America: the "Northern Rectangle"
By Cuffa Ramirez–Aranda (Belize)

Belize's unique cultural and geopolitical disposition in the Central American and Caribbean regions is of significant importance as a potential insular link between both regions. In recent years, there has been a shift in the dynamic of Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) in its most frequently seen forms: drug trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking, money laundering, and weapons smuggling. As countries in the "Northern Triangle" continue to partner with the U.S. to combat TOCs, especially drug trafficking, a balloon effect has created an additional in-transit hub for illicit activities – Belize. The term "Northern Triangle was originally designated "for commercial purposes" to describe the mentioned countries "after May 12, 1992, following the signing of a trade agreement in Nueva Ocotepeque, Honduras". (Avalos & Chavez, 2014) Nonetheless, the once triangular shape has morphed into a rectangle to include Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras – the "Northern Rectangle." While the proposed categorization does not produce the most positive image of the challenges that the country of Belize faces as it relates to transnational crime, it is a harsh but true reality.

Photo caption: Members of the Belize security forces on patrol.
Photo Credit: Interpol.

The efforts to combat TOCs in the Western Hemisphere, in all its emerging forms, have been relentlessly championed by the United States Government through several initiatives. Nonetheless, the

perpetrators of TOCs continue to develop new methods to evade strategic, operational, and tactical level preventative measures that have been instituted by regional governments. The reality of the success of TOC operations is evidenced by the number of burnt aircrafts, wet drops, and drug seizures. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), "There is no exact data on the total quantity of foreign-produced illicit drugs flowing into the United States." (CRS Report, 2019) However, it is suspected that the interdictions are but a fraction of the much larger total.

In the advent of the COVID -19 pandemic, these criminal organizations creatively evolved to continue their illicit activities though traveling became difficult due to the closure of many land and sea borders across the Latin American region. The perpetrators of TOCs also assumed humanitarian quests to provide COVID-19 assistance as municipal and national Governments were economically crippled by the effects of the pandemic. According to Felbab - Brown, "Among the Mexican criminal groups that have jumped on the COVID-19 "humanitarian aid" bandwagon are the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Viagras, the Gulf Cartel, and some of the Zeta splinter groups." (Felbab-Brown, 2020) These Cartels are responsible for most of the illicit drugs that flow through the "Northern Triangle", and it is highly probable that "humanitarian aid" was extended in other countries.

In 2020, in Honduras and Guatemala, the military continued to disable clandestine plane landing sites, destroy coca and marijuana fields, conduct various terrestrial and maritime drug interdictions, and partially dismantle criminal rings. Simultaneously, in Belize, as non-traditional roles were assumed by military and law enforcement personnel, TOC activities surged. The balloon effect of these anti-drug operations was felt on Belizean soil as illicit aerial traffic increased which was evidenced by the discovery of burnt (some buried) aircrafts in several parts of the country – especially in the remote areas of southern Belize.

While Belize does benefit from continuous support through U.S. regional security initiatives, the focus is on countries in the "Northern Triangle". A review of the Appropriations for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America by Country and Foreign Assistance Account (FY 2016 – FY 2020) shows the disparity between U.S. assistance in the "Northern Triangle" and Belize. (Every CRS Report, 2019) One of the most recent examples is the donation of Near Coastal Patrol Vessels (NCPVs) to Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. "The patrol boat has been fitted with electro-optic infrared systems for night operations and has the provision to carry one 12.7 mm and two 7.62 mm machine guns." (Janes, 2021) The naval capacity to patrol blue waters in these countries has been strengthened while Belize's capacity remains limited. This type of support would add an additional layer to the regional effort to deter or interdict go-fast vessels that circumvent naval patrols in the previously mentioned countries.

It is imperative that the areas of concern in the hemisphere be strategically delimited according to the prevalence of TOC activities. The hemispheric strategy should concentrate on disabling entire networks through systematic sequencing and synchronizing of efforts with countries within the region. Belize, though small, remains a vital piece in the TOC puzzle in northern Central America. As such, inclusion would prove to be a more suitable strategy to prevent a further balloon effect – closing the

strategic and operational gap that has been created over the years. Increase capacity building, information and intelligence sharing, terrestrial and maritime patrol capabilities, and strengthened cooperation between Belize and the U.S. would undoubtedly result in a reduction of the gap.

If the hemispheric strategy concerning Belize should remain the same, then greater collaboration is required from the countries that benefit from Northern Triangle initiatives. Cooperation in blue water patrols through ship rider agreements with Costa Rica and Honduras would be of great assistance to the Belize Coast Guard. Increased joint operations and intelligence sharing would minimize the gap that resulted from the exclusion. Furthermore, developing stronger relations with the Joint Agency Task Force (south) for assistance annually during Operacion Martillo (Operation Hammer) would also benefit Belize. The destruction of clandestine landings and maritime operations in Belize would also be beneficial.

In conclusion, regional strategies should be modified to mitigate the known risks and prepare for the unknowns. Stronger collaborative ties are the best solution in both the Central American and Caribbean regions as developing countries strive to deter and reduce the detrimental effects of TOCs. The inclusion of Belize as part of the northern Central American polygon to reflect a rectangular shape than a triangular one could prove beneficial for both regions. As a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member state, Belize could become a nexus for the flow of information and intelligence between both regions - where most TOC activities originate.

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Arms Trafficking and the Caribbean

By Rasmin Rogers (St Vincent and Grenadines)

Photo caption: Members of the Regional Security System from multiple Caribbean nations (including St. Vincent and Grenadines) conduct riot control drills in Basseterre, St. Kitts, as part of Exercise Tradewinds 2015.
Photo Credit: U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hamann, 102d Public Affairs Detachment.

A senior United Nations (UN) disarmament official told the Security Council that "the widespread proliferation of approximately one billion small arms in circulation around the world to terrorists, parties to intra-state conflict, organized criminals and warring gangs continues to pose a major threat around the globe".

The illicit trade in small arms is a global phenomenon. It occurs in all parts of the world. Simply put, small arms trafficking can be defined as the smuggling of guns and ammunition into a country. The UN protocol against illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms defines it more broadly as the "import, export, acquisition, sale, delivery, movement or transfer of firearms, their parts and components from across one state to another." Firearms trafficking is a major concern to national security as well as human security. Such contraband trade is linked to a wide range of other social issues and illegal activities including human trafficking, maritime piracy and is primarily responsible for much violent crimes particularly homicides resulting in the death of hundreds of persons. In addition to loss of life the illegal trade destabilizes societies and causes unnecessary human suffering.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), a small island state in the Eastern Caribbean, gun crimes are very prevalent. SVG does not manufacture firearms, therefore all illegal weapons are smuggled into

the state. These weapons are rarely imported in bulk. Instead, they trickle in by ones and twos and in some cases in parts which makes them harder to detect. It is reported that criminals increasingly take advantage of various methods to traffic firearms. In SVG, police reports indicates that firearms have been entering the country using the old parcel methods. The many bays and inlets among the archipelago of islands make it a haven for yachts, speed boats, fishermen and other seafarers to engage in nefarious activities which go undetected by security forces. Three factors fuel the black market trade in SVG which occurs on a small scale by individual transactions: (1) the demand from criminals who need the arms for use in various criminal activities; (2) warring gang members who arm themselves as a form of personal protection, (3) and a brisk drug trade between neighboring countries where guns are bartered for marijuana.

When a murder occurs, the local police force is quick to pronounce that the crime is drug related or it is as a result of gang feuds. The weapons involved are illegally possessed. Yet the powers that be seem reluctant or lack the willpower to come up with strategies to curb the menace. Small arms are easy for criminals to conceal and transport so to effect seizures police need to have intelligence on criminals. This is one crime fighting method that is lacking in the local constabulary. Its intelligence capability is so weak that weapons (mainly Glocks) and, in some cases, military firearms are imported into the country undetected. The magnitude of seizure rate is very small.

While there are regional and international instruments to regulate the trafficking of firearms, very little is being done at the local level to punish the perpetrator. There are laws enacted to prosecute persons for trafficking in illicit drugs, but there is no such legislation in force for those caught trafficking in illegal guns. As an example, in late 2021, local police arrested one of their members for allegedly stealing four small arms and a quantity of ammunition from the police armory. The perpetrator was charged for possession of firearm and not trafficking. If convicted the perpetrator faces a mandatory prison sentence of seven years maximum.

SVG as a single nation cannot reduce the supply of illegal firearms. That is quite a challenge given the large number of weapons in circulation globally. However, there are actions that can be taken to disrupt the supply and get weapons off the streets. The international Police Organization (Interpol) offers several firearm activities including assisting police agencies to identify firearms, track their movements and disrupt the supply. SVG does not have the police capacity to trace weapons after seizures. They should make use of the services of Interpol. In doing so, that would be a key contribution to weapons control.

About two decades ago there was an amnesty for holders of illegal firearms. It may very well worth offering another amnesty given the proliferation of firearms in the country. The amnesty must not only target the holders of illegal firearms but those persons who can provide reliable confidential information to the police as to who are the criminals in possession of illegal firearms.

Border Protection
Land border controls are an important dimension to combat the uncontrolled proliferation of small

arms as well as ammunition. Checkpoints at both sea and airports must be optimized in terms of human and technical needs. The island state of SVG has many bays and uninhabited cays. The resources of the marine unit of the police must be optimized as well in terms of patrol boats to provide for increased security along the shores. It would be futile effort if the control methods alluded to above are implemented and no measures are taken to strengthen national legislation to provide for stiffer penalties for perpetrators.

It would be welcoming news for citizens who live in volatile communities and have a fear of crime to know that the relevant authorities are getting tough on crimes and the causes of crimes, a public policy that the government has enunciated since 2001.

The Caribbean Security Posture Can Potentially Benefit from Increased Attention to the Private Security Industry

By P. James Santiago (Bermuda)

In 2009, the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (as a consequence of UN Resolution 18/2) supported the invitation for all governments to survey the role played in their territories by the private security sector. A rise in global security threats coupled with diminishing budgets for the military and public law enforcement, the Private Security Industry (PSI) has elevated its response to fill the security void. As a region, the Caribbean landscape has not escaped this dynamic.

Importance placed on this effort was due to the UN's appreciation for, among other aspects, individual governments' primary responsibility for public safety and security and that PSI plays an ever-increasing role in supporting public law enforcement and the military. Additional attention establishes that PSI operates both nationally and internationally, and that regulatory oversight aspects for PSI varies widely among Member States.

It was encouraged that by assessing the state of PSI in member countries, (as well as regulatory regimes in this industry) this would serve to positively influence the promotion of local and cross-border crime prevention strategy, community safety, and afford adequate national oversight to PSI.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) accepts that the private security industry (PSI) has developed vastly over the last few decades. However, even regional administrations like CARICOM IMPACS note, the progression toward more advanced regulation systems of PSI has evolved slower in some jurisdictions than in others.

Private security plays an increasingly important role in societies particularly where, due to budgetary cutbacks, authorities have had to become more creative in how to effectively police various environments, including public spaces. Amidst rapid growth within PSI globally, academic arguments both for and against industry regulation began to surface. Some felt that PSI should be regulated with a light-touch approach like many other industries. The counter-argument affirmed however that the work of security personnel is not like that of many other industries**.** Depending on the scope of their deployment, security staff can have greater opportunities to steal from clients or employers, use privileged access and guardianship of sensitive areas to commit or assist with crime, abuse use-of-force powers, exploit or compromise confidential materials or, if deemed to be technically incompetent, install faulty security equipment or good equipment poorly, thereby negligently exposing denizens to harm or loss.

Research has shown that PSI continues to expand faster than jurisdictional regulatory efforts can keep up. Appropriate regulatory oversight in line with suitable PSI development is in the balance. The public interest is met when the regulatory criterions for PSI are high enough to safeguard proper accountability and qualified service the community and clients should expect. At the same time, the industry's interest is served when the profession gains competent footing within communities and the need for legitimate security services can develop without excessive barriers from over-regulation.

Aside from the regulatory aspects surrounding the expansion of PSI regionally (and globally for

that matter), societal implications are also observed which argue both the prospective benefits as well as potential drawbacks of the growth of this industry. Evidence suggests that private security firms can achieve a more flexible use of their workforce in dealing with community security issues. PSI can incorporate a wider assortment of incentives for good service (and consequently penalties for bad service), create more accurate areas of responsibility (particularly for specific roles), as well as providing an element that is less fixed on processes and more focused on achieving results. Opposition to privatization of policing indicate that cost savings could be illusionary as they are often achieved by hiring less qualified and less trained people. There is also the argument where company monopolies could lead to various industry ill effects, including lack of competition and a lowering of service standards.

It is suggested, however, that the concept of private policing is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years. Various perspectives drive this expectation including:
- Budgetary and other administration / operational issues faced by public authorities
- Actual (as well as the fear of) crime, terrorism and political violence
- The maintenance of public order

The above aspects present good reason for the need to incorporate private policing to supplement public security forces in certain ways. From a cost basis alone, sound argument exists supporting that valuable public service can be performed at lower cost by incorporating private policing elements. These comprise (not exhaustive):
- Traffic control and collision investigation
- Vehicle parking and issues surrounding abandoned vehicles
- Alarm response
- Vandalism reporting
- Crime scene work
- Prisoner transport
- Property checks
- Animal offense complaints

Research of the state of PSI in the Caribbean region presented distinct commonalities with the rest of the world including absence of or weak legislative oversight, direct oversight by public authorities (who have other priorities), and the need for more effective oversight instruments. Scholar suggestion to regional standardization of PSI is also noted as well as a need for further regional research. Although CARICOM's single-market aims faintly mirrors that of the EU, this region too faces significant challenges in the development of its PSI framework.

In conclusion, in no way does this commentary imply that the UN advocates the elimination or downsizing of public policing authorities. Many reasons for downsizing are beyond the immediate control of public agencies themselves. But it is true: public security forces are stretched and the opportunity is presented for these services to be supplemented in areas of need.

It is encouraging that the effective oversight (raising the standard of private security practitioners) can guard this industry against compromise by the negative impact of criminality including those influenced by organized crime on both national and transnational levels. Regionally speaking, because of the tremendous similarities within the cultural and administrative frameworks, if done well and receptive to a collaborative approach, the adoption of common themes within the PSI industry (both function-based and regulatory) in the Caribbean has the potential to greatly enhance defence and security in this geographical area.

The Collection and Sharing of Biometric Information from all Incarcerated Persons for the Creation of a Caribbean Regional Database

By Rupertthera Symonette (Bahamas)

The formation of a Caribbean Regional database that stores and analyzes the biometric information of all incarcerated persons, can prove to be of great benefit and can be a useful asset amid all the national security concerns appearing both globally and among the various nation states.

This initiative could be crucial in solving many open cases of homicide or other violent crimes that have occurred with only fingerprint evidence and the absence of eyewitness reports as the exclusive source of evidence.

Photo caption: Security forces from the Bahamas offload bales of marijuana in Nassau, Bahamas in 2015. The drug market in the Caribbean contributes to the plague of arms trafficking that afflicts many Caribbean nations.
Photo Credit: U.S. Coast Guard photo.

Once an individual has been convicted by their member state, their biometric information is taken from them and uploaded into the regional database. In addition, all those who are currently incarcerated would have their information (name, country of birth, age, nature of criminal activity/activities)

uploaded for use both locally and regionally.

If there is a crime, such as what appears to be an execution style murder, and forensic evidence yields a fingerprint or partial print that can't be identified locally, the fingerprint can be uploaded into the database and cross referenced with the biometric data collected from those participating nations, to ascertain if there is a possible match found for the evidence collected within the region.

The database would work similarly to the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), which according to various sources is described as a biometric identification system that obtains, stores, and analyzes fingerprint data. However, unlike the AFIS system used in many parts of the United States, this system is designed so that each member state will not operate independently once the data is captured, but rather sign on to sharing the information with each other.

The importance of being able to identify a suspected criminal, who can go undetected because the country in which the individual commits the crime has no record of their existence, is essential in today's global climate. A person can leave their country and travel by various means to another country, commit crimes as gruesome and heinous as murder and rape and leave completely undetected, because even if a fingerprint is left behind, if there is no system in place to analyze it, it will just sit in an evidence box.

With a creation of a database the chances of connecting or linking a possible suspect to a crime greatly increases.

The creation of a Caribbean Regional database can also improve on the traditional and still current paper fingerprint cards still in use locally and regionally and can possibly hasten or expedite the identification process.

The accuracy of certain systems in use worldwide leads one to question how effective it is to use them versus a skilled highly trained human being, who can detect the subtle differences while examining fingerprint evidence. The cost efficiency as far as the purchase of the equipment and the adequate training of individuals for the usage of it is called into question.

The gathering of this information may also pose a defense or security issue for some regional partners who may not want to share such delicate information with others. Those partners may not want others to be aware of or having access to what may be deemed sensitive information from their prison or correctional institutions as it may lead to the degradation of the reputation or standing of the country and could possibly affect future investments from corporations, who may not want to associate or conduct business with a country with such high criminal activity.

According to a Thales Group online article (published on 18 June 2021), alongside the ever-present "traditional" crime, the onset of new challenges, such as global terrorism and illegal immigration, has only heightened the need for authorities to identify individuals that might pose a threat to homeland security."

The overwhelming need for counteracting the wave of unsolved crimes locally and in the region among island nations in the Caribbean far outweigh the outcry of fears or concerns that can and will be raised.

When speaking of the defense and national security of a nation or country, no more lives can or should be placed in harm's way or jeopardized because of the lack of a system that can easy the trouble and burden of sharing crucial and pertinent information in a quick and timely manner. One realizes that the creation of such a database is no panacea, but it is a starting place that can enhance and work in tandem with other factors that could prove to be an integral part in keeping the Caribbean Region and all its citizenry safe from the threats of criminal individuals and enterprises both locally, regionally and globally.

Jamaica must cultivate Public-Private Sector Partnerships to fight Cybercrime
By Locksley Waites (Jamaica)

As the world continues to battle the coronavirus pandemic, cybercriminals took advantage and mounted increased attacks on healthcare, education and financial sector entities for profit. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported an increase of over 300,000 reports of suspected cyber-incidents compared to 2019, with attacks in the form of malware, phishing, ransomware and social engineering attacks. Millions of home-based workers were also exploited due to weak security. Ransomware on critical infrastructure is a significant threat to national security. The FBI has projected ransomware losses to be over US $20 billion for 2021.

In light of these evolving and growing threats, Jamaica must be prepared holistically against cybercrime to preserve the nation's interests.

The 2020 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Cybersecurity Report indicated that Latin America and the Caribbean was not sufficiently prepared to handle cyberattacks. Many countries in the region lacked a critical infrastructure plan, cyber-incident response teams and adequate legislation as well as the investigative capability to tackle cybercrime. There was a resource gap of 600,000 cybersecurity personnel.

Based on the IDB Report, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica led the Caribbean in terms of cybersecurity readiness. Jamaica's 2015 National Security Strategy highlighted four primary objectives which involved responding to cyberattacks, increasing personnel capabilities, improving the regulatory framework and public education.

Jamaica established a fully resourced Cyber-Incident Response Team (Ja-CIRT) to mitigate cybercrime threats. The Jamaica National Cybersecurity Strategy included measures to protect the nation's critical infrastructure. An ICT Sector Plan and ICT Policy were developed along with Jamaica's legislative framework surrounding cybercrime. The Jamaican Government also implemented "Plan Secure Jamaica", a comprehensive program to strengthen Jamaica's national security architecture for a budgeted $176 billion per annum from 2016 to 2023. Under the plan, resources were allocated towards the development of a cross-government cyber-analysis team and the development of a new cybersecurity strategy and academy. Entities such as the Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA) and the Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime Investigation Branch (C-TOC) are responsible for the enforcement of cybercrime legislation and were trained in cybersecurity, cyber-forensics and cyber-investigations.

Despite the billions spent by the Jamaican Government to mitigate cybercrime activities, the nation's public and private sector have continued to fall victim to cybercriminals often resulting in significant economic loss.

In 2016, the Jamaica Constabulary Force Cybercrimes Unit indicated that Jamaica lost over US $100 million due to cybercrime activities and had more than 200 cases reported. In 2018 the Bank of Jamaica reported 62 instances of internet banking fraud amounting to JM $38.2 million in losses. The

Jamaica Bankers Association (JBA) revealed that Jamaica's banks experience an average loss of JM $4 million due to hackers. In March 2020, the Jamaica National Bank was subjected to a ransomware attack. Multiple Government websites have also been hacked, including the 2015 hacking of the Jamaica Information Service website by supporters of the Islamic State. In 2021, breaches in Jamaica's Covid-19 travel app called JamCOVID exposed the data of almost 500,000 travelers. Jamaica has also experienced frequent malware attacks, electronic card fraud and money laundering activities in the form of cryptocurrency.

Public-Private Sector Partnerships in Practice

The way forward to tackle cybercrime in Jamaica is to create a united front to facilitate information sharing and infrastructure development (technical and human). Businesses must also invest in risk management initiatives against cyberattacks. This where public-private sector partnerships (PPSP) prove advantageous.

The Government of Jamaica (GoJ) has actively taken steps to facilitate a PPSP in the drafting of cybercrime legislation and the rollout of cybercrime education campaigns. For instance, the 2010 Cybercrimes Act was designed to "provide criminal sanctions for the misuse of computer systems or data and the abuse of electronic means of completing transactions to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes". In 2021, the Joint Select Committee sought feedback from public and private sector stakeholders to update the Act. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) suggested that penalties under the act be brought in line with offences under the money laundering and anti-gang legislation. The JBA suggested changes to ensure organizations are not held liable for the actions of employees.

Challenges with PPSP

The main challenge with PPSP amounts to trust. Private sector entities must be able to trust in law enforcement's capabilities to tackle complex cybercrime cases as well as to ensure confidentiality. Reporting may involve divulging company vulnerabilities (technical and financial), a risk some members of the private sector may be unwilling to take. Law enforcement, in communicating with public and private sector entities, must also examine what information can be shared and not disclose some law enforcement capabilities.

The Way Forward

Despite the potential challenges, the benefits of Jamaica cultivating PPSP far outweighs the potential risks. Local and international collaboration is needed to mitigate global evolving threats.

To cultivate PPSP, the GoJ must be in constant communication with public and private sector stakeholders and provide support where necessary in the form of investment in cybersecurity initiatives, the hiring of third-party cybersecurity services, conducting cybersecurity audits, investing in cyber-insurance, implementing data management protocols, creating cyber-incident response plans and

providing easy yet confidential reporting mechanisms for potential breaches. It is imperative that the GoJ inspire confidence regarding the capabilities of law enforcement in prosecuting complex cyber-crime cases.

The GoJ could incentivize stakeholders that engage in best practices surrounding cybersecurity through tax breaks and grants. The GoJ could also explore exercising punitive measures against stake-holders that fail to maintain minimum cybersecurity standards. A win-win strategy must be developed that will allow law enforcement to efficiently access evidential electronic data while encouraging com-panies to preserve evidence without it being a financial strain. The private sector could create scholar-ships to boost the nation's cybersecurity capacity.

Cybercrime is not limited by jurisdiction and continues to remain a national and regional threat. Greater PPSP will increase the difficulty and risks of engaging in cyber-criminality thereby preserving Jamaica's national security.

Part III – Climate Change and Other Topics

Developing Force Multipliers in a National Security Apparatus of Small Island States
By Ronald Lessey (Trinidad and Tobago)

Trinidad and Tobago consistently devotes a significant amount of resources to national security. Funds that could have been re-directed to education or social programs or toward the achievement of national developmental goals that improve the quality of life for all of us are no longer available. The conundrum has been however that the spend on national security has tended to be necessitated by the need to ensure the security of the nation and individuals first, while diminishing or deferring expenditure on other slices of the pie in our zero-sum game – There must be a better way to achieve both!

We need a bigger pie!
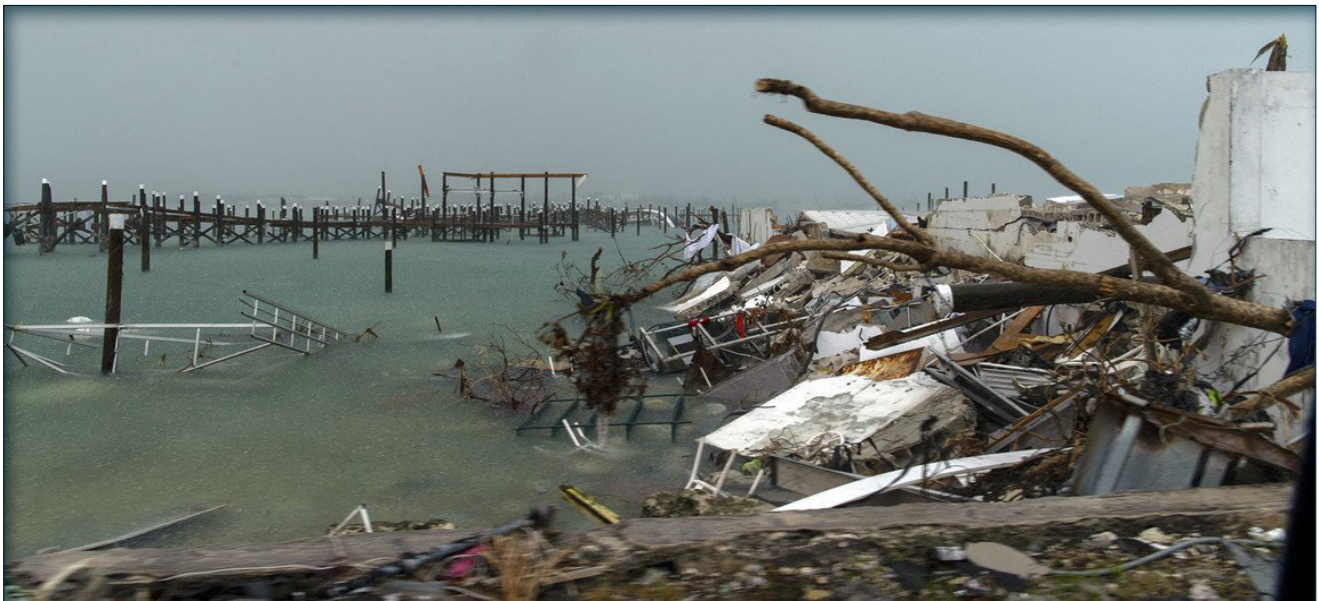
Photo caption: Hurricane Dorian caused extensive damage to Abaco, Bahamas in 2019, flattening most structures and leaving 70,000 Bahamians homeless. The climate change-fueled storm and a category-5 hurricane was the strongest storm to ever make landfall in the Bahamas.
Photo Credit: Mark Garten, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Force multipliers tend to improve the effectiveness of the various arms of the national security apparatus and create potential avenues for reduction or redirection of scarce resources to other worthwhile goals.

Globally we have seen the application of this approach by security and defense forces in the deployment of non-human actors; and the use of cyber defense systems to thwart and/or dismantle large networks of criminal organizations. Make no mistake though, the criminals have been paying attention too and have launched their own counter offensive with the increased prevalence of malware and ransomware on traditionally less-reachable and lucrative targets.

Effective use of force multiplier strategy is by no means out of the reach of small island states and specifically within the reach of Trinidad and Tobago (if we're smart about it!).

Let's deal with some inconvenient truths: i) austerity is here to stay; ii) the world is under an increasing number and sophistication of threats; iii) the capacity of governments to sustain traditional forms of expenditure and revenues are challenged and; iv) infectious disease has emerged as a significant issue for most governments that have been found wanting in their response to the Covid19 pandemic.

Another factor is environmental threats brought about by climate change. The 2021 global risk report published by the World Economic Forum has identified several risks including biodiversity loss, human environmental change, climate action failure and extreme weather conditions. Each of these have a high likelihood and high impact.

Almost daily we encounter new and disruptive technologies that have significant potential for the advancement of human activity but are counter-balanced by bad actors using this same technology for nefarious activity. The cybercrime and cybersecurity landscape remains a rapidly evolving space furled by these trends, how will the region keep pace and remain relevant?

Gender equity remains a challenge for our society. Although key strides have been made with targeted programs, the global realities remain the same; most persons trafficked are women and girls. There has been a marked increase in gender-based violence observed at the same time where lockdown has been implemented. The effects also tend to be economic, where the most impacted workers are disproportionately females.

The imperative is clear, we can't do business as usual and survive, far less prosper as a nation or region

It should be clear that we have little option but to find ways to do more with less. Enter force multipliers.

Environmental threats necessitate that T&T must shift more significant portions of our population to the use of cleaner fuels, renewable sources of energy (primarily solar in our region), and efficient by design projects similar to those undertaken in Singapore that recognize climate as a factor to be considered at the start. These interventions should include government led public-private partnerships for the local production of necessary components to lower cost and prepare industry for what's next.

The appropriate use of disruptive technology has the potential for significant positive shifts in our security and defense posture. Direct interventions by way of the use of open-source platforms to lower costs and promote innovation. Application of advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning, freely available and applied to big data sets, reveal new paradigms, and challenge our uninformed perception. A specific opportunity is in the use of a public-private blockchain to establish a single source of truth for digital information allowing us to treat with the modern threats posed by deliberate disinformation campaigns and "deepfakes."

Human trafficking will thrive in environments where there is institutional corruption and lack of real-time intelligence on the movement of persons. Application of improved data gathering and analy-

sis, automated by machine learning will establish predictive patterns that serve to focus the efforts of the national security systems making them more effective and able to cover more digital ground.

You may note that the above prescriptions have a couple, possibly, deceptively simple themes that may beg the question – why haven't we done this before? The main reason I can discern is that these strategies have been largely driven as disparate activities, driven from a pristine security perspective. Defense and security must be redefined just as we consider what the new roles of the military will be during pandemics and the like.

Another thread to note is that these interventions have been designed from the acceptance of the inconvenient truths notes before, so we can afford to pursue them economically, and we are obliged to implement them.

Friends, we cannot continue to move along at OUR pace because the rest of the world isn't waiting on us. The bad actors will continue in this arms race and the prize for those that fall behind is oblivion and irrelevance

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Army Commands must Adopt Environmental Operating Principles

By Matthew L. Lease (United States)

Our mission success, national security and perhaps even our survival depends on a sustained and balanced environment. Environmental concerns must become a significant part of all U.S. Army activities. Army commands can start by incorporating environmental operating principles into their operations.

Beginning in the early 2000's, the leadership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers challenged the command to develop a set of environmental operating principles that could be incorporated into the command's infrastructure programs. Soon after, the principles were developed, approved, and publicly unveiled at a restoration project in Louisiana. The project, which had significant environmental components, was designed to aid the restoration of a salt marsh habitat that was being lost to erosion and drainage.

The environmental principles demonstrated ways in which the command's missions must be integrated with natural resource laws, command values, and established environmental practices. They were designed to establish a corporate uniformity to all the command's projects so employees and our partners will recognize our role and responsibilities for sustainable use, stewardship, and restoration of the country's natural resources. This also applies outside the U.S. as well, to those other countries in which the command and other Army units conducts activities. The principles also show a connection between environmental protection, public health, and national security.

Principles cannot be developed alone. Commands must also adopt environmental doctrine through the development of policies and regulations. The regulatory framework sets the direction that commands must take to achieve a partnership between environmental sustainability and the execution of military activities and missions. This is a new direction for Army commands and will require all personnel to have the flexibility and adaptability to change views and expectations. As Army members, we must understand how our activities and missions impact our environment and world.

Potential Barriers to Change

A difficulty in adopting command environmental principles is getting personnel within the organization to adjust their thinking about their environmental responsibilities which are identified in regulations and policies, and at the same they are making decisions about projects and tasks. These adjustments may be difficult due to organizational culture so it's important that leaders initiate these changes within their commands.

It should also be recognized that some Army personnel may not believe that environmental sustainability and the accomplishment of the military mission go hand and hand. However, Army leaders need to shift away from this belief. Commanders don't have to put environmental considerations above mission accomplishment. Rather, there needs to be an understanding that they can and must choose to lead and act in ways that take environmental considerations into account. They must recognize the link-

age between the two, because the environment is connected to our health and productivity.

The purpose of integrating environmental operating principles into the command's doctrine is to restructure the organizational behavior and operations. In order for this to be effective, the changes must become part of the command's culture. Cultural changes can be difficult and require a collective and cooperative approach from both leaders and employees. No change happens overnight, so time, explanation, and understanding are all required.

Army units today perform a wide variety of multi-faceted military and civil missions for both our country and partner nations. These missions have significant impacts on the natural environment. Another challenge commands may have in developing environmental principles is to ensure they are broad enough to apply to a wide range of military activities and be specific enough to meaningfully guide environmental decisions and responsibilities of a command well into the future.

Environmental principles should also be integrated into a command's internal controls, business practices, and other decision-making and oversight processes in the early stages of operations and project planning. Commands can bring together a multi-discipline team that can help draft an implementation plan for military programs. This will help the command's culture in adopting and integrating environmental principles across all programs, missions, and projects.

Future Outlook

It is clear that adopting environmental principles does represent a new way of thinking for Army commands, much of the underlying doctrine is not new though. Many of these principles can be found in laws, regulations, and policies, many of which are decades old.

It will be challenging to implement environmental principles into existing and future planning efforts, but being a leader requires commanders to continuously improve their organizations. There is still a great deal to learn about our environmental impacts. This is why we must expand our partnering capabilities and consider our military exercises and operations in a much broader context. Army commands are not the only entity that has needs and requirements. Our environment has needs as well and commanders should understand that it's ultimately our environment that restricts or allows us to perform our military missions.

Community Emergency Response Terms are Necessary in Small Island Developing States
By Keisha Linton (Barbados)

Photo caption: A Barbadian police officer and a member of the Barbadian Defence Force guard a solar power plant during Tradewinds 2017 in Barbados.
Photo Credit: U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Garrett L. Dipuma.

It is well known that countries in the Caribbean, are most at risk for, and are feeling the effects of, climate change, even though they contribute the least to the activities that result in global warming.

Global climate change is no longer a theory. Climate change is real and it poses a great threat to the security, human development and livelihoods of all people. In recent years, climate change has triggered frequent and more intense hurricanes as well as more rapidly intensifying storms. As ocean temperatures rise, storms are increasingly stronger and more devastating, and these disasters will continue to have severe social and economic consequences. We only need to look back a few years to see examples of this, and despite it being years later, the recovery process is still ongoing in some of our islands. This is evident in Dominica, post Hurricane Maria, and the Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian.

These small islands, with a combined population of only 44.42 million, are constantly on the defensive when battling nature because of a lack of resources, limited capacity, and constant exposure. The islands of the Caribbean are low-lying and the fact that our coastlines may be inundated by sea level rise, or that our beautiful coral reefs may be totally lost is heartbreaking to even think about.

According to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs), the annual cost of inaction on climate change in the Caribbean could total $10.7 billion by 2025, $22 billion by 2050 and $46 billion by 2100, according to an economic analysis of the associated costs. These costs represent 5 percent, 10 percent, and 22 percent respectively, of the region's GDP. These numbers are truly terrifying.

But there is some hope for the region. Hope that if we work together, we can begin to make a difference. To do this, a massive effort is required to build the capacity of local and national governments to mainstream Comprehensive Disaster Management, and by extension, climate action and disaster risk management, in development planning and decision making for regional security policies.

To that end, I believe to be resilient, we must first reduce our communities' vulnerability to impacts. One way in which this could be done is by ensuring local communities are adequately prepared, equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge, to combat the immediate effects of natural hazards.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) should be the first line of defense. CERTs can mean the difference between life and death in the community. Community members know each other, the vulnerable and the capable within the community, and what resources may be available. After a major event, national assistance may not be immediate due to a myriad of factors, however, trained community members could begin the process of rehabilitating their communities by clearing debris, conducting light search and rescue, and maybe even some initial rapid damage assessments.

However, there are many out there who may want to argue against using CERTs in the aftermath of a disaster. Critics claim that entrusting civilians with such a responsibility is not only reckless, but may also result in additional injuries and even potential law-suits.

Furthermore, critics argue that there is always the risk to personal safety to be weighed…why would a community member risk his/her life to save someone? Or, should they encounter someone with traumatic injuries, and in an effort to be known as a hero, further injure that person, or even cause their death, who would be ultimately responsible? This is especially so, as CERTs do not receive the same level of training as professional emergency responders and may even forget some of what they may have learned due to the time elapsed between the training and the disaster event. It is believed that such scenarios are grounds to deny the use of CERTs in local community disaster management.

I say they are wrong!

While some communities are more close-knit than others, where neighbors have deep and strong bonds, the success of such a program is dependent on a number of factors.

Moreover, with the limited resources available, and the overworked and underpaid emergency personnel throughout the region, SIDS such are those in CARICOM should utilize CERTS as often as possible.

As a community member, ensuring the safety of those around me, and aiding in their times of need is paramount. Besides, charity begins at home, and I am sure that in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, individuals would not be picky about who is rescuing or assisting them, or would prefer to wait for someone more 'suitable' and 'professional'. We as humans tend to come together in times of need, and that is one of the elements on which CERT is based…the kindness of the human spirit.

Therefore, when used effectively, CERTs can empower and uplift a community, and prepare its members to respond to disaster situations. In addition, the training also educates the community on how they can reduce their individual and collective vulnerabilities by teaching mitigation practices.

Photo caption: Members of the Royal Barbados Defense Force disassemble a small boat engine during a maintenance management.
Photo Credit: U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Rachael L. Leslie.

The United States Reengaging the Caribbean and Latin America

By Rushton Paray (Trinidad and Tobago)

United States' President Joe Biden has properly identified that rebuilding strategic ties with the Caribbean and Latin America are in his country's "undeniable self-interest."

"When we strengthen our alliances, we strengthen our power and our ability to disrupt threats before they reach our shores," President Biden stated in outlining the U.S.'s considered response "to meeting all the challenges of our changing world."

Indeed, the U.S.'s active diplomatic and economic reengagement with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is equally in each other's core security and economic interests.

It is refreshing and gratifying to hear President Biden proclaim a commitment to working "with our closest allies and partners" and in "renewing our own enduring sources of national strength."

The leader of the free world has spoken – and outlined a strategic approach – against a background of deepening involvement in the region, much of it predatory, by certain countries, most notably Russia, China, and Iran.

The strategic location of Latin America and the Caribbean and their relative economic vulnerability are malleable targets for Russia's sinister ideological designs, China's economic soft diplomacy and the terrorist ambitions that emerge from Iran.

The region's susceptibility has been worsened by the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has wrecked some shoe-string economies that are reliant on agriculture and tourism.

The circumstances are made even more fertile by the path away from democracy and toward authoritarianism chosen by leaders of some hemispheric countries.

The geopolitical stagecraft of Russia, China, and Iran could seriously destabilize societies that are virtually at the doorstep of the United States and already within the sphere of the Russia-Cuba axis and Venezuelan totalitarianism.

President Biden is correct in asserting that strengthening the alliance is "how we ensure the American people are able to live in peace, security and prosperity." U.S. security and its historic influence throughout the region are at stake.

But in countering the undoubted impact of the Russian, Chinese and Iranian initiatives, it is vitally important that the United States carefully weigh the appeal and worth of their respective programs to the target countries.

Moscow has been ostensibly promoting trade and military arms and equipment sales, while masking its propaganda campaign and covert cyber espionage.

As with Russia, China has been working at eroding U.S. hemispheric influence.

Beijing's major scheme, the Belt and Road Initiative, could economically ensnare many of the 70 vulnerable countries where infrastructural development is taking place.

Among other countries, Trinidad and Tobago has invited the participation of China in several costly public works, most without public procurement scrutiny.

China has provided preferential interest loan rates, and projects are tied to the provision of Chinese material and labor.

The exposure to Iranian-sponsored terrorism is real and worrisome in light of Hezbollah's attacks in Latin America, and the flight of Trinidad and Tobago jihadists to the Middle East.

The number of ISIS recruits from Trinidad and Tobago has made the twin-island state, per capita, a major global recruitment source.

The systematic machinations of Russia, China and Iran having been unveiled, the U.S. must suitably craft its foreign policy and economic outreach and present itself as the preferred partner.

Already most of the region and our superpower neighbor have had long, fraternal, and mutually rewarding relations.

The U.S. is Trinidad and Tobago's largest trading partner, and both countries share abiding diplomatic and cultural relations.

Trinidad and Tobago has been a reliable associate at the Organization of American States and at other international and hemispheric agencies.

In the "core strategic proposition" which President Biden has put forward, the United States must make essential investments in Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the region.

These must be expressed in a holistic and coordinated manner, most notably in economics, security, transfer of technology, educational opportunities, immigration, and other tangible measures.

The United States must work alongside the Caribbean and Latin America in seeking to deepen and diversify respective economies and to grant greater market access to manufacturers.

There is need for revision and strengthening of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, especially in light of the parity granted to NAFTA countries such as Mexico.

The U.S. must acknowledge that China is exploiting the soft underbelly of the region's struggling economies, high debt, and steep unemployment.

There should be collaboration between the US and the region in the establishment of green industries and in confronting the urgent challenge of climate change.

With its vast resources, the United States should consider deep-rooted involvement in depressed communities in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere where there is prevalent gang violence, narco-trafficking, and widespread use of illegal arms.

The U.S. could implement applicable policies and empower the non-governmental sector to engage at-risk youths of these communities, with education and skills programs as a primary tool.

On the issues of organized crime, human trafficking and related cross-border offences, the U.S. should consider bolstering the resources of existing agencies.

Critical participation in health and social welfare would provide tremendous dividends to these countries and shore up the U.S.'s image as a meaningful partner.

Information and communication technology is a vital sector in which the vibrant US private sector should be encouraged to invest, expand, and undertake transfer of skills and knowledge.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are facing a crisis in defending and upholding

treasured values, and the US, with its exhaustive resources, should carve a purposeful role for itself.

President Biden was on point in stating that with changing global dynamics, the United States must "meet today's challenges from a position of strength."

Such power and potency should be properly utilized in America's virtual backyard, through coordinated effort and in ventures that would have the most positive impact on people..

"America's unmatched network of alliances and partnerships," as President Biden put it, must work for the mutual advantage of the United States and the Caribbean and Latin America.

With such a resolute approach, the U.S. could be assured of an enduring and rewarding reengagement.