



Foreword

I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce you to this new feature of the Atlas which includes description and analysis of some of the defence and security realities in the Caribbean region.

The security realities of the Caribbean have several features in common with the realities of the hemispheric as a whole. Moreover, as one would expect, the region has some elements that places it in stark contrast with the rest of the hemisphere.

In terms of commonalities, as in the hemisphere generally, there is in the Caribbean the primacy of non-traditional security threats over conventional ones, which highlights the centrality of internal security issues such as drugs, crime, and violence. This is not to say that conventional matters, notably territorial and border disputes, have lost their salience, either in the Caribbean or in Latin America. For example, the disputes involving Guatemala and Belize, Venezuela and Guyana, and Suriname and Guyana are still among several significant and unresolved controversies.

There is no inter-state conflict any place in the hemisphere, and there is no justifiable concern about nuclear proliferation or an arms race, although the matter of confidence building is still germane. Thus, it is the non-traditional arena, notably drugs, crime, and violence, which is dominating the debate among scholars and journalists and commanding the attention of policy makers and security practitioners. This is true for the entire hemisphere, including the Caribbean.

Beyond this, the Caribbean shares with the rest of the hemisphere a dynamic geopolitical environment. Notable here is China's increasing military and security engagement and economic and commercial investment. Undoubtedly, China is guided by a strategic vision in this pursuit. The China push has led to further tussles with Taiwan over diplomatic recognition in the Caribbean and Central America.



ALBA contributes to this dynamic geopolitical scene. Although only Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are ALBA members, the geopolitical aspect is enhanced by the participation of those Caribbean nations plus several others in Petrocaribe, a foreign policy instrument for Venezuela which also created ALBA. As well, the geopolitical matrix is being influenced by the re-engagement of Russia, Iran's outreach, and a new engagement discourse by the United States following the election of President Barack Obama.

For all these reasons and others, which space does not permit me to address, the inclusion of the Caribbean security landscape in this Atlas is both welcome and invaluable, as it permits a more complete portrait of the defence and security realities of our hemisphere.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith'.

Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith