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DEFINING A LONG TERM U. S. STRATEGY FOR THE CARIBBEAN REGION

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Ground Rules

"Strategy", the Greek root of which refers to generalship, is defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as "the science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or a group of nations to afford the maximum support of adopted policies in peace or war." The time-frame "long range" is construed here as referring to policies which will endure into the 21st Century, and not to current events. The "Caribbean Region" is taken as encompassing our states on the Gulf of Mexico, Mexico, Central America including Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, and the island nations or dependencies of the Antilles --linguistically, culturally, economically, and politically a most diverse grouping seldom, if ever, treated as an entity either in formulation of U.S. strategy or its execution.

Presidents of the United States usually endow strategy with substance in one of three ways: (1) by political or diplomatic measures establishing the tone and extent of U.S. relations with foreign government(s), such as forming an alliance or coalition; (2) allocating resources, or foregoing revenues, to affect such relationships; and (3) directing that U.S. military forces be structured or postured for the same purposes, such as forming a new unified command, or changing force missions. Responsibility for proposing and executing strategy for the Caribbean Region is fragmented among the Assistant Secretary of State for American

Republic Affairs, who has purview over relations with the foreign nations therein, and the U.S. Missions in each; USCINCLANT, who is charged with U.S. military concerns on the islands and waters of the Carribbean (and with the Pacific Ocean off Central and South America); USCINCSOUTH, who has similar responsibilities on the mainland south of the Mexico-Guatemala border; USCINCSpace and USCINCREd, who are charged with defense of the U.S.; and the Joint Mexican U.S. Defense Commission, which provides such coordination as mutual defense may require.

Past strategy for the Caribbean Region has tended to be a subset of larger, more expansive designs. President Kennedy supported the Alliance for Progress, and U.S. security assistance for counterinsurgency, and pursued a vigorous anti-Castro policy. President Johnson intervened in the Dominican Republic to foreclose a communist takeover, obtaining the participation of regional allies, and proposed formation of a Common Market for Latin America. Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter pursued a strategy of deemphasis and withdrawal, central to which was the Panama Canal Treaty, but which also involved a significant cutback of forces in Panama and of U.S. military personnel stationed throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, reducing the rank of USCINCSOUTH from four stars to three, and a substantial drop in security assistance. President Carter reacted to Senator Church's indignation over the rediscovery of Soviet troops in Cuba by forming a new unified command in Florida to keep an eye on the situation. President Reagan has increased U.S. force presence in the Caribbean Region, intervened in Grenada with support of a regional coalition, launched the Caribbean Basin

Initiative and the Jackson Plan, and provided support for Nicaraguan "Freedom Fighters."

This paper addresses approaches which the next two or three Presidents might consider.

### Involvevement

There is a contemporary school of strategic thought, one articulate spokesman for which is Ambassador Robert Komer, which holds that the Caribbean Region is unimportant, and that any U.S. involvement there is a diversion from other, vastly more important interests in Europe and Asia. But until the recent past, perhaps until the advent of Henry Kissinger in the White House, American strategists kept a wary eye on the Caribbean region and Latin America.

There was, of course, the Monroe Doctrine. America's debt to British seapower. Nineteenth Century authors chronicled sea voyages "around the Horn", and the feverish treks across the Isthmus of Panama during the Gold Rush Days. One hundred years ago, American strategists measured the American navy against that of Chile, creating thereby the strategic environment against which Mahan, Sims, and other naval reformers rebelled. It was insurgency in Cuba, and the prospective dismantlement of Spain's overseas empire, which summoned us to our "Manifest Destiny", including status as a world-class naval power. Nor should we forget that the Twentieth Century Army and Air Force had their beginnings in the police action against Mexico --the 1st Division was formed at Brownsville, Texas, and the Signal Corps flew

its first operational missions with heavier-than-air aircraft in support of Black Jack Pershing's foray south of the border. U.S. Marine Corps aviation came into being during campaigns in Hispaniola and Central America between World Wars I and II. When the nation emerged from its isolationist cocoon in the late '30's, we hastened to buttress the defenses of the Panama Canal, and reacting to what was perceived as widespread penetration of South and Central America by the Axis powers, we stationed military teams in capitals throughout the hemisphere, and threw a net of air and naval bases around the Caribbean Sea and along the air and sea lifelines to Africa. When the war ended, there were American military personnel and facilities throughout the Caribbean Region.

But today most Americans do not know that Brazil sent a division to fight as our ally in the arduous and bloody campaign in Italy. Or that we built the principal airport in what is now Suriname. Or that on the north coast of Honduras, overlooking the picturesque half-moon bay at Trujillo, there are two American monuments: the grave of William Walker, the American freebooter who conquered Nicaragua just as Abraham Lincoln came to office, and the masonry shell of an American naval hospital dating from the 1940's. Or that Colombian infantrymen died defending Hill 347 west of Chorwon, Korea, in 1953, along with their comrades of the U.S. 32d Regimental Combat Team.

What most Americans do know is that Latin governments have been unstable, plagued with military takeovers, and prone to an unmodern ferocity in dealing with dissent. We have seen reproachful pictures of teeming slums and hordes of tattered, dirty children. We have been

led to believe that our past interventions in these societies, seemingly so different from our own, were largely sordid. We are apprehensive lest somehow the violence portended in their future be visited upon us. Like the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who early in the 1970's decided that we should withdraw militarily from the region, and recommended to President Nixon that he abolish the United States Southern Command, most of us would certainly prefer that our military forces not be committed there.

But the United States is involved with the Caribbean Region, and for the foreseeable future, will remain so, even should we determine to extricate ourselves. A glance at the TV programming for almost any metropolitan area will remind how deeply Hispanic culture has penetrated ours. Cuba, as Ambassador Walters reminds us, is a nation with its treasury in Moscow, its army in Africa, and its people in Florida. The second largest Honduran city after Tegucigalpa is New Orleans, Louisiana. There is a hotel near the Pentagon in which the housekeeping staff comes entirely from San Miguel, El Salvador --mostly illegal aliens. And even in New England there is Central Falls, Rhode Island, where the population of illegal Colombianos trebled from 1980 to 1984; in the latter year, pirates among the predominantly law-abiding and productive colonists extracted \$100 million in cash from cocaine peddling in the strip city along the coast from Boston to New Haven. No, we might choose to avoid intervention in many forms, but the fact is that the Latins have intervened here, and are inextricably involved with our legal institutions, our politics, our economy, and our religious groups.

Our national choices relate not to involvement. for there we have few options, but to our purposes, our objectives, and to the military strategy we should pursue on their behalf. This paper assays an exploration of these, beginning with national interests, and proceeding to consider, in turn, how these relate strategically to Panama, Central America, Mexico, and the remainder of the Caribbean nations.

### **What Are U. S. National Interests?**

The current Administration has, I believe, defined national interests in the Caribbean Region adequately for the next few decades:

- \* **Support for Democracy.**
- \* **Economic Recovery**
- \* **Stemming the Migrant Flow**
- \* **Controlling International Narcotics Trafficking**
- \* **Defending key facilities and lines of communications.**

**Democracy.** In 1976, When President Carter took office, two out of three Latin Americans lived under authoritarian governments, mostly military dictatorships. Ten years ago our policies focused on human rights and the rule of law. In 1979, with U.S. acquiescence, the oppressive Somoza regime was overthrown in Nicaragua, and the winds of change seemed to be blowing in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and in other, more distant lands. It did not disturb some American political leaders that Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries were in the vanguard of the forces of change in Central America, and that these

possessed the discipline and determination to convert any nascent democracy into a Cubanized garrison state. Even when it was evident that Leninist Sandinistas had betrayed the Nicaraguan revolution, and that Managua was dominated by a government as ruthlessly repressive as Somoza's, Jesse Jackson was preaching that the United States should align itself with the inevitable, visiting Cuba and extolling Fidel Castro. Even after it was clear that El Salvador was under deliberate attack from an international conspiracy involving Cuba, Vietnam, and the communists in Managua, and that the latter and Castro contemplated similar violence in Guatemala and Honduras as well, Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut characterized our national choice as being "to move with the tide of history", or "to stand against it". Presumably he meant that we should not support those willing to fight and to die for representative democracy. He was not alone; many in Congress joined Senator Dodd in opposing military aid to the Salvadoran government, whether persuaded that the Soviet-bloc trained and armed insurgent leaders in the hills represented the wave of the future, or that it did not matter to us who ruled, how they came to power, or how they would conduct themselves in office.

But the "tide of history" now seems to be flowing against Castro and Cubanization. In 1986 nine out of ten nations to our south live under a constitutional democracy, the outcome of a decade of remarkable political transformation. That turnabout was occasioned in part, to be sure, by the ineptitude of military regimes, especially their economic blundering, but it was also wrought because the United States has consistently used its influence toward free elections and

and criminality, and that their economic policies have enslaved their people to the Soviet Union. U.S. strategy should seek to prevent other capitals in the Region from falling under similar governments.

**Economic Recovery.** The collapse of world markets for agricultural products and fossil fuel in the late 1970's created financial havoc. Private banks in the United States, as well as international lending institutions, impressed by vigorous economic growth in the early and mid-'70's, had extended extensive credit to governments and private enterprises throughout Latin America. When commodity markets collapsed and national revenues fell, interest payments became onerous. Rescheduling these has usually been conditioned upon the debtor's undertaking stringent austerity measures to underwrite future payments. Governments then found themselves in a vise, caught between the demands of North American bankers, and the expectations of their people for expanded social services or even outright dole.

Fidel Castro, the hemisphere's foremost economic basket case, has advocated internationally concerted debt abrogation, which from his perspective has the dual virtue of identifying Cuba with the instincts of most Latins, and of threatening bank failures all across the United States. The United States government has pursued a policy of case-by-case loan renegotiation, coupled with measures designed to stimulate trade, such as President Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative. The Report of the President's Bipartisan Commission on Central America, the so-called Kissinger Commission, recommended a venturesome program of grant aid and loans --labeled the Jackson Plan-- designed to bring about an economic revival in Central America

comparable to the recovery in Europe under the Marshall Plan. These schemes were more than self-interest, but they were certainly that, for as was the case in postwar Europe, the nexus of politics and economics dictates that to deal with one, the other must be addressed. But none of the measures thus far adopted have been sufficient. Foreign debt-servicing now consumes national budgets which ought to be addressing creating jobs for the hordes of young workers which each year enter the work force --Mexico, for example, needs at least one million jobs per annum. That is a U.S. problem as well, for large pools of unemployed fall naturally prey to the proponents of political violence, and stimulate migration to the U.S.

Surely vigorous trade with the Caribbean Region, conducted in a climate of mutual confidence, should be one object of our long term national strategy. It is our fourth largest market abroad, and for the foreseeable future will remain an important source for labor, raw materials, and agricultural imports. Indeed, as the U.S. economy moves ahead in transforming itself from one based on the production of hard-goods to one based on services, manufacturing enterprises in the Caribbean Region will be in an ever better position to capture broader markets in a North America no longer competing vigorously for some forms of manufactured wares.

Moreover, the wave of democratization in the Caribbean so propitious for U.S. interests occurred as economic decline set in. Thus far, the old authoritarian regimes have been perceived as responsible for the depression. The U.S. can not afford to have this perception shift to one blaming economic problems on democracy or free enterprise.

Accordingly, our long-term strategy must include imaginative, new economic stimuli, and, given the current poor prospects in most countries for repaying foreign loans, probably loan-forgiveness or some other form of "bail-out."

**Migration.** A colleague who recently visited a string of detention facilities belonging to the Immigration Service along the Mexican border reported his amazement that Mexican aliens --the traditional "wetbacks"-- were in the minority among detainees, and that OTM (Other Than Mexican) aliens included not only large numbers of Central Americans, but also Colombians, Arabs and Iranians. That our porous borders and permissive labor laws have created political, economic, and social problems inside the U.S. is evident from the difficulty the latest Congress encountered in passing ameliorating legislation. Less evident is the connection which must be made between these difficulties and the policies we pursue abroad: the easiest way to deal with illegal aliens is to help keep them in their homeland.

Despite all the frictions which in the past have attended relations between the United States and our southern neighbors, USIS polls attest that the latter retain a deep-seated admiration of the United States, and a profound respect for our power and resourcefulness. Time and again, their leaders have stated that they need American material aid far less than they require our moral support, our open commitment to their future. Many believe that popular conviction of continued American involvement and support would be a major deterrent to emigration, offsetting that desperation which leads to flight, and

restoring confidence in government and national future.

In any event, any coherent U.S. strategy for the Caribbean Region must deal with illegal immigrants by cooperating with governments there to reduce the causes for people leaving home.

**Narcotics Trafficking.** Last March the President's Commission on Organized Crime submitted a report entitled "AMERICA'S HABIT: Drug Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime." That report includes the following passage:

Trafficking in cocaine and marijuana produced in Latin America and the Caribbean Islands constitutes a threat to the security of the United States, both because present and foreseen consumption of these substances subverts millions of Americans from productive pursuits, and because of the vast, rich underworld, which thrives on international smuggling of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, is also the milieu of those who are engaged in illicit movements of arms and munitions, in espionage, in terrorism, and in fomented revolution. Moreover, the patent inability of the United States to detect, let alone to apprehend, aircraft or vessels conveying bulk shipments of contraband to the United States reveals inadequate early warning on our southern approaches, a grave vulnerability in the era of the cruise missile.

This threat has grown despite extensive efforts by the United States to encourage foreign governments to enforce counternarcotics laws, to eradicate coca and cannabis, and to promote alternate agriculture,

and despite interdiction operations involving unprecedented cooperation among U.S. agencies.

To meet this threat the U.S. will have to engage its intelligence community and its military forces much more broadly. The most promising concepts for counteraction entail increased aid to foreign governments in attacking processing centers, where large amounts of the substances are prepared for export, and in clamping down on furtive aircraft and ships --aid which includes military intelligence support and security assistance. But there must also be better U.S. surveillance over the Caribbean approaches to our own airspace, which will require the Department of Defense to commit to counternarcotics missions both more forces and more funds, e.g., for communications, radars, operations and maintenance. Since the criminals have displayed remarkable inventiveness in foiling interdiction to date, a DoD research and development effort will also be needed to provide intelligence and enforcement agencies a lasting advantage over their resourceful quarry. However, all of these activities will enhance the readiness of U.S. forces to meet more military threats to security across the entire spectrum of war.

The Commission recommended to the President, inter alia, that he instruct the Joint Chiefs of Staff to define national security to include "the airborne, amphibious, and overland invasion of this country by drug smugglers", and that he direct the Department of Defense to act accordingly. In April of this year, a National Security Decision Directive was signed by the President which in essence implemented the Commission's recommendation.

Again, the attention devoted to the drug issue in the Congress and in political campaigns this fall attests to the wide support for national action against drug abuse. But the thrust of the Commission's recommendations concerning military action has been misconstrued by some commentators as an attempt to thrust the military into domestic policing. What is proposed in the Commission's report is more active surveillance outside the U.S. --and that seems both prudent, and consistent with the traditional missions of our armed forces. National strategy should operate against the foreign sources of cocaine and cannabis, as well as against illegal traffickers in the Caribbean Region.

**National Security.** The Commission on Organized Crime reminded the President that our security is still involved in Caribbean America. And more is at stake there than narcotics trafficking or even attack by undetected cruise missiles or other aircraft. As was the case during World War II, many of our more militarily critical shipping routes traverse the Caribbean: 60% of the shipping which would carry men and war materiel to Europe in the event of mobilization in NATO would issue from Caribbean ports, and should we have to reinforce Korea, much of the wherewithal would pass through the Panama Canal. Indeed, the Panama Canal remains a key strategic defile for the United States, one which we would seek to use and defend in a broad range of possible conflicts. It is, moreover, important to our allies, particularly those, like Japan, whose security rests on maritime traffic.

Cuba's providing the Soviets a base 90 miles off our shores, and the Cubanization of Nicaragua, have both been setbacks for the national security of the United States. While neither seems at present to harbor Soviet weapons which can strike the United States directly, both have been involved in training terrorists intent on killing Americans, and both have actively supported international narcotics traffickers --the only governments in the hemisphere to promote drug smuggling as government policy. And both have airfields and other facilities which could very quickly be turned to use by Soviet aircraft, ships, and other forces. Hence, both merit the continuing surveillance to which they are subjected by U.S. forces.

But, of course, surveillance has not deterred subversive aggression by either Nicaragua or Cuba. To respond to the aggression in El Salvador, and to repetitive armed incursions into Honduras and Costa Rica from Nicaragua, the United States, consistent with the Guam Doctrine of helping others willing to defend themselves, has relied on Security Assistance, a clumsy instrument for such low intensity conflict, and an even more awkward mechanism for dealing with narcotics trafficking. To meet similar circumstance in the future, to arm and train all those willing to fight on behalf of democracy, U.S. national strategy for the Caribbean Region ought to include new modalities for providing timely and relevant security assistance.

Some authorities have proposed a further attempt at a regional military coalition. General Wallace Nutting has accurately described the Cuba-Nicaragua nexus as a strategic flanking of NATO, and has called for a NATO-like alliance to counter the thrust. I do not

believe that the Rio Pact and its military institutions, nor the OAS, can provide the aegis for such a coalition. Moreover, given the diversity of the Caribbean Region, setting U.S. strategic sights on an embrasive coalition would consume energies we might better devote to attainable goals. We should recognize that a regional coalition would, in any event, be largely dependent on U.S. resources and will. Hence, the better course is to support such sub-regional security groupings as may emerge --such as that in the Lesser Antilles, or even a revived Central American confederation--, leaving the impulse toward same largely to the foreign states, and reserving U.S. security initiatives for supporting them and new bilateral arrangements.

#### Some Regional Specifics

**Panama.** The United States has an unfinished agenda in the Republic of Panama. One of the most severe indictments of past U.S. policy is the fact that the two Third World nations over which the United States has exercised the longest and strongest influence --Panama and the Philippine Republic-- are among the most disreputable examples of representative democracy. The venality and corruption of the Marcos regime has Panamanian counterparts, but Panamanian electoral manipulations are in a class by themselves. Also uniquely Panamanian is a set of banking laws which are establishing Panama City as the black money capital of the world. These laws, which restrain release of information concerning accounts even to governments upon presentation of evidence of criminality, close the Panamanian banking system more securely than Switzerland's or Austria's, and greatly

facilitate the "laundering" of money from illicit enterprises like narcotics trafficking, and the transmittal of large, lump sums of ill-gotten cash.

The United States should set itself to helping Panama become something other than the proprietor of an obsolescent set of waterworks and a banking center for international crooks. Panama's natural resources are geography and history: its position between the continents and astride the Canal; its long, close relationship with the United States. We ought to take seriously Panamanian aspirations to become a high-technology communications hub for the Caribbean Region and all of Latin America, and entertain supplying the capital and the expertise, helping upgrade the labor supply as necessary. As a necessary complement, we should be prepared to underwrite action on the Panama-Japan-U.S. study on the Canal's future. We should certainly promote Japanese contributions of funds, materiel, and technical assistance to Panama's future. And we should continue to encourage the Panamanians to schedule and hold cycles of elections from local through national jurisdictions, to instruct the populace in the exercise of democracy, and to instill confidence in it.

Also on the agenda is addressal by both governments of the military role of the U.S. in Canal security after full implementation of the Panama Canal treaty at the start of the year 2000. We are already late with these negotiations: in DoD programming terms, it is already 1992, and tough decisions are overdue on when to remove USSOUTHCOM Headquarters from Panama; or whether to retain in the active force structure after their withdrawal units now stationed in Panama, and

if so, where; or how otherwise to perform strategic functions now being performed by U.S. units from Panama.

Obviously, these are contentious issues, sensitive not only among Panamanians, but also among members of the U.S Congress. Many of the latter report that the Panama Canal Treaty is still widely resented by American voters, and that if it becomes evident that we really will walk away from the Canal and leave it to the Panamanians, it might become an issue hot enough again to affect both local elections and national campaigns.

President Reagan has the stature to reassure these questioning voters, to tell them that the Treaty has worked to our advantage, and to set us on the right path for the future. He could withdraw the U.S. Southern Command headquarters without fear that his move would be seen as retreat or abandonment, and otherwise set the ambiance for the negotiations which would thereby be precipitated.

Central America. The United States enjoys a momentary advantage. Friendly democratic governments, all recently installed after legitimate national elections, exist in all the nations save Nicaragua, and even there, democratic opposition to the Leninist Sandinistas has led to armed rebellion. The Salvadoran guerrillas, their numbers shrinking, face increasingly effective government security forces. A historic opportunity lies before us all.

While the future of Central America must be decided freely by Central Americans, the United States should be prepared to support any

revival of Central American federalism, and should welcome regional disarmament and demilitarization under adequate safeguards. Our strategy should aim at supporting governments which derive from genuinely open, one-man, one-vote elections, at arbitrated settlement of the border disputes which affect every nation there, and at that economic integration which would make Central America again attractive for foreign investments and tourism.

In this effort, as in its planning with Panama, the U.S. should seek the cooperation and contributions of Japan, and should make every effort to involve Brazil and Mexico as well.

Mexico. In the long run, Mexico and Brazil are the two nations in Latin America which count the most. By the turn of the century, both will be comparable to the United States in population, and both possess resources which could make either influential well beyond their borders. Brazil, already the fourth largest vendor of military equipment in the world (sales volume exceeding that of Israel), should be induced to contribute to both economic and security assistance. Mexico, which has preferred to remain officially aloof from the Region other than Cuba, should also be asked to lend a helping hand to its neighbors. With U.S. aid, Mexico's defenses and our own should be integrated, at least to the extent of our sharing surveillance tasks and derived intelligence along our common border.

Mexico is under enormous economic and demographic strain, and it is uncertain whether its one-party system can cope with the demands for jobs, the pervasive corruption, widespread crime and violence, and a

have/have-not differentiation as dramatic as any in the Region. U.S. difficulties with narcotics traffickers and with illegal Mexican immigrants have already been touched upon. Mexico has maintained close relations with Castro, and hosts the most numerous congerie of spies in the hemisphere outside of UN headquarters in New York --the Cuban and Soviet delegations are the largest in Latin America. Mexico City has become a subversives' crossroads, a center of intrigue. And while Mexican government ministers like to remind the public that Mexico is not in Central America, Mexico has seen fit to be a prime actor in the Contadora group seeking a settlement there, so that diplomats pursuing peace go to Mexico City as well as insurgents and espionage agents. The time seems ripe for the U.S. to pursue a more purposeful and helpful role for Mexico in Regional policy, especially since the U.S. can offer far better solutions to Mexico's problems of finance, markets, and underemployment than can its communist friends.

Colombia. Colombia is on the front lines of the war against cocaine and marijuana. Tensions within Colombia over the government's campaign against the narcotraficantes, and the not unsuccessful attempts of the latter to form common cause with guerrillas and other dissidents against both the government and the United States, could seriously destabilize the society. Although Colombia has repeatedly been promised U.S. help with its security problems, we persist in the fiction that Colombia can purchase what it needs from us, and have proffered mainly credits instead of material aid. For example, although both Vice President Bush and Senator Hawkins promised the President of Colombia air surveillance radar more than two years ago, to date only pricing information has been forthcoming. In return for

continued active cooperation in the counter-narcotics campaign, the United States should undertake promptly to assist Colombia with surveillance and communications equipment.

For the longer run, while recognizing that Colombia is not a Central American nation, the U.S. should appreciate that its shared history with, and its proximity to Panama, and its central position in international narcotics trafficking, urge according to Colombia a position of prominence in any plans for security of the region. Colombia's San Andreas Island sits off the coast of Nicaragua astride the air and sea lanes into Panama and the drug smugglers' routes north; claimed by Nicaragua, it is a sensitive installation deserving better defenses than it enjoys. All the Colombian armed forces require updating if they are going to be capable of handling missions of blocking the drug traffickers, dealing with Colombian guerrillas, or rebuffing Sandinista challenges re San Andreas. Conceivably, the time has come to revive that degree of military cooperation between our nations which led Colombia to send a battalion to fight in Korea with the U.S. 7th Infantry Division, and the United States to respond with a decade of training and material aid.

Venezuela. As Colombia has increased pressure on the narcotics traffickers, some of the latter have transferred their operations to neighboring Venezuela. Security officials there are concerned not only with this development, but with the growing arms trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago, off their northeast coast, which they believe is associated with the drug rings. Because of their oil, the Venezuelans may be in a better position to buy U.S. materiel to enhance their

capabilities against drug and arms smugglers. But like the Colombians, they need our cooperation, particularly in the fields of intelligence and communications, if they are to be effective.

**The Island Democracies.** The free nations of the Greater and Lesser Antilles are barely capable of policing their own citizens, let alone coping with well-financed criminals and subversives from outside. Nonetheless, they figure in all the objectives of U.S. strategy: democracies we ought to sustain, economies we ought to bolster, a source of illegal immigrants we ought help eliminate, participants in trans-Caribbean narcotics trafficking --geographic at least, and for some, such as Jamaica's marijuana growers, more substantive--, and situated where they can contribute significantly to Regional security. Their beginning moves toward collective security deserve our continuing support.

**Cuba.** Fidel Castro is not the sole source of threats to U.S. interests in the Caribbean Region. The U.S. encounters its greatest difficulties there from putative friends, whose ineptitude, corruption, or overweening pride frequently causes them to embarrass us and our common designs. The Soviets play their own game there, cooler than the Cuban's, conceivably the more dangerous because it is more subtle. The narco-traffickers seem to have turned to the Nicaraguans and the Cubans only because they had to, and probably today's drug traffickers use Castro's Cuba little more than smugglers and pirates have always exploited its position. Fidel has not been central to the insurgencies in Colombia, although he has tried to intervene there. And now there are Libyan, Palestinian and Basque

terrorists in the region. But Castro works energetically, relentlessly, to advance the cause of revolution wherever and whenever he can. He has arranged funds for, orchestrated strategy on behalf of, and furnished training and logistic support to insurgents in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. He is certainly deeply committed to the foothold on the continent which the Leninist Sandinistas have provided him, and he has been lavish in his support.

It is tempting to argue, as did Secretary of State Haig, that the U.S. should "go to the source", and deal directly with Cuba and Castro, employing force as necessary, to cause him to cease and desist from further depredation in the Region. Strategically, that would be both the simplest and most dangerous course of action we could pursue, entailing as it does a direct threat to the Soviet units stationed there, and virtually assuring a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. Moreover, it seems unlikely that Castro would respond to any U.S. ultimatum, since he probably calculates that we will not attack Cuba, and that a prolonged confrontation would be more stressful for any U.S. Administration, because of domestic opposition, than it could ever be for him.

Nonetheless, it is important to point out that Cuba is an island, and despite extensive air and coastal defenses, remains vulnerable. Against a deployed U.S. fleet, Castro would be impotent; in the case of an overseas attack on Cuban troops or on a Cuban ally, he could offer no more help than he was able to in the case of Grenada.

### Defining a Long Range Strategy

The foregoing objectives and requirements lead to the following recommendations for a way to help define a long term strategy:

1. Assign the Caribbean Region to one unified command, and task its CINC with presenting recommendations for a long term strategy. Withdraw the unified command headquarters in Panama, and consolidate it with another in the Region. Give the new CINC(cariblatam) purview over all "peacetime" operations, and over low intensity conflict. Subordinate him to USCINCLANT for general war.
2. Devise and obtain Congressional support for a new Security Assistance Program underwriting CINC(cariblatam), among other CINCs dealing with low intensity conflict, a Program tailored to meet materiel and training requirements for disciplined forces bearing arms on behalf of democracy .
3. Direct CINC(cariblatam) to plan for:
  - o Collective action by U.S. and foreign military forces against international narcotics trafficking, and the illicit movements of arms and subversives.
  - o Air, land and sea defense of the U.S.-Mexico border, in conjunction with Mexican defense planners.

- o Military contingencies involving  
Cuba or Nicaragua, short of general war.
  
  - o The security of the Panama Canal.
4. Foster close integration of CINC(cariblatam) with the Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs, and with other non-DoD U.S. departments and agencies, exploiting modern communications to the fullest, and adapting traditional hierarchies to the need for timely, coherent planning and swift, well-coordinated operations.