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gence of this latest avenging figure that is a revealing sign of the crisis—a figure who does not seek to explain and understand his social location by references to any logic of “black suffering.” For the “shotta don” the Jamaican postcolony is itself a predatory state, and contestations rooted in subaltern rebellious cultures have all failed. There is only one way out: accumulate enough capital through extortion, government contracts or the haulage business, then use these resources to influence the formal two-party system.

The Jamaican postcolony therefore faces a unique situation. Not only is there no hegemony from the rulers, but subaltern radical counter-hegemony itself has also collapsed or has diminished in influence. In such a context politics takes on different dimensions. The “shotta

don” becomes the area leader and establishes rule in communities often by the force of death. In such circumstances, death is not a rupture but a norm to be deployed, with arbitrary violence foreclosing all possibilities. Rule, therefore, is about the absolute power of death. Violence, too, must now be especially brutal and rape has become a regular feature of violent attacks.

The contemporary nature of violence in Jamaican society is the mark of a profound crisis in the Jamaican postcolony. It is not a crisis that can be named by recourse to discourses about a lack of values and attitudes, or by nostalgic musings about better times past. Thinking through the current Jamaican crisis requires coming to grips with new forms of power and their expression in the current postcolonial moment. ■

## Remapping Caribbean Geopolitics

by Diana Thorburn

A SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY JET FILLED WITH arms bound for Haiti was grounded in Jamaica in February 2004 because the intended recipient of the shipment, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was no longer in the country. The incident provided a delicious and ironic symbol of the stark changes in Caribbean diplomacy and its external political relations and represented a stunning reversal of 30 years ago, when at the height of the Cold War, Cuban military planes touched down in Jamaica on their way to southern Africa. The Cuban forces with their matériel not only reached their intended destination, but also enjoyed tremendous and surprising success as they turned the Angolan civil war around by helping defeat U.S.-backed mercenaries and apartheid-era South African elite troops, ensuring victory for the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

This twist of historical precedence comes amid other intriguing developments in the changing diplomatic and political arena in which the Caribbean now finds itself. Indeed, Haiti could be seen to provide the fulcrum for what appears to be a wave of new international political dynamics in the region. Although Washington’s purported involvement appears to be a repetition of a familiar interventionist pattern, a close examination of developments in the wake of Aristide’s downfall reveals a pronounced shift in the regular trajectory of U.S.-Caribbean relations. These include emerging powers seeking influence in the region and regional leaders in search of new international interlocutors—particularly given their indignation over the Haitian situation—all in the context of a hegemon that at the extreme might be on the decline, and at minimum is distracted elsewhere in the world.

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France's role in Aristide's departure was its first active political intervention in the Caribbean basin (aside from its overseas departments) since its failure to quell the Haitian Revolution at the turn of the nineteenth century. The UN peacekeeping force in Haiti led by Brazilian troops marks the first significant Latin American military or political presence in the circum-Caribbean region—a development consolidated by Brazil's increasing foreign policy activism in general, and in the Caribbean in particular. China's contribution of police personnel to the UN mission in Haiti is another watershed. Haiti is one of the few countries in the world that recognizes Taiwan in continued opposition to the mainland's "One-China" policy, which China has been recently enforcing with greater vigor in the circum-Caribbean. South Africa has also begun extending greater diplomatic activism in the region, as demonstrated by its granting of asylum to Aristide.

Where, in all this, is the historical self-appointed neighborhood policeman? Does the United States continue to

State Department official admitted had grown "a little ragged."<sup>3</sup>

The Haiti incident brought to the fore latent tensions between the United States and the English-speaking Caribbean that had been brewing since the denouement of the Clinton Administration and growing discontent with U.S.-led initiatives such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The Caribbean Community's (Caricom) refusal to issue a joint statement with regard to the U.S. invasion of Iraq could have been interpreted in the context of the Bush Administration's approach of "you're either with us, or against us" as the latter. The Bush Administration's rhetoric and the manner in which it has pursued the global "War on Terror" has alienated countries—both governments and their citizens—around the world, and has further deepened the political chill in Latin American–Caribbean bilateral and multilateral relations with the United States.

The flap over Haiti raised a considerable degree of skepticism on the part of many English-speaking Caribbean leaders over Aristide's alleged request for the United States to help him leave his troubled country as he sought to protect his own personal safety, which inarguably came under serious threat. While it was never directly stated by any Caribbean government that they endorsed Aristide's claim that he was indeed kidnapped, the actions of Jamaica and others throughout the entire debacle could be seen as tacit endorsements of Aristide's side of the story. Jamaica's hosting of Aristide and his family, and its involvement in arranging for his exile in South Africa, further reinforced this impression. Furthermore, Caricom

A man hurls a molotov cocktail towards police during street violence that led to the ouster of President Aristide in 2004.



play an overarching role in the external and internal lives of Caribbean nations, just as it did during the Cold War (and before, in the non-Anglophone Caribbean), or is U.S. hegemony in the region weakening? Is the Monroe Doctrine, as a provocative editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* taunted, "ripe for a challenge"?<sup>1</sup> And is it, as one commentator suggested, time for the Caribbean to "give thought to how it positions itself in a multi-polar world"?<sup>2</sup>

The perception of a breach between the United States and the Latin American–Caribbean region has been widely accepted and remarked upon, leading the Bush Administration to periodically dispatch its top officials to heal the rift. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's March 2006 visit to the Bahamas was openly acknowledged by Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shannon as "a way to re-engage" in the context of a relationship that another top

pressed for a formal UN investigation into Aristide's departure as well as an investigation by the Organization of American States (OAS), both of which the U.S. resisted (France also objected to the proposed UN inquiry).

In an article for *In These Times*, Brian Kehrl reported, "The United States threatened to impose an arms embargo against Jamaica, the most outspoken member of Caricom. Condoleezza Rice warned of possible military recourse against Jamaica for harboring Aristide. And the United States withdrew in protest from a previously scheduled regional conference on terrorism and international security."<sup>4</sup> Resisting U.S. pressure, many Caricom members insisted on not recognizing Haiti's interim government led by Gerard Latortue. In a column for the *Washington Post*, foreign policy activist Randall Robinson wrote: "Condoleezza Rice has warned Caricom leaders that if one

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U.S. soldier is killed in Haiti, Caribbean governments will be held responsible because the Aristide family was granted sanctuary in the region.”<sup>5</sup> Although doubt has been cast on the veracity of Robinson’s statement, the fact that it was put forward and repeated is indicative of the current U.S.-Caribbean zeitgeist. And while an investigative report by the *New York Times* last January did fill in some of the blanks regarding U.S. involvement, the point remains that many English-speaking Caribbean leaders were publicly suspicious of the U.S. role in the entire affair.<sup>6</sup>

Nor has it helped that the Bush Administration has clamped down on Cuba, tightening the embargo and steadily establishing commissions, positions and offices with inauspicious titles such as “Cuba Transition Coordinator” or “Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba.” This is not in any way to endorse alarmist notions of U.S. plans to invade Cuba any time in the near future, but this kind of rhetoric, particularly in the context of the widespread suspicion by regional leaders of U.S. Marines having kidnapped Aristide, perpetuates the idea of the United States as the neighborhood—and global—bully.

Venezuela’s continuing friendly overtures to English-speaking Caribbean countries could also be seen as an irritant to the U.S. government, which has overtly and covertly sought an end to Hugo Chávez’s presidency. Venezuela has recently forgiven Dominica’s debt and granted university scholarships to Dominican citizens.<sup>7</sup> And almost every Caricom member warmly accepted Chávez’s PetroCaribe regional energy initiative. The recent choice of the OAS Secretary General is another indication of the widening gulf between the English-speaking Caribbean and the United States. The Bush Administration favored former Salvadoran President Francisco Flores, but with the key support of the 13 English-speaking Caribbean member-states, the position went to Chilean Interior Minister José Miguel Insulza—the candidate endorsed by Venezuela. This was the first time in the organization’s history that the U.S.-backed candidate failed to gain the appointment.

Further contention has arisen between some Caribbean countries and the United States over their refusal to sign immunity agreements exempting U.S. nationals from being turned over to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Caricom agreed in principle to ratify the ICC agreement, but member-states were free to enter into bilateral agreements with the United States over the immunity question. Those who have not signed the U.S. exemption have been subject to cuts in U.S. aid, “generating strong resentment at what many see as heavy-handed diplomacy,” according to the *New York Times*.<sup>8</sup>



This editorial cartoon appeared in the *Jamaica Observer*, February 8, 2005. According to the Jamaica Tourist Board, the number of Chinese visitors to Jamaica has increased by over 40% since 2004.

So who is stepping in to fill the void?

In early 2005, a series of events, including a highly publicized Chinese-Caribbean Trade Fair and a visit by the Chinese Vice President to Jamaica, drew a great deal of speculative interest from the Jamaican public over the perceived suddenness with which China was beginning to exert its presence in the region. But closer analysis reveals that this is not just a perception, and it is not limited to Jamaica. As but one example, Dominica’s 2005 general election was so overshadowed by the Roosevelt Skerrit Administration’s decision to sever ties with Taiwan in favor of China that Taiwanese flags adorned the homes of opposition supporters. Political scientist Sabita Manian, who has comprehensively detailed China’s diplomatic and economic activism in the circum-Caribbean, argues that the Beijing-Taipei battle for recognition and power has extended into the Caribbean region and that the U.S. government’s distractions elsewhere in the world have created the space in which this can proceed.<sup>9</sup>

The new vigor of Chinese diplomacy—particularly amid notions of “China on the rise” and increasing tensions in the Taiwan Strait—lends weight to the proposition that the United States is not the only international actor trying to claim the Caribbean as its so-called “backyard.” Jamaica has responded vigorously to China’s engagement. It recently opened an embassy in Beijing, with strong encouragement by the Chinese government, and when the Jamaican Prime Minister went on an official visit in July 2005, the two governments signed 11 bilateral deals, including economic cooperation, investment and loan agreements.<sup>10</sup> Other Caribbean governments have also signed significant accords with the Chinese.

Ironically, many of the region's countries' refusal to grant the United States immunity before the ICC, and the resultant cut in U.S. military aid—one of the main bones of contention between the United States and the Latin American–Caribbean region—has opened even more space for the Chinese. General Bantz Craddock of the U.S. Southern Command told a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee that if the U.S. government does not train these countries' militaries, other countries would step in, gaining greater influence in the region. "We see more and more that military commanders, officers and noncommissioned officers are going to China for education and training," said Craddock. "We see more and more Chinese non-lethal equipment showing up in the region, more representation, more Chinese military, so it is a growing phenomena."<sup>11</sup>

Aside from China, with the U.S. government having sufficiently alienated its Caribbean allies, it has apparently opened up the region to other emerging powers, which could amount to a notable concession of U.S. hegemony in the region. At the October 2004 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, a roundtable featured some of the most important analysts and writers on regional security. They arrived at the consensus that two of the most critical contemporary security issues facing Latin America and the Caribbean were the U.S. prosecution of its War on Terror and the threat that Haiti posed to regional stability. There is great irony in this concern, given that much of South America has paid little attention to Haiti for the past two centuries, despite Haiti's crucial assistance to Simón Bolívar in the Wars of Independence. Nevertheless, what this discourse betrayed was a subtle but significant shift in what has been, at least since the late 1800s, in the exclusive purview of the United States. One could interpret Brazil's taking the lead in the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti as an indication of a first step of regional engagement with that nation. The UN force in Haiti is Brazil's first significant military deployment in another country of the region, though it has sent peacekeepers around the world.

Indeed, this development—of Washington not playing an active role and Brazil taking up the mantle after Aristide's ouster—might suggest a larger shift. One could draw a parallel to the move that the U.S. government itself made at the turn of the twentieth century: just as the United States used its actions in Haiti as a springboard for its self-appointed role of regional policeman, the leadership-aspiring countries of South

America could be pursuing the same strategy using the same locale. The already mentioned editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* noted, "Among Latin American nations, Brazil sees itself as the natural leader in the region. It commands the world's eighth-largest economy and has a population greater than Russia's. Its populist president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, claims he won't let the U.S. use its 'big stick' in the region. And he's told his military that 'Brazil will be respected in the world only when it turns into an economic, technological, and military power.'" Under this analysis, Washington has created a vacuum by not being as present in Haiti as might have been expected.

Brazil has also been active in the region outside of the Haiti issue. President Lula has made it a diplomatic priority to more actively engage Suriname and Guyana, its Caricom neighbors. Though Brazil is arguably responsible

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for one of the Caribbean's current major economic and political dilemmas—the lowering of the guaranteed price paid for Caribbean sugar—it has sought to turn that seemingly ignominious position to political advantage by offering to help the region diversify its agricultural sector. Brazil has consistently maintained that its successful complaint to the World Trade Organization (WTO) against EU sugar subsidies, filed along with Thailand and Australia, was never intended to challenge preferential treatment for Caribbean countries, though the effect was exactly that.

In the context of Brazil's increased diplomatic and military presence in the Caribbean, it is therefore of marked significance that Jamaica recently announced plans to open an embassy there by mid-2006. Trinidad and Tobago has had an embassy in Brazil for decades, and Guyana and Suriname, which share borders with Brazil, have in the past had stronger relations with Brazil relative to the rest of the Caribbean. However, it is significant that, at this critical juncture in Brazilian and regional geopolitics, Jamaica should make such a decision. At the same time that its plans for a Brazilian embassy were announced, the Jamaican government disclosed imminent plans to open an embassy in South Africa, another new actor in the geopolitics of the Caribbean Basin.

South Africa's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council is but one indication of its current thrust for a greater say in world affairs, as should be expected given its rise to an economic and political leadership role in Africa in general. As the post-apartheid

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government has consolidated its new internationalist foreign policy, it has sought to strengthen its ties with African diasporic countries and communities, and chief among these have been the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean.

As yet another example of a new international actor increasing its presence in the region, India has at different levels extended and expanded its relations with the Caribbean. At the official level, in tandem with its overall greater assertiveness in the international arena, India has the potential to capitalize on its diasporic and diplomatic relations beyond Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. While at the unofficial level, the Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian-descended nationalist groups in Guyana have been developing important new political relationships.<sup>12</sup>

**GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF U.S. VIGILANCE OVER** its supposed “backyard,” and given that other actors are exploiting this new political space to establish relationships with Caribbean countries, what is the Caribbean to do in terms of its foreign policy amid these budding relationships? Cognizant of the failures of the 1970s, when attempts at bombastic foreign policies achieved little medium- or long-term developmental gains, small states are constrained by the international system. As Jeanne A.K. Hey writes, “Because of their relatively weak power base, small states act in passive and reactive modes, rather than as proactive agents of international change.”<sup>13</sup> At first glance it might seem a positive development that the United States’ position of global superpower might be in decline. Indeed, English-speaking Caribbean decision-makers widely acknowledge that the autonomy of sovereign states in the region has been subject to U.S. hegemonic constraints, the removal of which would be welcomed. And it inarguably suits Caribbean countries to broaden their diplomatic and especially their trade relationships beyond traditional ties with the United States and Europe, particularly since the bases of the European-Caribbean relationship steadily erode as agricultural trade preferences are removed. But Caribbean policymakers ought to be cautious and pragmatic in the enthusiasm with and the extent to which they pursue these relationships. The Caribbean’s proximity to the United States—the region’s largest and natural trading partner—should not be disregarded, and should in fact be exploited. A new development in this regard is the benefit to be had in the area of trade entrepôt possi-

Caricom leaders pictured with Fidel Castro in Havana, Cuba, on December 8, 2002, at the signing of the Havana Declaration, which deepened economic ties between Cuba and its Caribbean neighbors.

bilities, given new Homeland Security regulations that require that ships entering U.S. ports have a designated recipient on their cargo bill—something not required by the nearby Caribbean ports.



Countries like Jamaica, which arguably has a more activist bent in its foreign policy relative to the rest of the English-speaking Caribbean, appear to recognize the need to maintain some semblance of upholding the status quo while seeking to test its limits. One might interpret as a recent example of this the visit of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez to Jamaica in late August 2005. During the visit, Jamaica accepted a concessionary oil deal and other offers of assistance on the part of Venezuela. Then-Prime Minister P.J. Patterson was careful to make clear that the deals came “with no strings attached,” in an apparent attempt to weaken any appearance of “coziness” that might irk the United States.<sup>14</sup>

A truism of English-speaking Caribbean foreign policy priorities has long been the push towards regional integration, namely in the form of Caricom. In 2005 there was considerable and notable progress on two significant regional initiatives: the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, which was finally ratified as the Caribbean Single Market (CSM) in 2006. There have also been the beginnings of cooperation on the harmonization of regional immigration and security issues as the region prepares to host the 2007 Cricket World Cup, as well as regional anti-crime initiatives.

But a number of incidents in the past two years suggest that Caricom’s objective of foreign policy coordination is not only unfulfilled, but that member states are in many cases actively working at cross-purposes with that objective, despite the openings that now exist in the regional political economy. Evidence supporting this regrettable

conclusion includes disagreement within Caricom for a joint condemnation of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, discord among Caricom leaders over recognizing Haiti's interim government, the lack of a united position on the bilateral U.S. immunity agreements and, perhaps most concretely, Jamaica's unilateral opening of new diplomatic missions in three countries—Brazil, China and South Africa. In fact, some of the recent moves towards meaningful and functional regional cooperation—the regional security activities and the harmonization of immigration systems—have actually been prompted by the imperatives of the International Cricket Council or of U.S. and British anti-drug and anti-crime initiatives.

The dismissive analysis of scholars Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton comes to mind: Caribbean regionalism is

better described as regionalization, wherein Caribbean states are still not prepared to allow greater regional good to predominate over national concerns.<sup>15</sup> Small English-speaking Caribbean islands remain overly jealous of their individual sovereignty—to the detriment of the regionalist promise that many Caribbean leaders and intellectuals constantly talk about but have not yet committed to in real terms, particularly in the coordination of foreign policy. It is even more lamentable that this failure is occurring at the precise moment when the regional and international political status quo is at its most flexible, and when it appears the moment is opportune for collective vision and action towards a more autonomous and beneficial regional geopolitical environment. ■

## Peace Despite the Peacekeepers in Haiti

by Reed Lindsay

**I**N THE LAST TWO YEARS, HAITI'S democratically elected president was ousted by an armed band of "thugs," a coterie of unpopular elites took power, politically motivated violence and human rights abuses spun out of control in Port-au-Prince slums and the nation's already moribund economy inched closer to death. Without a doubt, hope had become a rare commodity in Haiti; that is, until René Préval won the February 7 presidential elections by a landslide margin. Haitians voted in droves, defying fears of violence, walking for miles to reach polling stations, waiting for hours in lines that stretched for blocks and enduring chaotic and disorganized voting centers. Suddenly, the gunfire and kidnappings that had haunted the streets of Port-au-Prince since the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004 were replaced with a tangible calm.

The elections were declared a resounding success by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (known by its French acronyms as Minustah), which had struggled to keep the country from slipping into violent chaos despite

facing increasingly strident critiques from both the poor and the rich. Préval's victory and the unexpected peace that came with it represented a vindication for the UN mission, which could now point to an irrefutable sign of progress for the first time since it arrived in June 2004.

"[Minustah Chief Juan Gabriel] Valdés opened up the political space for everybody to participate, not only the political parties but also the voters," said Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, who heads the UN's peacekeeping missions in Europe and Latin America. "This is a big achievement. The other major achievement was to assure a stable and secure environment to the extent that it was possible to hold elections."

But just what role did the UN mission play in bringing peace to Haiti? In fact, the long-awaited elections, the self-proclaimed crowning achievement of Minustah, coincided with a noticeable rise in resentment among the poor *against* the peacekeepers. Six days after the elections, Haitians seized city streets and highways throughout the country in protest of the electoral council's announcement that Préval's lead

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6. This latter trend was particularly significant in the Eastern Caribbean and gave the old labor parties (St. Lucia Labour Party, Dominica Labour Party, St. Vincent Unity Labour Party and others) new energy, leadership and a more progressive platform.
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### Peace Despite the Peacekeepers in Haiti

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