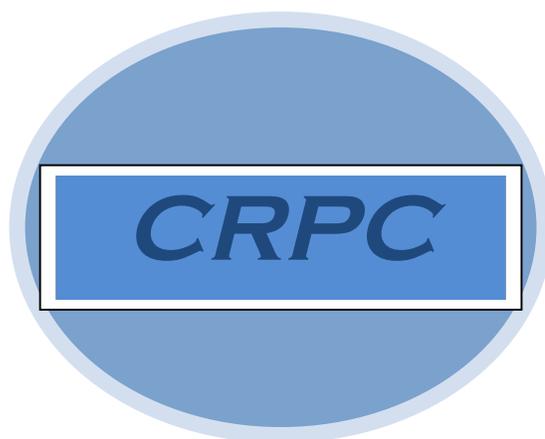


**SECURITY IMPERATIVES & COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN US–CARIBBEAN  
RELATIONS**

**By**

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**Security Imperatives & Cooperative Partnerships in US–Caribbean Relations**

by

**Ambassador Curtis A. Ward**

***I. Executive Summary***

1. Without a robust security capacity building program the countries of the Caribbean will become an area for easy transit for drug trafficking to the United States, Canada, and Western Europe; and increasingly so as the U.S. creates greater barriers to trafficking along the U.S.–Mexico border, including through the building of the proposed border wall between the two countries as promised by President Donald Trump.
2. Certain countries of the Caribbean will become increasingly vulnerable to radicalization and become fertile ground for recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters, which will require the U.S. government to increase intelligence sharing and intelligence personnel training and capacity-building in the Caribbean to protect U.S. national security and the region’s security.
3. It is a U.S. national security imperative to ensure its “third border” does not become vulnerable to exploitation by enemies of the United States to do harm to the U.S. Homeland, including to protect the integrity of the international supply chain and to prevent the smuggling of WMDs on ships and aircraft, from or through the region, bound for the United States.
4. Investing in Caribbean security and the strengthening of law enforcement capabilities in each country and regionally will stabilize and strengthen the rule of law and good governance and enhance each country’s capability to cooperate and collaborate with the United States in mutual legal assistance, in the investigation and prosecution of transnational criminal activities – drug trafficking, illicit arms trade, human trafficking, terrorism, and money laundering.
5. Ensuring political, social and economic stability is the foundation on which the security architecture of the countries of the region, and the region collectively, can be enhanced and sustained.
6. *The United States–Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016* (H.R. 4939) provides an important framework for strategic engagement between the United States Government

and the Governments of CARICOM member states to address crime and security issues, including the linkages with development issues affecting human security and citizen safety in the Caribbean, while also recognizing the nexus between Caribbean region security and United States national security.

7. Reduction in the level of U.S. assistance under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) program would weaken the security architecture of Caribbean countries and the region and weakens America's third border security, thus posing a threat to U.S. national security.
8. U.S. security assistance capacity-building programs in the Caribbean serve the mutual security interests of the United States and of the Caribbean region.
9. Regional security integration, while a desired objective, can be achieved only with significant security capacity-building assistance programs which targets national security capacity disparities across the region.
10. U.S. Government budget cuts targeting the Department of State, USAID, and the Treasury Department could significantly affect security-related U.S.–Caribbean capacity-building programs.
11. A proposed tax on Remittances to Caribbean countries will add pressure on Caribbean government's revenue sources thus affecting security-related expenditures, directly impacting the region's security and U.S. national security.

## **II. Introduction**

There are new and developing trends which portend grave danger to Caribbean societies. Increased drug trafficking through the region, the threat of diminishing security assistance, and signs of radicalization leading to violent extremism threatens Caribbean societies. Understanding what is at stake calls for proactive engagement, action if you will, to prevent further progression of what could develop into a dangerous level of risks to Caribbean security. The facts are quite ominous and it would be a mistake to dismiss this warning as alarmist. Forewarned is to be forearmed.

This brings into sharp focus *The United States–Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016* (H.R. 4939 (PL PUBLIC LAW 114–291—DEC. 16, 2016 (130 STAT. 1497))) which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 16, 2016. The provisions of H.R. 4939 provide a framework for addressing important issues in U.S.–Caribbean relations and provide a working

platform for developing and maintaining strategic partnerships and programs to address, *inter alia*, pressing security and law enforcement capacity deficiencies in the Caribbean region.

### ***III. The Case for Increased Security Capacity-Building***

For many Americans the Caribbean is a vacation destination of choice and Caribbean people have built a hospitable environment and first class tourism product in response. The nations of the Caribbean for decades have openly welcomed U.S. investors, and each country maintains a robust trade relationship with the United States to the advantage of the United States.

The Caribbean, also, is identified with its peoples' migration to the United States which has for more than a century contributed significantly to America's cultural, social, economic and political development. While tourism, investment, trade, and migration will continue to be of significant shared interests between the United States and the region, there are a number of other important issues of mutual interests which should be addressed on a continuing basis.

Among the priorities for strategic engagement are mutually beneficial security imperatives fueled in part by the challenges posed to the U.S. and the region by transnational criminal networks. These challenges are exacerbated by lack of the requisite capacity to prevent illicit arms trafficking, drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, and radicalization and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters from the region.

In order to deal effectively with these seemingly intractable problems, national and regional capacity building in intelligence, law enforcement, border control and security are required. The requisite capacities of each government and the region, collectively, including in maritime border security and countering transnational criminal networks are beyond the resources of each government individually, and of the region collectively. Security imperatives and cooperative partnerships are important pillars of present and future U.S.–Caribbean relations.

It is in the national security interest of the United States to ensure its third border does not become vulnerable to exploitation by enemies of the United States in order to do harm to the U.S. homeland. Therefore, securing Caribbean maritime space is an important part of U.S. national security strategy. This cannot be achieved without the full regional cooperation and partnerships with Caribbean countries. Building each country's security capacity to interdict and prevent drug traffickers and smugglers of contraband, including weapons of mass destruction targeting the United States and U.S. interests is an imperative.

Of equal importance is ensuring transnational crime does not weaken the prospects for national and regional economic growth; does not degrade each country's capacity to maintain

law and order; and does not allow corrupting influences to undermine rule of law and good governance anywhere in the region. Each country's capacity to provide mutual legal assistance in criminal matters is important to the U.S. justice system in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of transnational crimes, as well as terrorism.

Internationally acceptable security standards in airport and seaport in the facilitation of travel and the ability to protect the integrity of the international supply chain from contamination, including preventing the smuggling of WMDs aboard aircrafts or ships bound for the United States, are matters of grave concern to U.S. national security interests. There are constant demands by the United States on countries in the region to keep pace with evolving maritime and aviation security. In light of economic challenges, and lack of large cadre of well-trained human resources available to the region, it is important for the U.S. Government to provide and maintain capacity-building assistance in the security and law enforcement sectors.

Responses to these security challenges rely heavily on collaborative partnerships between the countries of the Caribbean region, individually and collectively, and the United States, as well as other traditional partners such as Canada and the United Kingdom. Thus future US–Caribbean partnerships in security and law enforcement will be highly dependent on maintaining and expanding the programs provided under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). While CBSI programs have already made significant differences in the security capacity of individual partner countries, it is important that continuity of these programs is maintained to meet evolving security threats. The security architecture of each country and the region collectively requires constant improvement in existing security programs, and resources must be available continuously in order to ensure gains already made are maintained and built upon.

#### ***IV. Why Continuous Strategic Engagement Matters – H.R. 4939***

*The United States–Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016 (H.R. 4939) provides a framework to “increase engagement with the governments of the Caribbean region ... in a concerted effort.”* According to Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY), coauthor of H.R. 4939 along with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), the law is “aimed at strengthening U.S. engagement in the Caribbean.” Also, Rep. Engel stressed the importance of the U.S. not losing sight of what is going on with America’ closest neighbors. Accordingly, Rep. Engel described H.R. 4939 as requiring “a new, long-term strategy to make sure” the U.S. government is “working closely with Caribbean countries on a range of shared concerns.”

These shared concerns – to the U.S. and the region – include security and the effects of transnational crime. This discussion focuses in particular on two of nine broad areas of mutual interests identified in H.R. 4939, inter alia:

1. U.S. support for “*security integration efforts in the Caribbean region*” and
2. U.S. support of efforts to “*reduce levels of crime and violence, curb the trafficking of illicit drugs, strengthen the rule of law, and improve citizen security.*”

### ***U.S. Strategic Engagement in the Caribbean***

Since 1962, United States geopolitical relationships broadened throughout the region as the former British colonies became newly independent nations responsible for their own security and external affairs. Over the past 55 years, succeeding U.S. governments have taken a keen interest in the security of the Caribbean region initially influenced in part by the Cold War and other possible external challenges faced by the newly independent countries. In the post-Cold War period to the present, the U.S. has focused primarily on a range of transnational organized criminal networks engaged in:

1. trafficking in illicit drugs – the Caribbean as a source (marijuana) and transit (cocaine) from South America to the U.S., Canada, and Europe;
2. money laundering, primarily proceeds of transnational crimes – illicit drug trafficking and related criminal activities, including corruption;
3. human trafficking – Caribbean countries as source, transit, or destination; and
4. illicit arms trafficking to the region, primarily from the United States.

In more recent years, there has been increasing concerns about radicalization and recruitment to terrorism, in particular recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters from the region joining ISIS (Da’esh or Islamic State) in Syria and Iraq. Foreign terrorist fighters returning to the Caribbean can be expected to pose future significant risks to their countries of origin, to the entire region, and to United States citizens (tourist and business visitors), as well as to U.S. owned assets in the Caribbean region.

In addition, U.S. suppression of Caribbean migration to the U.S. makes it increasingly difficult for Caribbean people to migrate to the U.S., or to visit for pleasure and to study at American tertiary institutions. Furthermore, since 1996, U.S. deportations of thousands of criminal aliens to the Caribbean have contributed significantly to rising crime rates across the region. U.S. immigration policies negatively impact Caribbean societies and Caribbean economic development, and increase pressure on each country’s law enforcement capacity and governments’ capabilities to ensure citizen security.

There have been several attempts at defining the importance of U.S.-Caribbean engagement. I will focus on those initiatives which began at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **1) *The Third Border Initiative***

In April 2001, President George W. Bush in partnership with Caribbean government leaders at the Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico launched the Third Border Initiative (TBI). Through the TBI then-President George W. Bush formally recognized the Caribbean as America's "third border."

The proposed TBI was intended originally as a U.S.-led partnership with its Caribbean neighbors that would facilitate and strengthen those nations' institutional capacities to deal with social and economic problems; to combat transnational crime, particularly illegal drug trafficking and illicit arms trade; and to promote regional security. The potential of the TBI was never realized; institutional capacity building of individual Caribbean nations and the region has not kept pace with regional security and law enforcement needs, including the evolution of transnational criminal networks in a globalized environment.

Like other subsequent security-related initiatives in the region, the TBI was grossly under-resourced. Institutional deficiencies not only remained but security capacities nationally and regionally are more pronounced as current regional and global threats have been evolving at a pace well beyond the pace of security capacity building programs.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on the United States, successive U.S. administrations have required Caribbean governments to increase significantly security screening in Caribbean airports and seaports to guard against terrorists using the Caribbean to gain access to the U.S. homeland; to protect civil aviation; or to smuggle WMDs onboard ships or aircraft destined for U.S. seaports and airports. In this post-9/11 context, the TBI vision was broadened to include enhancement of the region's capacity for U.S.–Caribbean cooperation in dealing with potential terrorist threats.

The governments of the United States, the CARICOM states, and the Dominican Republic, in January 2004, issued a joint statement emphasizing security and counter-terrorism in U.S.–Caribbean relations. This statement remains quite relevant and appropriate to deal with the current situation. Very specific in intent, the joint statement identified the problems and suggests a future course for U.S.–Caribbean partnership, as follows:

*"We are further bound by a determination to protect our region from terrorists and criminals who would destroy our way of life and by a belief that terrorist acts, such as the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, represent a serious threat to international peace and our hemispheric security*

*and require our governments to continue our efforts to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism. We recognize our interdependence and the importance of close cooperation to combat new and emerging transnational threats that endanger the very fabric of our societies. By virtue of their small size and geographic configuration and lack of technical and financial resources, Caribbean States are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to these risks and threats, especially those posed by illicit trafficking in persons, drugs, and firearms, terrorism, and other transnational crimes.”*

Following this statement, Caribbean governments looked to the United States to provide the technical assistance and financial resources necessary for them to build their overall security capacity to deal with crime which were in large part fueled by the drug trade through the region, and the illicit arms trade to the region. However, the security capacity-building promises of the TBI were not realized, as U.S. security-related assistance was concentrated primarily in drug interdiction with some attention in the post-9/11 period paid to migration control, and to airport and seaport security enhancement. Very little attention has been paid to interdiction of illicit arms trafficking to the Caribbean region. One underlying issue is the lack of political will on the part of the U.S. Government and inadequate financial resources to address this issue.

## **2) *Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)***

In 2009, at the Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, President Barack Obama sought to improve U.S. security engagement with the region, including institutional capacity-building of the security and law enforcement sectors, by announcing the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). President Obama committed “to deepen regional security cooperation ... in an integrated effort that includes the other citizen security initiatives in the Hemisphere.”

According to the stated objectives of the CBSI, the program is “*A shared Regional Security Partnership*” in which the United States and the countries of the Caribbean would work together to combat the drug trade and other transnational crimes threatening regional security. The CBSI is regarded as the United States, CARICOM member states, and the Dominican Republic working together to improve citizen safety throughout the Caribbean region. The CBSI is a significant element of U.S. national security imperatives on its third border based on partnerships in a collaborative framework with Caribbean governments.

Undoubtedly, the CBSI has contributed significantly to security and law enforcement capacity in participating Caribbean countries and in the region generally. However, CBSI should

be expanded, and increased U.S. funding of CBSI programs is required to ensure effective future security capacity-building; and the U.S. government should commit more resources to training and equipping each country's law enforcement and security sectors.

Since 2010, when the CBSI was launched by President Obama as a joint regional security program, U.S. funding for the programs has not achieved a sufficient level to satisfy the security demands of the entire region. In the first year of the program, the Congress cut in half the original appropriations requested by the Obama administration to fund the CBSI, thus the program has been underfunded since its inception.

Like any other country, and, in particular, as a global super power, the United States, first and foremost, prioritizes its own national security; and U.S. security assistance programs are linked. Drug trafficking through the region is a major problem for the United States, as it is a major driver of crime which threatens the security and stability of Caribbean countries. Despite being under-resourced, the CBSI is fulfilling some of its original aims to assist countries in the region to build security capacity to deal with drug trafficking and related criminal activities. However, there is still much to be done. Any reduction of current funding levels for the CBSI would adversely affect the security capacity of the region, and the threats to U.S. national security emanating from or transiting the region will increase exponentially.

### ***3) Increased Threat from TOC and Violent Extremism – SouthCom's Perspective***

The threat to Caribbean security comes from two unrelated fronts –

- i.* transnational organized crime (TOC), in particular, drug trafficking through the region is trending upwards even as interdiction capacity could be adversely affected by decreases in security assistance from the United States; and
- ii.* there is an alarming increase in violent extremism in the region and elsewhere sparked by the propaganda machinery of the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) or Da'esh (aka IS or ISIS).

These imminent threats to the region's security were placed on the agenda of United States–Caribbean security partnerships by General John F. Kelly, then U.S. Marine Corps Commander of U.S. Southern Command (SouthCom), in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) on March 12, 2015. (*Gen. Kelly is now Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security in President Trump's administration.*) Gen. Kelly's dire warning to the U.S. Congress of these impending threats on the U.S. "third border" was made in the context of the deleterious effects of sequestration—cuts in U.S. defense budget allocations—on SouthCom's capacity to protect the United States from transnational organized crime.

For reasons related to Gen. Kelly's access to superior intelligence from U.S. national and military intelligence services (U.S. Intelligence Community) not available to Caribbean countries, I rely heavily on his unclassified briefing of the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2015 to highlight some of these security issues.

It is ironic that, while Gen. Kelly praised regional governments for their partnerships and cooperation on security matters, in particular countering drug trafficking from and through the region, as well as countering other transnational organized crimes, United States assistance for security capacity-building will be reduced in the future should the U.S. Congress fail to ameliorate the effects of sequestration on future security-related programs, or if the proposed President Trump administration's budget cuts on the State Department, in particular, are approved by the U.S. Congress.

On the other hand, Gen. Kelly was quite pleased with the progress being made in the region to build countering transnational organized crime (CTOC) capacity and wished to see these programs receive adequate funding in the future. At a time when United States security is threatened from so many disparate sources, Gen. Kelly said the effect of sequestration would be a "catastrophe," putting SouthCom out of business in helping countries in the region.

In his statement to the SASC and in a press conference he held subsequently at the Pentagon, General Kelly explained the need for increased rather than decreased resources to deal with the drug trafficking trends in the Caribbean. We are aware, already, of drug trafficking through the Caribbean moving in an upward trajectory, as more resources target drug trafficking networks in Central America and Mexico. The greater the interdiction successes in that region, the greater will be the transfer to drug trafficking routes through the Caribbean which would be considered a route of least resistance.

According to Gen. Kelly, with sequestration, the military (SouthCom) was not and would not be able to effectively interdict drug trafficking through the region. Further, transnational organized criminal networks pose a direct threat to the stability of Caribbean and other regional partners and pose "an insidious risk to the security" of the United States. In this regard, the forward security of the United States which extends out from the immediate borders of the United States throughout the hemisphere into the Caribbean would be severely impacted.

These programs could be further impacted by proposed cuts in the State Department's 2018 budget. With a proposed 28% cut in the State Department's budget, CBSI and related programs can expect to be cut at least proportionately.

U.S. leaders, rather than eschewing warnings of the growing security threats, should embrace Gen. Kelly's counsel on security issues in the region—America's "third border," and the significant collateral security implications for the U.S. Homeland. When speaking as Commander of SouthCom, his opinion mattered. That is, should the U.S. government fail to increase current levels of support, or should current levels of support be reduced due to sequestration or budget cuts, the risks to U.S. and Caribbean security will increase accordingly. It is now Gen. Kelly's responsibility as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to ensure the viability of Caribbean security programs in order to protect the U.S. Homeland.

#### ***4) Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the Caribbean***

Gen. Kelly, in issuing his warning of impending cuts in security assistance to the region, also highlighted the importance of maintaining and building on current security partnerships between the United States and Caribbean nations. Despite the high level of relevance of his warning in 2015, it is even more relevant today than it was then. Recruitment in the region to terrorism has increased significantly since then.

Experience shows that countering violent extremism is not merely a law enforcement or military response but requires a whole of government approach that takes into consideration all conditions conducive and attractive to vulnerable individuals in becoming radicalized. As President Obama stated, during his countering violent extremism (CVE) conference in Washington in February 2015, "Efforts to counter violent extremism will only succeed if citizens can address legitimate grievances through the democratic process and express themselves through strong civil societies." He stated further, that "Those efforts must be matched by economic, educational and entrepreneurial development so people have hope for a life of dignity." America can play a positive supporting role in helping Caribbean nations pursue such an approach.

Furthermore, there are already good processes beyond law enforcement solutions being employed by the United States and other countries to counter radicalization and thereby preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). These practices and processes must be shared by the U.S. with countries in the region faced with this new phenomenon. Additional resources should be made available to Caribbean nations to improve their capabilities to deal with the social and economic issues which have the potential to contribute to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism in the region. H.R. 4939 provides a vehicle within the framework of strategic engagement on security and law enforcement to develop P/CVE programs in the Caribbean region.

In the context of future threats, enhancing CTOC programs and building Caribbean

nations' capacities to engage in effective P/CVE programs jointly will serve the interests of the United States and the interests of the Caribbean region. As Gen. Kelly explained to the SASC, radicalized individuals traveling from the Caribbean to Syria may return at some point more radicalized and better trained in explosives and weaponry than before they left the region; and they will have established ties to other international Muslim extremists and possibly return with intent to do harm in the hemisphere. The conclusion is that these individuals could use the Caribbean as point of entry, using human smuggling routes to enter the United States and threaten U.S. national security.

In emphasizing the violent extremist threat to the region and by extension to U.S. national security interests, Gen. Kelly pointed to what he described as "Sunni extremists...actively involved in the radicalization of converts and other Muslims in the region and also provide financial and logistical support to terrorist organizations within and outside Latin America." According to Gen. Kelly, "partner nation officials throughout the region have expressed concern over the increasing number of suspected Islamic extremists from the hemisphere who are travelling to Syria to participate in jihad." He noted that some take part in weapons training before departing for Syria, citing a case of some 19 Muslims from a Caribbean island who were detained in Venezuela in 2014 for "conducting training with high-powered weapons."

Gen. Kelly also posited in 2015 that just under a 100 individuals had already left the Caribbean region to fight in Syria. This revelation should raise the level of concern across the region. In the past year, this number has been upgraded to in excess of 200 recruits from the region.

Gen. Kelly further pointed out that Caribbean nations lack capabilities, a clear reference to the region's intelligence capacity, to track such individuals. This reality provides yet another reason why sequestration and budget cuts should not be allowed to affect the level of security assistance programming in the Caribbean. It also highlights the importance of intelligence capacity-building in the region. The greatest threat to the United States and to the region will be if, and when these foreign terrorist fighters return to the region.

#### ***5) Intelligence Sharing – Capacity and Trust***

Intelligence sharing is an important element in the strategic engagement of the U.S. with Caribbean countries. Intelligence plays an essential role in security sector cooperation and collaboration. The level of information and intelligence sharing, and the capacity of Caribbean countries' security and law enforcement sectors to process and use actionable intelligence is a significant determinant in the security of the region and protection of U.S. interests in the

region.

The U.S. intelligence community is by far the most sophisticated in the world with the highest level of training and technical capabilities. Vast differences exist in the capacity and sophistication of U.S. intelligence community (IC) and the intelligence services of Caribbean countries. The intelligence process, which begins with information gathering by the United States IC, takes many forms through the use of several different collection methods – including human intelligence, signals intelligence, geospatial intelligence, and open source intelligence, to name a few. This is matched by highly technical information processing and analyses to arrive at actionable intelligence. Such intelligence is highly sensitive and the U.S. is selective about how intelligence is shared with other countries.

The level of sharing is concomitant with the level of trust and the capacity of the recipient country to use intelligence responsibly. The intelligence capacities of Caribbean countries pale in comparison with that of the U.S., thus Caribbean law enforcement and security sectors are obliged to rely heavily on intelligence and security-related information shared with them by the U.S. and other partners.

It is unrealistic to believe the U.S. shares everything it knows about security risks and threats to each country and to the Caribbean region. Uninhibited sharing of intelligence compromises intelligence and degrades its effectiveness. Sharing of intelligence is based on trust in the capacity of the recipient to treat intelligence with a very high degree of care. Intelligence sharing is an area in which U.S. cooperation with countries of the region could be improved significantly. In that regard, the U.S. should commit to building the information-gathering and intelligence analysis capacities of each country in conjunction with promoting good governance throughout the region to raise the trust level. This would result in intelligence sharing that more effectively contributes to each country's and the region's security and law enforcement, which in turn would inure to the mutual security benefits of the U.S. and the region.

Successful drug interdiction programs rely heavily on information gathering and analysis and actionable intelligence. In this regard, Gen. Kelly lamented the fact that SouthCom's ability to gather and share information was already affected by underfunded surveillance and intelligence capacities. Accordingly, Gen. Kelly confirmed that "sequestration will likely eviscerate (American) already limited ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) capacity." Gen. Kelly pointed out that budget reductions will "affect all aspects of (American) operations and engagements with (American) partner nations, including capacity-building activities, multinational exercises, information operations, interagency support, and (American)

ability to respond to crises or contingencies.” These are all areas of collaboration the Caribbean region can least afford to lose.

Intelligence sharing and the capacity of Caribbean countries to use such intelligence effectively will be of particular importance in dealing with the recruitment of foreign fighters from the region and, most importantly the problem posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters. Being able to identify and track their activities will be critical to future security in the region and to the security of the U.S. Homeland.

#### **6) *The Security-Development Nexus***

In the context of H.R. 4939, which calls for U.S. support of efforts to “*reduce levels of crime and violence, curb the trafficking of illicit drugs, strengthen the rule of law, and improve citizen security*”, I refer to a 2007 World Bank/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime joint report which underscored the negative impact of crime and violence on development of Caribbean countries, due in part to a lack of adequate security. The report noted that crime and violence present one of the paramount challenges to development in the Caribbean. Subsequent experiences suggest this trend continues literally unabated.

The insecurity that the report refers to is directly linked to the deleterious effects of drug trafficking and illicit arms trade on the region. Most importantly, the report stated emphatically that Caribbean states cannot solve the problems of crime and security on their own because of the vast amount of technical and financial resources required. It concluded in part that CARICOM (Caribbean Community) states require significant security capacity-building support from OECD countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) to do so.

Both the TBI and the CBSI are two initiatives which sought to partner with Caribbean countries to reduce the threats to citizen security. The CBSI, in particular have made some strides which must be built upon. H.R. 4939 in its mandate identifies the important linkages between crime and security and development. It provides a vehicle for cooperation and collaboration in developing meaningful partnerships between the United States and its Caribbean partners, individually and collectively.

#### **7) *Remittances to the Caribbean contribute to the region’s security***

Human security in the Caribbean region depends heavily on remittances from the Caribbean diaspora communities, particularly in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The bulk of diaspora remittances originate in the United States and the earners of funds remitted are already taxed by the federal and state governments. Double taxation on already taxed

savings would diminish the level of remittances to the Caribbean. This would be a retrograde step in enhancing human security and citizen safety in the Caribbean.

Reduction in remittances impacts significantly the GDP of Caribbean countries thereby reducing available resources for security and law enforcement. Reduction in annual remittances would affect all Caribbean countries adversely and perhaps even more so CARICOM's most populous member states – Jamaica and Haiti, as remittances contribute approximately 16% to these countries' GDP. A tax on remittances is likely to result in reduction of remittance flows, or at the least force remitters to abandon the formal regulated financial transfer facilitators for informal money transfer methods. Unregulated money transfer vehicles create a space for the movement of illicitly gained cash and promote money laundering.

H.R. 1813, a Bill introduces in the House to impose a 2% tax on remittances to Latin American and Caribbean countries, is a very bad idea. Reduction in remittances not only affects the economic well-being of Caribbean citizens, it reduces Caribbean government's available resources for security and law enforcement. H.R. 1813 is anathema to U.S. national security.

## **V. Conclusions**

Like any other country, and, in particular, as a super power, the United States, first and foremost, prioritizes its own national security interests. Thus, U.S. foreign security assistance programs are extensions of its national security priorities. Transnational threats, such as drug trafficking and other criminal enterprises operating in and through the Caribbean, pose significant threats to the U.S. Homeland. This threat is exacerbated by radicalization and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) by ISIS; and the anticipated return of FTFs to the region creates further urgency and new dynamics for security cooperation and security capacity-building in the region.

The CBSI program, the current principal vehicle for U.S. security and law enforcement capacity-building in the region, is critical to future Caribbean security and protection of the U.S. third border. H.R. 4939 provides a unique opportunity for strategic engagement and to build upon the valued partnerships and programs, such as the CBSI, which serve the mutual security interests of the United States and the Caribbean region. Any attempt to diminish CBSI and similar programs through any means must be rejected without reservation.

Building security and law enforcement capacities, promoting human security and ensuring citizen safety, protection of human rights, rule of law and good governance are important to the United States and its Caribbean partners. Diminution of security and law enforcement capacity-building will create space for transnational organized criminal enterprises and create

instability in the region.

Caribbean security integration as an ultimate outcome can be realized, but only after addressing the significant incongruent nature of the security capacity of individual countries. It is also important for the U.S. Government to commit resources to build the intelligence capacity of individual nations in the region in order to take advantage of two-way sharing of intelligence on security threats to the region and to the U.S. Homeland.

What is clear is that there must be continuity and expansion of CBSI programs as well as programs which seek to promote human security and citizen safety.

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