

# The United States' Post-9/11 Circum-Caribbean 'Smart Power' Strategy: Continuity or Change?\*

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**Rabidas, Ujjwal (2014) "The United States' Post-9/11 Circum-Caribbean 'Smart Power' Strategy: Continuity or Change?"**

## ABSTRACT

It is argued that with the end of the Cold War the United States adopted a strategy of 'pragmatism' to engage with its immediate neighbours in the Circum-Caribbean region once the 'threat of communism' had ceased to exist. While developments with wider significance have been decisive in the relations between the Circum-Caribbean states and the United States, what followed after the events of 11 September 2001? Several studies have been conducted to explain the post-9/11 Circum-Caribbean-United States dynamics. This work examines a further dimension in the debate by asking if the United States' strategy of 'smart power' is evolving in a way that cleverly combines the 'hard' and 'soft' facets of diplomacy, and what the relatively long-term trend in the Circum-Caribbean-United States relations suggests –continuity or change– when the United States, as it appears, has smartly intertwined business interests with security considerations in the region.

**Key Words:** Circum-Caribbean-United States relations, Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine, 9/11, homeland security, smart power strategy

## INTRODUCTION

As soon as the United States began to face the adverse consequences of its subprime crisis, it started sending somewhat curious signs of policy

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\* My gratefulness to the three anonymous reviewers whose critical comments have been helpful in revising the earlier draft.

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consideration towards its immediate neighbours in the Circum-Caribbean. The American President Barack Obama, for instance, unveiled the Washington's desire to seek a 'new beginning' with Cuba during the Organisation of American States' (OAS) Fifth Summit in April 2009 in Port-of-Spain, the capital city of Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequently, the 31 January 1962 suspension of Cuban OAS membership was lifted by the 39<sup>th</sup> OAS General Assembly on 3 June 2009.<sup>1</sup> Noting the American concessions to Cuba, *Latin American Perspectives* had the following to state:

Restrictions on family travels, remittances, and telecommunications have been loosened, progress has been made in limited areas such as mail service, and in January 2011 the White House announced the easing of Bush-administration restrictions on educational and cultural exchanges with the island. Broadly hailed as a significant restoration of Clinton-era rules for academic, educational, and cultural engagement with Cuba, the new regulations also permit the sending of nonfamily remittances and opening of more airports for flights to Cuba (*Latin American Perspectives* 2011a, 16).

Barely three months after that concession, democratically elected President of Honduras, Jose Manuel Zelaya was dethroned by the Honduran military in June 2009. This military coup invited condemnation from various sovereign entities and multilateral bodies like the United Nations, the European Union, and by every member of OAS excluding only the United States. Soon the OAS suspended its Honduran membership on 5 July 2009; it however readmitted the country on 1 June 2011.

Again in the OAS Summit of 2009, Obama announced the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a drug policy towards the region; and is said to be focused on 'citizen's safety'. The Initiative has identified three core security objectives: reducing illicit trafficking, advancing public safety and security, and promoting social justice (US Department of State 2011).<sup>2</sup>

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1 The OAS General Assembly on its "Resolution on Cuba" [AG/RES. 2438 (XXXIX-O/09)] resolved:

1. That Resolution VI, adopted on January 31, 1962, at the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which excluded the Government of Cuba from its participation in the Inter-American system, hereby ceases to have effect in the Organization of American States (OAS).
  2. That the participation of the Republic of Cuba in the OAS will be the result of a process of dialogue initiated at the request of the Government of Cuba, and in accordance with the practices, purposes, and principles of the OAS (OAS 2011b).
- 2 1. Reduce Illicit Trafficking: through programs ranging from counternarcotics to reducing the flow of illegal arms/light weapons. 2. Advance Public Safety and Security: through programs ranging from reducing crime and violence to improving border security. 3.

Several years before these developments, the United States was attacked in its *homeland* on 11 September 2001 (widely known as 9/11). After the attack, the American academic and policy circles could be seen attempting to invent new ways of engagement with the world; and the economic crisis after the attack was a further compulsion for such inventions. One such suggested way was 'smart power' strategy (Nossel 2004; Wilson 2008; Nye 2004; 2008; 2009; CSIS 2007) which was subsequently viewed to be employed in the Circum-Caribbean.

Louis Perez (1982, 167) once noted that the 50 mile strip of land in Panama had become as vital to the national interests and international aspirations of the United States as the 100 mile stretch of water in the Florida Channel has been to Spain. Expressing differently, Andrew Axline (1988, 215) wrote that the Caribbean received at least as much attention from the major world powers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as it did during the Cold War. After the Cold War the American President Bill Clinton proclaimed in 1997 in Guyana that the United States is a 'Caribbean state' (Payne 1998). After 9/11, Clinton was followed by his successor George Bush, Jr. declaring the Circum-Caribbean 'third border' of the United States in Canada (Nafey 2004, 25).<sup>3</sup> The tail of Florida definitely reaches the Caribbean Basin adjacent to the Bahamas; none of the known Circum-Caribbean or American literature has defined the United States as a Circum-Caribbean state either geographically or historically or culturally. Similarly, the visual cartography of the region, excluding Mexico, does not validate any of its part as a border of America. Was the post-9/11 'smart power' strategy, then, was a further wing of Clinton's aspiration to Caribbeanise the United States and Bush's wish to carve a 'third border'? This work is an effort to portrait the Circum-Caribbean-United States significance of 'smart power' strategy while examining what this strategy suggests 'continuity or break' in the American behavioural-pattern towards the region.

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Promote Social Justice: through programs designed to promote justice sector reform, combat government corruption, and assist vulnerable populations at risk of recruitment into criminal organizations (US Department of State 2011).

3 The thesis of 'third border', however, was not an original articulation of the Bush administration. The phrase was used in earlier literature as well. Anthony Maingot, for example, used the phrase in 1985 in an article. He wrote, '[...] United States policy towards the Caribbean was, and is, premised on the belief that the rapidity of changes in the region makes it a critical 'third border' of the United States' (Maingot 1985, 314).

## 9/11, HOMELAND SECURITY AND ITS CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN PROJECTION

In response to the ‘terrorist’ events of 11 September, the United States had enacted the Homeland Security Act (HSA) in November 2002. The Act was seen in that country as an overhauling of the political administration and was also argued to be the triumph of the New Public Management to catch up with countries like New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Moynihan 2005, 171-173). Subsequently, different facets of homeland security were widely discussed in the public administration literature. *Public Administration Review*, journal of the American Society for Public Administration, for example, published a special report in March/April 2002, followed by a special issue in September the same year. Simultaneously, substantial efforts were put together to link the enactment of the Act with the events of 9/11. ‘It is the administrative response’, wrote Donald Moynihan (2005, 171), ‘to the emergence of a new government function, the systemic threat of terrorism’. According to Frank Thompson (2002, 18), a fundamental question in the wake of the 11 September is how the four key functions associated with homeland security [and the HSA] – prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery – will be performed. In his own words:

*prevention* refers to the activities designed to reduce the inclination and ability of individuals to commit terrorism; *preparedness*, efforts to develop the plans and capacity needed to respond effectively to terrorist attacks, should they take place; *response*, the immediate actions taken by public activities, private parties, and citizens to limit injury, death, physical damage, and impairment of critical societal functions when an attack occurs; and *recovery*, taking the short-and long-term steps needed to rebuild, restore, and revitalise the area subject to terrorist assault economically and in other ways (emphases in original), (Thompson 2002, 18).

In addition to the terror-driven emergencies, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is further tasked with breaking the links between illegal drug-trafficking and terrorism (Moynihan 2005, 181).<sup>4</sup> While these all are meant to secure the homeland, Freedberg did not see the division between ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’ of any significance. He thought that now

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4 As it is evident from the works of Ivelaw Griffith (1993; 1993/1994; 2003), drug-trafficking and terrorism constitute major contents in the American policy towards the Caribbean Basin.

it is only a tightly interconnected world of dangers. It is tumbling down of the walls of division of labour between different departments and administrative levels (Freedberg 2001; Wise 2002, 144). After all, the attack on America had taken place in its 'homeland'. As Moynihan (2005) indicated, the implications of 9/11 were said to be so profound that the American academic and policy circles did not appear to conceptually distinguish between trading narcotic substances and an act of terrorism. But among all these, the gravest concern of trade-offs between liberty and security remained thick in the post-9/11 American society (Dempsey 2001-2002; Haque 2002, 170).

The direct causal-links, however, between 9/11 and HSA does not remain without reservations. 9/11 was also interpreted as an opportunity for the White House to have the homeland security codified in order to overcome a highly stable policy subsystem and achieve pre-existing public management policy to the issue image of security (Moynihan 2005, 173). Moreover, various proposals had emanated from commissions and committees that studied the problem of terrorism and thus the debate over the appropriate organizational structure to combat that problem preceded 9/11 (Wise 2002, 131).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Office of Homeland Security had already come into being in October 2001 before the HSA was enacted.

How to then proceed with an understanding of the American security architecture in the Circum-Caribbean context, when there are significant reservations in straightening the causal-links between 9/11 and the American security preparedness in its homeland? Taking note of such reservations and keeping in mind the United States' recent drug initiatives and policies towards Cuba and Honduras, a one-line rejoinder is unlikely to suffice. It rather calls for few considerations to take up as there are layers of issues in the post-9/11 political scene.

## **Ending Bipartisanship?**

The American policy gestures towards the Circum-Caribbean states seem to have vacillated with party-lines as well as with changes in government in Washington. Buttressing this impression, Julia Buxton (2011, 29) notes:

The goals of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America are seen to be limited

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5 It is to be noted that several of the Wise's ideas have found place in homeland security management of the US federal government that he expressed in his special report published in *Public Administration Review* in March/April 2002.

to the defense and promotion of an ill-defined “national interest”, but divergence can be seen in the ways presidents have interpreted, defended, and pursued this interest. This is traditionally accounted for through partisanship.

Robert Pastor had a similar notion. He thought that the Democratic Party has shown ‘democratic’ behaviour, whereas the Republican Party has been relatively inhospitable. In Pastor’s own words:

The tie connecting the U.S. government to its businesses overseas has been more intimate during Republican administrations than during Democratic ones. Democratic preferred to support national planning, multilateralism, and social reforms more than Republicans, who more often stressed private investment, “the magic of the marketplace”, removal of the state from the economy, and unilateral approaches (Pastor 2001, 316; Buxton 2011, 29).

Buxton (2011, 30) thus further notes that the Republican approach to the region has been of using ‘sticks’ whereas the Democrats have preferred ‘carrots’.

By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, however, such bipartisan impression began to fade up probably because of rising weight of immigration, drug, and other security issues in the American policy (Buxton 2011, 31). But the bipartisan concern, nonetheless important as a consideration, offers a less than partial explanation that why the American post-9/11 strategy would shoot differently with three or more heads in the Circum-Caribbean.

## **Reviving Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine?**

Can a quick revisit to the Monroe Doctrine and its Roosevelt Corollary help appreciate the scene after 9/11?

American pronouncement of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 preceded much before its victory in the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898 with which the American great power status prevailed in the Western Hemisphere. Yet, the pronouncement seemed to have plainly conveyed to the European colonists that the United States was determined to have the Hemisphere in its purview. It was a warning as well to them that now an effort to recolonize any part of the Hemisphere would be seen as an aggression; and would invite American intervention. Though the Doctrine was viewed as an early ‘post-colonial’ hemispheric policy of the United States and was apparently welcomed by the Latin American

and Caribbean states; it had seeds of ascendancy that subsequently got showered after America had decisively challenged the Spaniards in 1898. Its grip was steadily coalesced in the Hemisphere after the Roosevelt Corollary was appended to the Doctrine in 1904.<sup>6</sup>

The American homeland security preparedness along with the HSA enactment and its Circum-Caribbean projection had a larger inventive background of the violent threat eruption of 9/11. That background had been of far significance for the Circum-Caribbean-United States relations than that of the European naval blockade of Venezuela as i) America still stands as a relatively unchallenged major military power of the world with a cold-warrior's 'victory-tag' that precedes barely two decades; ii) 9/11 was the first ever witnessed direct attack in the modern American homeland whose visual images are in constant circulation around the globe with a measured civilizational palpitation; iii) the Circum-Caribbean region is a habitat of people with all colours, creeds, and ethnic stocks as well as is a place with characteristic socio-economic vulnerabilities; and iv) the United States perceives the Circum-Caribbean region as its 'third border' and, as Perez (1982) and Axline (1988) observed, has been –and continues to be– strategically vital for all the hitherto great or super powers.

Thus, a 'reviving Roosevelt Corollary' consideration of the above context of differently shooting heads of America in the region seems to concede that it may be trying to engage with the region unconventionally in the changing global circumstances. Therefore, there are few recent attempts to comprehend the changing scene as the American 'smart power' strategy in the Circum-Caribbean.

## **'Smart Power' Strategy?**

Suzanne Nossel (2004, 131), for example, wrote, 'The unparalleled strength of the United States, the absence of great-power conflict, the fears aroused by September 11, and growing public scepticism of the Bush administration's militarism have created a political opening for a cogent, visionary alternative to the president's foreign policy'; and in Nossel's

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6 The Corollary of 1904 was a further demonstration of the United States' 'right to intervene' in the matters involving the hemispheric nations in the case of 'chronic wrongdoings'. It is useful to remind that Venezuela's refusal to pay foreign debts and damages suffered by European citizens in its civil war and consequent European naval blockade of Venezuela in 1902-1903 were the inventive background of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

view, that alternative is becoming a 'smart power'. Nossel (2004, 138) further outlined the alternative option of smart power with the view that '[...] knowing that the United States's own hand is not always its best tool: U.S. interests are furthered by enlisting others on behalf of U.S. goals, through alliances, international institutions, careful diplomacy, and the power of ideals'. Simultaneously, Joseph Nye, Jr. (2004, 270) in the concluding remark of his article "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy" too suggested that success of the United States depends upon becoming a 'smart power' by developing a deeper understanding of the role of 'soft power' and balancing it with 'hard power'. Nye latter expanded his idea in "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power" (2008) followed by "Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power" (2009). Therefore, with an agenda of reclaiming the liberal international order (Nossel 2004), the United States' post-9/11 smart power strategy seeks to combine all forms of diplomacy along with retaining coercive force in foreign policy consideration.

Thus, according to a view expressed by the *Latin American Perspectives* (2011b, 10-11), the United States' condemnation of the Honduran military coup would have triggered section 7008 of its own Foreign Operations Law requiring the termination of most of its assistance to Honduras. Instead, it continued to have close relations with Honduran military including with the Honduran officers at the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation. This is a further direct violation of Article 2(b) of the Charter of the OAS which states that one of its purposes is 'to promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention' (OAS 2011a). Though Obama had committed during his first presidential campaign that he wanted to open a new chapter of cooperation and partnership to promote democracy, opportunity, and security across the Western Hemisphere and work for the common challenges like global warming, drug-trafficking, and terrorism (Obama 2008a), such an American (in)action towards Honduras and its gesture of 'new beginning' towards Cuba are apparently incongruous. Yet, the United States went on to announce the CBSI drug policy in the OAS Summit because, as the US Department of State (2011) would write, it is committed 'to broad partnerships that advance citizen safety signals that the U.S. understands that while security is a key priority throughout the region, people often understand security in a *personal way* on their street corners, on a bus to and from work, or in their markets' (emphasis added). It is however debatable whether the CBSI is a security partnership or it further heightens the insecurity-vulnerability image of the Circum-Caribbean region by bringing market areas, means of

transportation, and the street corners into its ambit. The United States launched the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) in 2010. It is another leg of the CBSI and its significance is to be read along with other preceding counter-narcotic policies like the Merida Initiative (2008) for Mexico and Central America, and the Plan Colombia (1998) for the Andean region with Colombia in focus; thus causing the apprehension whether the most recent drug initiatives complete the American process of securitization of the entire Circum-Caribbean region –the American ‘third border’– in the wake of the post-9/11 ‘homeland security’ preparedness. A consorted comprehension of the developments corroborates the notion that a strategy of smart power is in function between the Circum-Caribbean-United States and it is manifested in both the academic and policy circles. Resonance of this strategy could further be evidently observed during Hillary Clinton’s 13 January 2009 Senate confirmation hearing when she said, ‘We must use what has been called smart power –the full range of tools at our disposal– diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural – picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation’ (CBS News 2009); and Clinton’s words were again reflected in the Circum-Caribbean just few months after her Senate hearing when Obama shot three different lines of diplomacy in different directions in the region between April and June 2009.

## **‘SMART POWER’ STRATEGY AGES CENTURY**

What, therefore, the post-9/11 ‘smart power’ projection in the Circum-Caribbean region suggests –continuity or change– in the United States’ perceptions and policies towards the region? While disputing the post-9/11 standing of the strategy, this work further argues that ‘smart power’ is one among various policies that America has been devising since long to engage with its immediate neighbours in that region, whereas the American goal to secure its ‘area of influence’ continues without alteration.

The United States’ 1898 victory, for example, had decisively established its exclusive command over the Circum-Caribbean region as well as over the entire Western Hemisphere. It was not just an end of the Spanish jurisdiction but, as Louis Perez (1982, 167) would note, was rebirth of exclusivism over the region under the American aegis. With this, no significant rival was left to confront the American ‘right to guard’ the hemispheric waters; and since then its strategies with various shades could

be watched that had been employed to shepherd the 1898 victory by exploiting the events with wider significance. The strategies have acquired more visibility in the Circum-Caribbean as this region is studded with small and micro states which are characteristically identified as ‘Lilliputs’ when compared with the American might.

When Ivelaw Griffith (2003, 3) wrote, ‘Proximity, vulnerability, and instability are not new features of the Caribbean or of Caribbean-United States dynamics’, what he was trying to underpin is that these are the proverbially perceived features of these Lilliputs; and therefore the American ‘concern’ with the Circum-Caribbean ‘(in)stability’. After the war of 1898, the United States would have deliberated that the European incursion in this region would be a threat to its interests and may reverse the victory-gains. Therefore, prevention of ‘instability’ in the region was crucial to keep the European rivalries at bay. This could at best be done by not letting any Circum-Caribbean state to default a payment of a foreign loan, and not allowing any treaty to concede a foreign military base (Perez 1982, 168).

Since the United States had already secured its presence in the Circum-Caribbean, preserving the business interest was now obvious in the queue. This was what the Europeans earlier had done. And, all this subsequently perpetuated a dependent economy as the single most important feature of the Circum-Caribbean societies while splintering the polities. Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton (eds. 1993, 4) thus highlighted, ‘The broad impact of imperialism upon the Caribbean was not only formative: it set in motion an important and enduring contradiction between the legacy of political fragmentation, on the one hand, and economic uniformity, on the other’. In the process, the Circum-Caribbean states were intervened, annexed, and possessed by the European and American colonial forces while exchanging them among themselves to satisfy each other’s imperial claims (Skidmore and Smith 1984; 2001). But, in spite of historically involving geography and American national prestige in its post-1898 security-endeavour in the region, as Maingot (1985, 316) had indicated, its economic interests soon became prominent with continued (in)stability perception. Perez (1982, 168) thus maintained:

Stability was more than a means to keep Europeans out. It was also the necessary condition to bring American capital into the region.

And, since the business companies were now integrated with the American post-1898 commanding-prestige, it was unlikely to protect the company

interests without Washington monitoring domestic policies of the Circum-Caribbean national governments; hence the necessity of American meddling with the internal affairs of the sovereign entities in that region. The United States' Circum-Caribbean (in)stability concern thus had effectively resulted into stabilizing the former's business interest in that region. In Perez's (1982, 188) words, 'The stability once demanded in the name of American security interests now became a requirement to protect American capital interests'. It was a *smart-blending* of the American business goals with its security projection.

The United States' policies, moreover, have never been static. The facets of the policies have changed their shades over time.

While the premises and long-term objectives of policy may remain constant, the means employed in their pursuit, and the weight accorded to these means, have been in constant state of flux. They are subject to the vagaries of changing global, regional, partisan, and domestic developments (Perez 1982, 180).

The Cold War period thus was a phase of the most aggressive American involvement in the Circum-Caribbean national and regional affairs; and as Maingot (1985) expressed, securing the 'area of influence' was more than its national pride. The states in the region, as a result, faced recurrent American military intervention during the Cold War period. Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1961, the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989 were among those American military intrusions that are most underscored in the series. Even the American state intelligence agencies were possibly involved in executing some of the military operations. Stephen Rabe (1988, 206), for instance, included military operations against Guatemala (1954) and Cuba (1960-1965) in this category. He further opined:

Military intervention has been the most conspicuous feature of U.S. policy in Latin America. During the first third of the twentieth century, U.S. armed forces intervened some thirty-five times in the Caribbean Basin nations of Cuba, Panama, Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua (Rabe 1988, 206).

Were those interventions, if asked again in the light of the above smart-blending of business and security interests, merely for military base/occupation in the Circum-Caribbean? Given the Cold War height of insecurity threat, such a notion would immediately follow as the American

rivalries were seen expanding their respective 'area of influence'. Cuban missile crisis, for example, is a frequently cited episode to fittingly justify that notion. The thesis of merely military gain, however, is unlikely to pass the test. Rabe (1988, 207) would therefore argue that the interventions signified more than armed landings and military occupation. Referring to the Louis Perez's 1986 book *Cuba under Platt Amendment*, for instance, Rabe pointed out that the American investors wanted stability and docile workers in Cuba. Thus, America vetoed national development projects, set national budgets, and interfered in labour disputes in that country. And, this was obvious as the American direct investments in Cuba had reached 200 million dollars in 1911, and had crossed one billion by 1925 (Rabe 1988, 210). Thus long before the United States had plainly intertwined its military strategy with non-military ones to satisfy its national interest.<sup>7</sup>

Further, the Circum-Caribbean has been perceived as a region always pregnant with volatility, collective unrest, and historic capacity to articulate and agitate for grievances (Maingot 1985, 314). Particularly the volatility and unrest features, over a period of time, have been exploited by America in its favour by projecting 'homeland' security consequences. And, if America wished to avoid loss of domestic political support due to prolonged military involvements, it had to seek the refuge with other means (Maingot 1985, 314).

It is to be recalled that the end of the Cold War had again fostered the reappearance of the American ascendancy in the Circum-Caribbean as it was again reiterating the post-1898 scene in the region where no significant power was left to challenge the American might. Since the 'threat of communism' had ceased to exist, America was said to turn to be 'pragmatic' while dealing with its immediate neighbours. Concurrently, recognition of the appearance of 'non-traditional' and 'Third World' problems were equally important at the back of such an American pragmatism. The belief was, however, widespread that the post-Cold War

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7 Rabe did not rule out 'legitimate security concerns', however. Referring to David Haglund's 1984 book *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought*, Rabe took cognisance of Franklin Roosevelt's concern of Germany's hemispheric invasion plan, though, according to him (Rabe) no such evidence was found from German sources. Nevertheless, Rabe argued that Leslie Rout and John Bratzel's 1986 work *The Shadow War: German Espionage and the United States Counterespionage in Latin America During World War II* conclusively demonstrates that German clandestine intelligence operations in Latin America were widespread, albeit ineffective.

In a recent work *The Danger of Dreams: German and American Imperialism in Latin America*, Nancy Mitchell (1999) argued that the US leaders early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century consistently overrated the German threat in the Western hemisphere. Mitchell even renders the American apprehensions as mirage with no basis (Gilderhus 2000, 1350-1351).

world was now manifestly different with a diverse set of issues and concerns. How much qualitative difference, however, would have been expected out of the United States' pragmatism towards the Circum-Caribbean? Harold Molineu (1994, 223), few years after the Cold War, had the following to convey:

If it is true that intervention has been the most persistent characteristic of U.S. policy in Latin America [and the Caribbean], then is it reasonable to expect Washington to abandon the option merely because communist threats are withering away? The interventionist impulse preceded the cold war and therefore seems likely to remain afterward.

It seems that those 'pragmatism' expectations were hastily received while ignoring the preceding American behavioural-pattern towards the Circum-Caribbean. Thus, Molineu's above words were resonating with the United States' post-Cold War double interventions in Haiti, prompting one to ask that what had caused Washington to again intervene in that region when the 'communist threat' had disappeared. Probably, one reading could be to look into the 'resilience of the leftist guerrillas' (Kryzanek 1992, 141) which was thought to exist in few pockets of the region. Yet, it should be conjectured if those 'resilient guerrillas' were really aiming at to destabilize the American 'homeland', or if they had become a threat as potent as the Cuban missile crisis was that still such interventions were within the American considered policies!<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the American pampering of the regimes of its longing in the Circum-Caribbean should not be underplayed while discussing the 'resiliency of the leftist guerrillas'; and the American (in)action during the Honduran military coup of 2009 against the elected President of that country should still hold some water.

Nonetheless, the United States would have been attentive of both the limits of its conventional policies as well as of advantages that a multi-pronged strategy could accrue. Therefore, gradual swings in policies were carefully worked out to sustain the 1898 victory-gains. Democracy and development for the Circum-Caribbean stability, for example, was one such thoughtful strategy that was planned as soon as the 'communist alternative' was defeated at world stage. 'No democracy without development' and 'no development without democracy' had underpinned the American engagement with the Hemisphere. It therefore was the time when the economy and the polity were significantly opened/liberalized in the

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8 One can however question the way these guerrillas functioned in their respective countries for regime change.

Circum-Caribbean. While the option of democracy had opened the channel to legitimately watch the activities of the national governments, concern for development had further unleashed the business opportunities for the American companies. It was again the time when the role of the international financial institutions was deepened, and perhaps, a ‘cooperative framework’ of political economy was routed to deal with the states in the region bilaterally and at times multilaterally. Such an American approach would have been framed keeping in view that a functional sense of Circum-Caribbean regional identity was growing after the Cold War. Apart from the possible role of a worldwide renewed debate on small states’ political economy, a Circum-Caribbean identity based on geography, ethno-history, and political economy would have been decisive and therefore had prompted the American President Bill Clinton in 1997 in Guyana to proclaim that the United States is a ‘Caribbean state’ (Payne 1998).

## THE PURPOSE ENDURES

Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in its commissioned report on smart power for the United States acknowledged that ‘realism and idealism have shaped U.S. foreign policy since the earliest times’ (CSIS 2007, 67); and therefore when the propositions to mix the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ facets of diplomacy (Nossel 2004; Nye 2004; 2008; 2009; Wilson 2008) are read with the preceding section’s explanation of the American behavioural-pattern as well as with the CSIS’s acknowledgment, the ‘smart power’ strategy’s post-9/11 standing becomes evidently doubtful. What was the Circum-Caribbean-American significance, nevertheless, of the *post-9/11 phase* of the ‘smart power’ strategy?

In conclusion, it signified that the United States’ enduring purpose to secure its ‘area of influence’ (that is, the Circum-Caribbean) and maintain ascendancy in that region continued without changes; and the post-9/11 phase of the smart power strategy was just another dimension of that long-cherished purpose for which constant changes in policy-framework were undertaken. Therefore, the issues of drug and migration, for example, were forcefully pursued because it was now least difficult to construct an image of the Circum-Caribbean where the routes of drug-trafficking and (illegal) migration could be mastered and thus the perceived possibility of another 9/11. Consequently, ‘geo-narcotics’ (Griffith 2003) and ‘narco-terrorism’ (Nafey 2004, 48) acquired much weight in the post-9/11 Circum-Caribbean-United States relations; and Abdul Nafey (2004, 23)

therefore had to say that 9/11 had profoundly altered, perhaps irrevocably, the security and geo-politics, including geo-economics, in the Caribbean Basin. An intertwined projection of the American 'homeland' security with the Circum-Caribbean poverty (which was again tied with backwardness), one could have further noted, helped America reassert ascendancy in its 'area of influence' after 9/11. Since the 'Third World' economic backwardness is still believed to nurture 'terrorism', a consorted Circum-Caribbean post-9/11 perception was constructed linking poverty with security, drug, and (illegal) migration to achieve the goal of curving a Circum-Caribbean 'third border' of the United States that its President George Bush, Jr. had declared in Canada and with which the enduring American purpose to maintain its ascendancy in the Circum-Caribbean has been continued with its recent strategy of smart power dimension.

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Article Received: 2013. 08. 24  
Revised: 2013. 11. 04  
Accepted: 2013. 11. 09