Small states by their nature are weak and vulnerable. Sometimes it seems as if small states were like small boats pushed out into a turbulent sea, free in one sense to traverse it; but, without oars or provisions, without compass or sails, free also to perish. Or perhaps, to be rescued and taken on board a larger vessel. - Commonwealth Study Group 1985

Introduction

The vulnerabilities, challenges and prospects for the Caribbean region are unique and specific to the region's states. The Caribbean can be defined by geographical, ethno-historical and geo-political frameworks. Shelton Nicholls (2009) depicts the geographic definition of the Caribbean as an archipelagic group of islands while Benn and Hall (2000) describe Carib-bean states in ethno-historical terms, being the islands and the adjacent coastal communities in South and Central America who share a comparable history, culture and ethnicity.

Geopolitically however, the Caribbean consists of “three concentric zones.” Firstly, the core which is the innermost zone and comprises the islands that are traditionally considered to be the Caribbean (such as those focused on in this paper), secondly the fringe which is also the middle zone and include the territories farther away from the core (such as Belize), and thirdly the periphery which is the farthest zone and comprises Southern Mexico, the Northern Coasts of Colombia and Venezuela, the Yucatan and the rest of Central America that is not on the fringe.

This paper focuses primarily on the small states of the Caribbean region. The definition of a small state is an interesting point of contestation in the international system. The Commonwealth defines small states by population size of 1.5 million or less (The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2008). Comparably, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) undertook a key study in 1969 which identified a maximum figure of one million in population to define a small state (Saunders 2005). Associated to the definitions of small states are related concepts of small island developing states, less developed countries such as Haiti (UNCTAD 2007) and structurally weak vulnerable
economies such as Guyana (UNCTAD 2007). Such connotations are indicative of physical attributes as well as negative characteristics of small states.

Small states in the Caribbean and Latin American are defined by characteristics of population, gross domestic product (GDP), poverty and human development indices, and sovereign debt. This paper focuses on the small states of the Caribbean. To conceptualize the parameters of these small states, the table below illustrates their populations as well as current GDP.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antigua &amp; Barbuda</td>
<td>1,132</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>7,234</td>
<td>342</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>256</td>
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<td>333</td>
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<td>Dominica</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>12,070</td>
<td>2,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
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<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent &amp; the</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenadines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>21,204</td>
<td>1,339</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Caribbean small states are forced to contend with an extensive security agenda which is perpetuated by the inherent and complex vulnerabilities of these states. Within the Caribbean region, the reconfigured framework for security coupled with globalization saw the rise of the “uncivil society” and with it transnational security threats such as drug trafficking, money laundering, arms smuggling, trafficking in persons, pandemic diseases, and environmental and social security issues. These issues as well as other transnational challenges have broadened the security agenda of Caribbean small states since the 1980s (Braveboy-Wagner 2008).

The security agenda of Caribbean small states is exacerbated by the inherent vulnerabilities of these states. Small states are regarded as vulnerable due to the geographic, political, military and economic factors that compromise their security (Griffith 2009). Vulnerability is a multidimensional phenomenon which attempts to achieve three main goals. These are the identification of future induced risks (such as climate change and a rise in sea levels), the identification of vulnerable areas within the country, and the provision of strong and workable adaptation strategies in order to combat a problem.

Harden (1985) identified six factors that can contribute to the level of vulnerability of a state. These include great power rivalries, territorial claims, possession of valuable resources, provision of refuge to refugees or...

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1Table was composed by the author with data provided by the World Trade Organisation. Member Information, Trade Profile: 2010.
freedom fighters, corruption, and suppression of democracy (Harden 1985). Caribbean small states intrinsically possess unique and special vulnerabilities, which include limited diversification, limited capacity and resources, susceptibility to natural disasters and environmental change, remoteness and isolation, a general openness to trade, income volatility, limited domestic markets, restricted ability to develop economies of scale, and restricted ability to influence international prices (ECLAC 2005).

This paper analyses small state security in the 21st century. The discourse will centre on the reconfigured framework for the analysis of security in small states in the Caribbean. The paper argues that the inherent vulnerabilities of these small states perpetuate the already substantial and comprehensive security agenda facing these states. The aim is to evaluate Caribbean small states’ perceptions of security within the framework of hemispheric challenges, and its applicability to the strengthening/enhancement of regional responses to such challenges.

Conceptualizing a Small State

Small states have traditionally been viewed in international relations as especially handicapped and vulnerable, requiring particular attention and assistance. This perspective is due to the perception within the global environment that the smallness of states inhibits the states’ capacity to further their developmental strategies and national policies. Such views are advocated by theorists such as Anthony Payne (Payne and Sutton 1993) who conclude that vulnerabilities rather than opportunities are the most striking consequence of smallness.

Conceptualizing a ‘small state’ was initiated by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in 1969. Although the Commonwealth secretariat defines small states as sovereign states with a population size of 1.5 million people or less it also acknowledges that populations larger than one million but with similar challenges and regular regional interaction with other small states should also be considered. Most studies of small states define their unit of analysis as countries with a population of less than 2 million people (Aiyar 2008).

Winters and Martin (1996) identified four categories of small states which are (i) micro – under 12,000 inhabitants, (ii) very small – under 200,000 inhabitants, (iii) threshold – under 1.6 million inhabitants, and (iv) small – under 4 million. The United Nations has also classified small states into two groupings: small landlocked developing states and small island developing states. Most Caribbean islands are commonly referred to as small island developing states.

While most definitions of small states focus on the population size of a country, Erling Bjol has a contrasting approach to the meaning of small state. Bjol attests that “by itself the concept of small state means nothing. A state is only small in relation to a greater one. Belgium may be a small state in relation to France, but Luxembourg is a small state in relation to Belgium, and France a small state in relation to the USA. To be of any analytical use ‘small state’ should therefore be considered shorthand for a state in its relationship with ‘greater states’” (Lewis 2009).

The position that small states hold within the global environment is a precarious one. The end of the Cold War meant that small states were no longer pawns in the global competition to ensure super-power status. Small states therefore lost the avenue and held limited policy options to play the power broker role against
each other to secure their own interests (Hey 2003). In the neo-liberalist, globalised environment, Saunders (2005) has argued that governance is the main thing which powerful bureaucratic arms of states are protecting from becoming globalised.

As Stiglitz (2002) advocates, “we have a system that might be called global governance without global government, one in which a few institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, and a few players – the financial, commercial and trade ministers, closely linked to certain commercial and financial interests – dominate the scene, but in which many of those affected by their decisions are left almost voiceless”. Other international organisations such as the United Nations, the G20 or G8, and the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation can also be added to Stiglitz’s argument. Within the global context, the principles of sovereignty, self-determination and territorial integrity of small states have been eroded and they hold limited independent political clout to maneuver their demands on the international market (Saunders 2005). Therefore, although small states have joined the international system as sovereign independent nations, they have done so at its periphery, with little individual capacity to obtain benefits within the global environment.

Caribbean small island developing states inherently possess unique and special development challenges, which include limited diversification, limited capacity and resources, susceptibility to natural disasters and environmental change, remoteness and isolation, a general openness to trade, small domestic markets, excessive dependence on international trade and income volatility (ECLAC 2005). Therefore, the parameters of the definition of a small state should be expanded beyond traditional classifications of population size and physical characteristics to include the perception of a contemporary small state as a state which has little relative influence on global politics and policies. Small states often refer to countries that have a high degree of exogenous influence on sovereign state matters.

The Concept of Security

In the contemporary globalised, neo-liberalist international environment, security as a concept can be viewed as multidimensional in scope and focus. According to Barry Buzan (1991), security can be defined as “the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity against forces of change which they see as hostile” (Udovic 2004).

The concept of security has evolved through the progression of international history. During the periods of World War One and World War Two, perceptions of security were dominated by realist viewpoints. This realist approach to security was further perpetuated by the ideological Cold War. The state centric realist perspective identified military strength as the most important aspect of national security. Realists viewed the major security threat of a state as that of hostile action from another state. This belief was cemented by the fact that for centuries, only states controlled resources which allowed for the ability to enter into conflict with other states, such as labour, weaponry and finances (Griffith 2004).

Ivelaw Griffith (1996) has characterized traditional security issues facing Caribbean states as geopolitics, militarization, intervention and instability. Maintenance of the stability of these issues were accomplished by preserving strong ties with ex-colonisers usually through unsustainable trading agreements. Griffith went further to consider that these security issues were
classified under the overarching theme of the vulnerability of Caribbean states.

In a post-Cold War international environment, dominated by a hyper-globalised, neo-liberalist, capitalist ideology and shaped by events such as 9/11, financial crises, environmental challenges and economic and political instabilities, the international arena necessitated the broadening, or in some cases reconfiguring of the traditional concept of security.

The Reconfigured Framework of Security

The concept of security has been reconfigured to denote, according to Ivelaw Griffith (2000), a multi-dimensional perception. Grizold (1999) and Buzan (1991) debunked the stigma of security as being purely state centric and identified four sublevels into which the modern concept of security can be divided. These sublevels are the individual level, the community level, the national level and the international level. In the case of Caribbean small island developing states, all four sublevels are related to external influences on Caribbean states.

Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, has identified the individual, the state and the environment as the principal agents under threat under the reconfigured framework of security. He identifies the key values of security as economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democractisation, disarmament and respect for human rights and the rule of law (Annan 2001).

Some theorists have argued that the reconfigured framework of security arose in the post-Cold War era within the parameters of the “new world (dis)order.” Arguably, this new world (dis)order was a result of the end of a bi-polar balance of world power which occurred during the Cold War. This discourse stemmed from the fact that during the Cold War the state of the international arena was bi-polar in nature, being balanced by the two main powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. Security during this period was driven primarily by military statecraft (Baldwin 1997). While the principle of mutually assured destruction held fast that neither power attempted to take forceful and direct military action against each other, it also created a structure for an ‘either or’ situation between these two powers, which acted as a balance mechanism of power. With the fall of the Soviet Union this balance no longer existed and the rise of capitalism partnered with the rapid proliferation of neo-liberalist globalization brought many contemporary security issues to the fore. For Caribbean states such contemporary security issues were exacerbated by the inherent vulnerabilities facing small island developing states and included economic security, political security, human security, environmental security, energy security, climate change, migration, pandemic diseases, human trafficking, crime, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and money laundering.

Contemporary theorists are presently “obliged to work with a conceptualization of security that extends beyond the narrow definition of the term that dominated security studies in the early 1980s” (Griffith 1995). Modern assertions that the concept of security extends beyond ‘high politics’ have given new emphasis to economic considerations and also incorporates environmental, social and human dimensions into the concept of security.

This reconceptualised framework of security has been prescribed by not only changes in the international system, but also by shifts in the domestic realities of states. Buzan
(1991) argues that as a result of the common nuclear capacities and thereby nuclear paralysis imposed on the rational use of force among the more powerful states, political and social issues have been brought to the fore. His argument holds that as a result of the stagnant nature of the military agenda of states, the security concerns of the economy and the environment have become more dynamic and central to daily concerns. Sorensen (1992) adds to Buzan’s analysis to state that traditional concepts of national sovereignty and military development cannot adequately address citizens’ quality of life, transborder flows of drugs, weapons and arms, pandemic diseases, immigrants and the challenges of climate change. He specifies that state-centric models are no longer adequate and new regional institutions are necessary to combat these contemporary threats facing most countries (Griffith 1995).

The importance of regional approaches in addressing security challenges has been further highlighted by Jorge Nef (1999). Nef prescribed that as Wallerstein’s World Systems Theory maintained the resources of the periphery contribute to the development of the core, the resultant interdependent nature of the system lies on the pretext of ‘mutual vulnerability’ (Nef 1999). Therefore, the seemingly stable developed countries are susceptible to becoming increasingly vulnerable to the challenges facing the less secure and less developed small states. This argument correlates with a conception of security which recognises that the international system is only as stable as its weakest link and in order to attain a viable homeostasis in any society, including the global society, there must be a collective, significant and continuous reduction of risk and insecurity at all levels (Griffith 1995).

The transnational and interdependent nature of security challenges have been fuelled by the process of neo-liberalist, hyper-globalisation. Globalization signifies a transition from the linkage of national societies based on a world economy to an emergent transnational or global society centered on a global economy (Robinson 1998). The globalization of technology, transport and information communication systems has led to states no longer being externally linked to an overarching international system, but rather internally interdependent within a singular global system (Robinson 1998). The vigour of globalization prescribes that “no island is an island” (Gonsalves 2010) and states, particularly small states, are more vulnerable and sensitive to exogenous shocks.

It is important to note however, that although global realities have compelled the reconfiguration of perceptions of security, every definition of security is dependent on the individual’s predispositions, basic values and viewpoints (Udovic 2004). Therefore, as the theoretical construct of ‘time space distanciation’ would show, although a general definition of security can be posited, one’s interpretations of what security encompasses will be specific to their individualistic time, space and place.

**Contemporary Security Agenda of the Region**

The security agenda for the hemisphere is constructed around the less institutionalized, transnational threats facing the region and are no longer centered on the traditional state-centric notions of security (Tulchin and Espach 2000). In the Caribbean, as around the world, security concerns regarding state-based conflict have been replaced by less institutionalized transnational threats....these threats constitute a new security agenda for the region, one that is
no longer centered around, traditional state-based threats (Griffith 1996).

The Caribbean states in particular, as small states, are increasingly threatened by security challenges which arise as a result of and which further perpetuate their small state vulnerabilities. This was highlighted in the Declaration of Kingstown (2003) on the security of small island states which reiterated that "the small island states have peculiar characteristics which render these states specially vulnerable and susceptible to security risks, threats, concerns and other challenges of a multidimensional and transnational nature, involving political, economic, social, health, environmental and geographic factors".

Classifications of vulnerabilities which confront the capabilities of small states and further proliferate the dimensions of security concerns challenging these states were identified by Lino Briguglio (2003). He listed economic vulnerabilities such as small domestic markets, limited abilities to exploit economies of scale, lack of natural resources and limitations of diversification possibilities as key factors in perpetuating the copious security agenda of the region. Further critical vulnerabilities identified which augment the exacerbation of the security issues facing the region included environmental vulnerabilities, social vulnerabilities, climate change vulnerabilities, trade vulnerabilities and disaster vulnerabilities (Briguglio 2003).

The contemporary security issues facing the region are starkly different from conventional security state-centric challenges due to their complex transnational nature. Contemporary security issues which are exigent on Caribbean small states are interdependent and transnational in nature and cannot be resolved by any one state at the national or local level. The contemporary security agenda challenging the region consists of issues such as economic, political, social and environmental security challenges, climate change, pandemic diseases, energy security, migration, drug trafficking, money laundering, arms smuggling, destabilising international capital movement, and the trend towards neo-liberalist markets and its overemphasis on openness which has a tendency to leave small states vulnerable in the international system.

The reconceptualised framework for security in the region requires that new strategies be employed through the scope of 'cooperative security' (Stares 1998) which will assist in reducing spending by individual states on advanced military equipment and will also serve to strengthen regional institutions with a mandate to effectively manage the security concerns of the region. Baldacchino and Betram (2009) argue that the Caribbean region has proven to be resilient and have utilised 'strategic flexibility' and partnering association that have allowed them to bear the brunt of "hypothermic, boom and busts and feast and famine scenarios" in the twenty-first century.

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2Second High Level Meeting on the Special Security Concerns of Small Island States; "Declaration of Kingstown on the Security of Small Island States"; OEA/Ser.K/XXIX SEPEIN-II/doc.8/02 rev. 2 corr. 1; Adapted at the Fourth Plenary Session, January 10th 2003.
Addressing Region’s Security Agenda

The 1990’s witnessed a turn towards outward focused regionalism throughout most of the international environment. This period facilitated a resurgence of integration initiatives in the Caribbean which were triggered mainly by security, political and economic motivations (Mera 2007). These open regionalism attempts varied from the previous inward-oriented regional integration initiatives employed by these small states. The endeavour by Caribbean and Latin American states to strengthen regionalism initiatives also allowed for a divergence away from the reliance, which previously held sway, on preferential agreements with the United States and Europe (Braveboy-Wagner 2009).

In 2007, CARICOM established security as the fourth pillar of the integration movement, recognizing that security engenders serious challenges to regional development. The Community recognized the ever-increasing importance of addressing the security agenda in the region due to the cross-cutting and fundamental nature of security challenges. This progress highlights the importance of security to ensure a stable and secure environment in which social and economic developments can prosper.

Caribbean small states have adopted regional security systems as a measure of collective security. Regional security systems ensure the stability of the region through mutual cooperation. These regional security systems aim at enhancing social and economic development and to maintain the principles of democracy, liberty of the individual and rule of law. The independent units of the regional security system act jointly with each other to give the regional security system the ability to counter threats which may overwhelm the capacity of individual states.

CARICOM’s Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) is one such regional security system. IMPACS is aimed at strategic research, project implementation, and analysis and mobilization of resources to augment collective efforts at combating crime and further security threats in the region. The primary objective of IMPACS is to ensure the implementation of the necessary actions required to guarantee the realization of the objectives of the regional crime and security agenda. The Agreement Establishing the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security signed by the Heads of Government on July 6 2006 in St. Kitts and Nevis identified thirteen primary functions of IMPACS which include, research and analysis on regional responses to security, to perform the role of an executing agency for regional projects relating to security, mobilization of resources in support of the regional security agenda, dissemination of information on evolving regional and international security trends, and the collaboration and coordination with national and international crime prevention agencies to establish trends, methodologies and strategies for enhancing security in the region.

IMPACS has conceived sub-agencies such as the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre and the Joint Regional Communications Centre to assist in the achievement of these objectives. The ongoing priorities of IMPACS in attempting to focus on the maintenance and balance of security in the region are border security activities and capacity building. The Minister of Foreign Affairs for Trinidad and Tobago, Suraj Rambachan has contested that his empirical research has evidenced the successes of IMPACS’ initiatives and continued and
persistent support should be given to the Agency, particularly given that regional security remains a priority for most states in the region.

The Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) which was mandated to assist in securing the region’s borders by way of pre-screening travelers to, from and between Caribbean states during the Cricket World Cup in 2007, is the central authorization agency for Advanced Passenger Information (API) in the region. The JRCC acts as an information and communication centre for law enforcement and intelligence agencies regionally and internationally, and serves as a central point for effective communication among such agencies, while also acting as the primary point of contact for API from air and maritime carriers transiting the region.

Additionally, the Agreement establishing the CARICOM Operations, Planning and Coordinating Staff (COPACS) was signed by the Heads of Government on February 14 2007 in St. Vincent. COPACS is temporary in nature and is mandated with the functions of mobilizing, coordinating and deploying the resources of the Security Assistance Mechanism, seeking to ascertain the capacity and availability of resources, and preparing and implementing a plan in relation to all security related aspects for which it was convened. The Security Assistance Mechanism was instituted in 2006 with the objectives of the efficient and timely response to and the management of natural and man-made disasters, the expeditious mobilization and deployment of regional resources in order to manage and defuse crises (both national and regional in nature), combating and eliminating threats to national and regional security, and the preservation of territorial integrity.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) has also actively initiated mechanisms geared towards enhancing security in the region. Such was evidenced by the Constitutive Treaty (Brasilia) in 2008 which advocated for established measures for coordination among the member states’ specialized agencies in order to strengthen the fight against narcotics, corruption, human trafficking, small and light weapons trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime and other threats. Other security aspects of the treaty are aimed at the promotion of cooperation among the judicial authorities of the region’s states, and the exchange of information and experiences in matters of defence and cooperation for the strengthening of civilian security.

Additionally, the South American Defence Council, which was formed by the Declaration of Guayaquil in May 2010, reiterated the need for dialogue and cooperation, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the principle of non-intervention, and the need for confidence-building and security measures to strengthen regional stability and security.

Caribbean small states and Latin American states have attempted to enhance regionalism initiatives in a measure to address the region’s energy security concerns. Caribbean and Latin American territories enjoy a geopolitical advantage in terms of energy availability due to

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3 CNEWS. *IMPACS Will Protect Region*. 13 April 2011.  
http://www.ctntworld.com/LocalArticles.aspx?id=26906
their abundant energy resources (World Energy Council 2008). Regional energy initiatives have been advanced by, among others, the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur), the Andean Community of Nations, and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to promote communication, energy and physical integration.

CARICOM's efforts to address energy security dominated the fourteenth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Heads of Government in Trinidad, February 2003, where a Regional Energy Policy was established with the primary mandate of addressing the security of energy supplies in the region. The Regional Energy Policy highlighted ten objectives geared towards achieving the goals of sustainable, secure and accessible supplies of energy to all CARICOM citizens, the transformation of the energy sectors of the various states to contribute to sustainable development, the optimization of domestic production of energy in an environmentally sound manner and the facilitation of the growth of internationally competitive regional industries (CARICOM 2007).

Another regional response to the security agenda of the Caribbean states have been focused on the identifiable exigencies necessitated to stabilize the concern of food security in the region. Caribbean and Latin American states facing increasing shortages and consistently climbing commodities prices have been compelled to contend with the resultant negative impact on the availability of food in these countries. A regional attempt to respond to the issue of food security in the region has produced the Caribbean Food Corporation (CFC) aimed at coordinating the production and marketing of food within the region and with the implementation and execution of the Regional Food Plan. The Caribbean Regional Special Programme for Food Security (CRSPFS) draws funding from the Government of Italy and is aimed at improving the production of vegetables and root crops in the region through micro-irrigation.

The Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) has further attempted to assist the food security agenda in the region by establishing as one of its initiatives under its framework of Caribbean ALBA a joint plan of alimentary security which would guarantee “the conditions for the development of the production and food processing according to norms of correct manufacture, analysis of risks and critical control posts, as well as trade and commercialization of nutritional products with low prices for less resources population of the region”.

The Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has identified climatisation as one of the triple threats facing Caribbean small island developing states (Gonsalves 2010). The sustainable development of Caribbean small states requires an integrated and strategic approach to addressing the exogenous challenges which accrue as a result of the threat of climate change especially given the fact that many Caribbean islands are located below sea level and within the hurricane belt (ECLAC 2010).

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CARICOM has established the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCC) as the regional approach to strengthening the institutional, technical and financial capacity of Caribbean states to address climate change threats. The CCCC is also mandated to provide forecasts and analyses of the potential impacts of both natural and man-induced climatic changes on the environment. The CCCC operates in collaboration with other regional institutions such as the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA).

The Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) Project (1997-2001) strengthened the framework for the mitigation and adaptation of Caribbean states to climate change threats. The CPACC established a monitoring system for sea levels and climate, and established coral reef monitoring protocols, as well as an articulation of states’ national climate change policies and implementation strategies. Further initiatives such as the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Caribbean (ACCC) Project (2011-2004) sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency, and the mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) Project (2004-2007) and the Special Programme on Adaptation to Climate Change (SPACC) (2007-2010), both sponsored by the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank, supplemented the Caribbean small states’ framework for the adaptation and mitigation of climate change challenges (ECLAC 2010).

Are Caribbean Small States Really Vulnerable?

The vulnerabilities of Caribbean small states are essentially characterized by the degree to which these states are predisposed to international forces and extra-national forces and the manner in which this restricts the states’ maneuverability. As has been evidenced, Caribbean small states endure inherent and perpetuated vulnerabilities as a result of their size, remoteness, and resource capabilities. Caribbean small state vulnerabilities perpetuate the security challenges of these states. Such vulnerabilities include, but are not limited to, a limited resource capacity in addressing their security agenda, productive sectors being dependent on a limited resource base, high transport and communication costs, high vulnerability to natural disasters, limited domestic markets, restricted ability to develop economies of scale, restricted ability to influence international prices, dependency on a narrow range of export products, scarcity of resources, increasing pressure on coastal and marine environment and resources, limited ability for economic diversification, limited ability in which a domestic competition policy can be applied, and high degrees of uncertainty regarding the supply of remoteness or insularity (ECLAC 2005). Globalisation processes and neoliberalist institutions such as the World Trade Organisation have also perpetuated the already exhaustive vulnerabilities of Caribbean small states (The University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development 2002).

Former Prime Minister of Barbados, Owen Arthur, argues that the challenges faced by the Caribbean are unique to the region and special as they do not confront any other group of nations. These indigenous challenges incorporate the simultaneous requisite for Caribbean small states to “reorder their economic relationships with its principal partnerships, while also trying to reconstitute its component units into a single market and economy (Arthur 2009). The
challenges to Caribbean small states are further compounded by the fact the region has seldom been as unassisted by international cooperation and financial aid as it has been in the past few years (Arthur 2009).

The vulnerabilities of Caribbean small states are clear. Such vulnerabilities inhibit the capacity of these small states to effectively and adequately address their imperious security agenda. Therefore, in order to appropriately manage the security challenges of Caribbean small states, the vulnerabilities of these states need to be addressed. Such an attempt was evidenced through the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States adopted during the Global Conference on Small Island Developing States in Barbados, 1994. This Programme of Action highlighted the special and unique vulnerabilities of small states and proposed special policy approaches which were required to effectively enhance the sustainable development capabilities of these states (Briguglio 2003). Further to this, there have been regular and periodic reviews and reports on the Barbados Programme of Action, by regional bodies, in order to continue its relevance to and enhance the effectiveness of its prescribed policies and action plans in addressing the challenges of Caribbean small states.

The University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development has also identified strategies for combating the vulnerability of Caribbean small states. These include enhancing trade, promoting renewable energy, protecting the environment, natural disaster mitigation and preparedness, investments, human resource development, governance planning, capacity building, developing competitiveness, stability in the macroeconomic environment, diversification, increasing the use of information communication technologies, and amplified cooperation among small states (The University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development 2002). By addressing the vulnerabilities of Caribbean small states, these states reposition themselves within an arrangement of augmented capacity and capability necessary to effectively and comprehensively deal with their security challenges. Addressing Caribbean small state vulnerabilities therefore, supplements efforts at managing the regional security agenda.

The nexus between security and development in the Caribbean small states is palpable. The economic development of the region's states weighs considerably on the ability of these states to cope with their security challenges and also further progress their economic development. As previously prescribed, the vulnerabilities of the small states in the region severely compound the magnitude of the security threats challenging these states. Vulnerabilities of many of these states need to be diminished through policies and programmes aimed at augmenting the resilience and viability of such countries. Transformations of positions of vulnerability into positions of resilience and viability can be achieved through sustained economic development. The security-development nexus clearly recommends that economic development and a proper security framework and complementary as well as the efficient and sustainable provision of one leads to the effective management of the other. Therefore it is essential for Caribbean nations, in a bid to enhance and maintain their economic development and thereby effectively manage their security agenda, to implement policies geared towards promoting sustainable economic development not only within their country, but in
the region. This crux is also highlighted by the work of Amartya Sen (1999) who closely aligns freedoms to contemporary notions of security and posits that freedom (security – economic, political or social), are not only the primary end of development, but also the constitutive means of achieving it.

Regional Partnerships – Augmenting Resilience?

Caribbean states have fervently made attempts at establishing and maintaining an adequate and comprehensive regional security framework to address all the contemporary security threats facing the region. Such regional initiatives have indeed ascertained many successes in addressing the security challenges of small states in the region. The collaborative approach to security allows small states to adequately address their security agenda and mitigate against transnational threats without diverting the majority of their scarce resources away from development, political and social programmes needed to required to build a sustainable society.

CARICOM initiatives for security have been extensive and persistent, building on the legacy of the success achieved by the security co-operation initiatives utilized for the Cricket World Cup 2007 (CARICOM 2008). The successful components of this security co-operation have been upgraded, expanded and molded to effectively address the unique security concerns of Caribbean small states.

The Agreement Establishing the CARICOM Implementation for Crime and Security affirms that a co-operative approach by the region’s states employs the method of maximum effectiveness in confronting the region’s security agenda. Although regional initiatives utilise a collaborative approach, they also affirm the utmost importance of the principles of sovereignty, equality, mutual respect and friendly relations.

Regional partnerships have embarked on developing, implementing and exploiting the use of mutual security databases. Such privileged information is not restricted to any member state and has the possibility to serve to strengthen or destabilise the region’s security framework dependent on the manner in which this information is employed. Regional initiatives also allow for the transfer of assets from one country to the other free from restriction, and to convert and to hold any currency without being restricted by financial controls, regulations or moratoria of any kind (CARICOM 2006). Therefore, it is mandatory that adequate and sufficient control and regulatory mechanisms be put in place to ensure that the misuse of the resources which these regional strategies provide is prohibited. This is particularly so given the special and individualistic exigencies of the Caribbean small states. For example, three key actors within the Caribbean region rank highly on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index. The Corruption Perception Index measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption within 178 countries worldwide (a #1 ranking highlights the state with the lowest levels of corruption and #178 ranking highlights the most corrupt state). Trinidad and Tobago is ranked 73 on the Index, Jamaica at 87 and Guyana at 116. Comparatively, Barbados is ranked very positively on the Index, at 17.
Regional attempts at addressing food security in the region have proven to be very effective. However, the successes are not uniform among all the Caribbean small states. Chart I illustrates the percentage of small states' national budgets which are dedicated to the import and export of food.

The data clearly indicate that initiatives at augmenting food security in the region have benefitted small states such as Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. The extent to which these benefits have been accrued needs to be significantly enhanced. For example, although Jamaica is now exporting more food than it is importing, the country's food import bill rose from US $730,660,000 in 2007 to US $805,995,000 in 2010 (Statistical Institute of Jamaica 2012).

The region has made significant advances in securing the energy security of the region. However the national budgets of many Caribbean small states are still premised on non-renewable sources of energy as their primary energy consumable. Although many regional initiatives and Caribbean small states are ardently developing and adopting alternative energy strategies, however these policies need to be mainstreamed as soon as possible. Due to the limited energy resources worldwide, progress with the implementation of strategies focused on alternative sources of energy cannot be incremental, but rather needs to be fuelled.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in the region have proven to be very beneficial to the susceptible and vulnerable Caribbean small states. The threats of climate change and natural disasters require a worldwide approach in, at its most basic level, reducing the concentrations of greenhouse gases and chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere. The environment as a global good needs to be addressed on an international scale. Regional attempts at mitigating disasters, however have proven to be more effective than international conventions which are still under dispute by the powerbroker rivalries of the developed nations. However the recognition by Caribbean small states of the fact that small states cannot independently protect themselves against the threats posed by climate change serves as a vital focal point for the development and continuance of regional approaches in tackling such challenges.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The contemporary security agenda facing the Caribbean small states are not insurmountable, but they require regional cooperation in order to pool together the requisite technical and financial requirements to adequately address the security concerns challenging the region. Vulnerabilities of many of these small states need to be diminished through policies and programmes aimed at augmenting the resilience and viability of such countries. Transformations of positions of vulnerability into positions of resilience and viability can be achieved through sustained economic development. It is essential for Caribbean small states, in a bid to enhance and maintain their economic development and thereby effectively manage their security agenda, to implement policies geared towards promoting

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5Corroborated by the author with data provided by the World Trade Organisation for March 2011.
Chart 1. Caribbean Small States' Food Import and Export Bill, 2010

Country

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent
- Trinidad and Tobago

Food Exports - Share in Total Economy Exports
Food Imports - Share in Total Economy Imports
sustainable economic development not only within their country, but in the region.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CLACS) attempts to do such by establishing programmatic commitments to economic coordination and cooperation. The Community, in the Latin American and Caribbean Unity Summit Declaration (2010) affirmed their “commitment to integrated regional development which should be inclusive and equitable, taking into account the importance of ensuring favorable treatment for the small vulnerable economies and land-locked and island developing states” (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States 2010).

It should be recognized that CARICOM IMPACS is a valuable mechanism for regional security, and may be broadened to complement and supplement Latin American regional security issues that are already in place. Within the context of the changing hemispheric environment, there is a vital role to be placed by IMPACS within the framework of the potential for sharing information, intermediation and collaboration in security areas. IMPACS can play a critical function for enhancing regional initiatives, especially under UNASUR and CLACS if the organization is well organized and precisely structured.

Regional initiatives by Caribbean and Latin American states require a prioritization of agendas as integral to the success of the process. Since the transnational nature of security threats require a collaborative approach, states need to be clear about priorities, resource allocation and commitments. Sustainable regional partnerships in the region require deeper commitments and not merely promises of action. A major shortfall of past integration agreements have been a clear lack of commitment by states to uphold the constituted agreements. This is largely because there exists no major incentive or penalties for a state’s failure to maintain its commitment to the process. This therefore results in weak regional institutions. Scholars and politicians have identified lack of political will, proper implementation of regionalism strategies and measures of compliance as problematic areas facing sustainable regional partnerships.

In order to achieve sustainable regional integration movements among Caribbean and Latin American states, the lack of political will of some states needs to be addressed. Ralph Gonsalves (2006) has questioned the existence of true political will to make the integration process a success. Notably, regional initiatives have witnessed what seems to be a lack of participation or diminutive interest. Clearly, in order to achieve a sustained partnership, a continued effort on the part of all members is requisite. Saunders (2008) has argued however that many regional leaders are not adequately cognisant of the benefits to be accrued from a fully functioning, expanded and enriched integration initiative. He posits that unless this issue is appropriately addressed, the goal of a sustainable regional movement will remain elusive.

In addition, similar factor endowments and geographical proximity mean that some Caribbean and Latin American states contend for market access. Possible rivalry among Caribbean and Latin American nations needs to be properly managed. This became evident in the 1990s while the Association of Caribbean States was being established. During this period Caribbean and Latin American integration was being promoted as a medium of addressing development and as a form of collective security for the region. Latin American states, however,
were simultaneously complaining to the World Trade Organisation that preferential treatment granted to the small states of the Caribbean for agricultural products was unfair. This subsequently resulted in the removal of preferential trade granted to the Caribbean small states. The consequences of this witnessed the wiping out of the ability of these small states to compete against the large scale banana producers of Latin America.

Sovereignty issues are especially pertinent when trying to address sustainable regional partnerships. Sustainability of regional initiatives requires that states surrender some measure of sovereignty in order to facilitate the deepening of the integration process.

Iglesias (2000) identifies key factors which Caribbean and Latin American States need to attain in order to develop sustainable regional partnerships. These include political vision and regional statesmanship, the strengthening of institutions, a strong multilateral support system, harmonizing disciplines, increased macroeconomic coordination, the improving of infrastructure, and the improved capacity to evaluate integration processes and progress. It has also been ascertained that an enormous language barrier exists between Caribbean and Latin American States. Addressing this issue and “promoting ongoing, regular exchange of teachers, researchers and university academics as a result of furthering regional integration” (Government of Guyana 2007) can prove to enhance the sustainability of regional initiatives among Caribbean and Latin American states.

Sustainable regional partnerships should be premised on functionalist logic and centred around the tenets of cohesion, consensus, cooperation, integration and predictability. Caribbean and Latin American states should consider new regionalism approaches. Regionalism can be described as a functional relation that bundles multiple nations with their political, economic and cultural inheritance, often based on the geographical advantage. While ‘old’ regionalism had been concerned with relations between groups of neighbouring states, new regionalism advances the prospect that countries can align themselves with other states outside of their specific geographical area.

Caribbean and Latin American nations should recognize that new regionalism goes beyond geography. It is not confined to formal inter-state regional organizations and institutions. Moreover, as Fredrik Soderbaum (2003) puts it “… this new regionalism is a range of formal and informal mid-level ‘triangular’ relations among not only states but also non-state actors, notably civil societies [the media] and private companies – it is a central aspect of the ‘new’ inter- or transnational relations.” In addition, new regionalism is conceptualized in a multipolar international environment and within the context of globalization. Fredrik Soderbaum further states that this new regionalism is a voluntary process from within the emerging regions, where the constituent states and other actors experience the imperative of cooperation, an ‘urge to merge’, or the pooling of sovereignty in order to tackle new global challenges. Ramiro Pizarro (1999) goes further to attest that new regionalism is also associated with ‘deep integration’ because it transcends free trade issues by promoting wide economic liberalization projects which include other areas of the international economy while also maintaining consistency with the World Trade Organisation’s norms.

Diana Tussie (2003) reasons that new regionalism is a response to new global risks. Contemporary economic and security risks now
being confronted by states are heightening insecurity and leading nations to attest to the idea of pooling sovereignty and managing these challenges collectively. New regionalism is also regarded as a mechanism through which the international bargaining capacity of a regional group can be strengthened.

Caribbean and Latin American states need to bear in mind that in order to promote sustainable regional partnerships, there must be transparency and accountability. In addition, the empowerment of local governments needs to be facilitated and the empowerment of the citizenry needs to be enforced so that regional efforts can be progressive. Moreover, all the constituent components of the region as well as the region as a people, must work in collaboration to share a common awareness and by extension a common platform to adequately address the region’s security challenges.

The limited capabilities of Caribbean small states are not uniform in magnitude and measurement. Some states will, for reasons such as economic development, size, resource base and natural endowments, be in a heightened position of competence in contending with vulnerabilities and regional security threats than others. The inherent nature of a collaborative regional approach may therefore require states with fewer deficiencies to contribute more to the collective effort. Such requirements of asymmetrical reciprocity may lead states to question whether their intrinsic realist reflex of self-interest and preservation should be forgone for the communal interests of the region.

However, issues of security have served to present a formidable challenge to states in the Caribbean and Latin American region. The reconceptualised framework for security within states in the region necessitates that Caribbean and Latin American states must further facilitate responses to security related challenges which will, by necessity, be broadened to include sustainable regional partnerships, approaches and integration initiatives. Caribbean and Latin American states, compelled by their contemporary security agenda, are now required to adapt to their individualistic unique security concerns and adopt collective integrationist resolutions which are the most effective means by which to adequately address such consistently intensifying security challenges. The schema of security challenges provides the medium through which sustainable and advantageous integration initiatives and collaborations can be conceived and further developed among Caribbean and Latin American nations, to the benefit of all. The onus is on these states to utilise such prospects which will serve to greatly enhance their competency and rigours, both as a nation and as a region, within the international system.
References


CARICOM. 2006. Agreement for Establishing the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security; Article 12 (b), 6 July.


