



EDITORIAL

Editorial

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Welcome to the final issue of the *Caribbean Journal of International Relations & Diplomacy* of 2013. This has been an extremely exciting year for us, in which we launched the journal, and produced four issues carrying a wide range of interesting academic and policy-related articles. We strongly believe that the CJIRD has rapidly begun to fill a gap – a gap which is characterised by a dearth of accessible, timely and lively research and writing relating to the changing international system in which the Caribbean finds itself – in an expressive and original way.

Indeed, already in its young life the journal has covered many issues. These include: Caribbean integration and the question of ‘convergence’; climate change, REDD+ and the diplomacy surrounding the upcoming SIDS+20 meeting in Samoa; CARICOM’s relations with Canada and the EU; regional integration in Latin America; and contemporary change in the non-independent Caribbean. According to the feedback that we have received, our ‘Reflection’ section is proving particularly popular. So far, we have seen how the Caribbean region has been viewed historically in the eyes of US presidents through their memoirs; what distinguishes the kind of diplomacy practised by small states; and, in an evocative article which has been my own personal favourite so far, how Professor Vaughan Lewis sees his own history – entwined as it is with the development of the region itself – as a West Indian academic and diplomat.

In this issue we cast our net yet wider in our search for exciting work which looks out beyond the parochial debates with which we

can sometimes be excessively concerned in the region. Catherine Ali begins with a wide-ranging analysis of conflict mediation at the 'Bail Boys Court' in Trinidad. Although a domestic issue empirically, questions of transitional justice have been critical in international relations and, especially, democratization studies for many years now, and Catherine's research holds important lessons for how we think about and practice the delicate diplomatic art of mediation. Following this, our forum this time looks at contemporary change in the Middle East. Mojtaba Mahdavi begins by analysing the geopolitical drivers and implications of Iran's recent, long overdue, and still tentative rapprochement with the West. Then, we have two terrific articles on Syria. Arthur Snell explains the long historical genesis of the Syrian crisis, setting it in its regional and religious context. Richard Blewitt analyses the UN's involvement in the crisis, setting his discussion within the context of the emerging norm of 'responsibility to protect' (often shortened to the acronym R2P). We then move onto a discussion with Ambassador Albert Ramdin of the Organization of American States. And the issue rounds off with a reflection by Paul Brummell, the outgoing UK High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, who contemplates his time in the region along with the evolving nature of UK-Caribbean relations.

We would like to thank you for all of your support in our first year. We have lots of plans for 2014, including special issues and fora on the G20, Caribbean integration, regional and hemispheric security, and, soon, the launch of a book reviews section. If you wish to submit an article, are interested in reviewing a book for us, or simply wish to give us some feedback – whether positive or more critical - we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to send us an email; full details are available via our website.