

Lima Support Group, may prove effective models for conflict management because their approach is to dissociate local disturbances from global rivalries. Regional bodies such as the Sistema Economico de Latin America (SELA) could identify areas of common interest, and contribute to the formulation of joint negotiating positions. In this regard, particular attention might be given to widening the Caribbean Development Co-operation Committee (CDCC), a Ministerial Committee established within the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to include Venezuela, Colombia, Panama and Mexico. Such a widened mechanism could provide a consultative body with integrative potential, which might be more immune to external penetration or pressure than the Committee as presently constituted.

Canada

In a review of Canadian policy towards the Caribbean, undertaken in 1980, the member states of CARICOM were accorded a special relationship with Canada. The review put emphasis on economic co-operation and limited security assistance. Nevertheless Canadian policy towards the region is founded on a fragile consensus of public opinion which sets certain limits to Canadian action and rules out certain options; for example, it has not been possible for Canada to consider the provision of military assistance to Belize, nor to engage in large scale military training programmes.

On the specific issue of military security, Canada has yet to develop an effective bilateral and multilateral strategy for co-operation with those Caribbean governments whose policies have brought them into conflict with the United States. The maintenance of diplomatic, aid and trade relations with such governments will be most effective if those relations are supported by an active foreign policy. While the primary responsibility for formulating prudent policies that reconcile local needs and geo-political realities remains with Caribbean policy makers, Canada could exercise a useful diplomatic role in mediating potential disputes and in interpreting to others the policy imperatives of the Caribbean States.

Since the late 1960s, both Canadian imports from and exports to the Caribbean have decreased to a small percentage of Canadian foreign trade; and there has been a similar decline in Canadian foreign investment in the region. CARIBCAN has recently been established in response to a CARICOM initiative with the aim of providing duty-free access for CARICOM products to the Canadian market. While it is still too early to determine whether this scheme will be effective, it has been criticized for excluding precisely those products, such as clothing,