

power. Unlike the earlier situation, there is now a growing disparity between military power and economic power; the United States has lost its post-war predominance over the international economic system, and despite current rhetoric, protectionist pressures are significant and growing; they could be of great potential damage to the Caribbean states.

Nevertheless, there is in the Caribbean a certain ambivalence in the relationship with the United States. On the one hand, the US is accepted as a guarantor of regional security; on the other, it is perceived as the source of constraints and interventions in matters which are regarded by Caribbean states as part of their sovereign jurisdiction.

### **The Major Regional States**

The major concerns of small Caribbean states in their relations with Latin American countries, especially those of the Caribbean littoral, are likely to revolve around the role the latter can play in the development of security arrangements which would minimize the possibility of regional conflict and perhaps constrain superpower rivalry in the Caribbean area.

Several of these regional powers are now themselves more limited in their ability to assume major leadership roles. Venezuela's financial crisis has resulted in diminished Petro-Bolivar diplomacy. Mexico's leadership aspirations are now almost entirely focussed on the Central American region. Cuba, on the other hand, remains, despite its current economic problems, one of the major factors influencing future events in the region, and its stature permits it to have its own agenda. While the Soviet Union may continue to exploit local or regional crises, it cannot be automatically assumed that Cuban and Soviet objectives coincide, given the complexities of South-South relationships.

As far as security arrangements are concerned, the Organization of American States (OAS) is not at present in the mainstream of dispute settlement and conflict management in the Caribbean. However, with the projected amendment of its Charter to permit the membership of Guyana and Belize and its commitment to the principle of representative democracy, the OAS may provide in the future an important diplomatic forum for CARICOM small states.

The Rio Treaty is perceived in the CARICOM region more as the occasion for intervention than as a source of security, and it therefore attracts little interest and has few adherents.

Such existing sub-regional initiatives as the Contadora Group and the