

More payment for the past

potential insecurity that could be generated by tiny internal markets, high per capita costs of infrastructure and rising, independent expectations. In other words the Caribbean began the process of confronting its "vulnerability" a long time before it became globally fashionable to do so. As a result the Caribbean has many extremely intricate regional arrangements which allow variously for coordination of foreign policy, harmonization of legal practice, a regional and sub-regional common market, coordinated approaches to economic and industrial policy, and, in the case of the OECS, defence policy.

The countries of the Caribbean have taken the concept of regional Community, in a relatively short space of time, as far as a group of small, relatively poor states could. And yet it was in a Caribbean of a complex series of regional development and security arrangements that the Grenada crisis occurred. It is therefore not enough to recommend regionally coordinated approaches to economic development, foreign policy, to security, political problem-solving, and so on. It was not the absence of the such "self-help" arrangements that contributed to the Grenada intervention; it was their failure.

Case of Grenada

The challenges to the post-Grenada Caribbean therefore go beyond those outlined in the report. How may the regional arrangements be strengthened and their effectiveness enhanced? How may the regional mechanisms be structured so as to avoid external intervention? And when a domestic or regional crisis appears to be resolvable by international assistance only, what are the circumstances which will legitimate external assistance, and what are the mechanisms through which that assistance should be requested and delivered? Above all who — given the absence of a Commonwealth peacekeeping force — should provide the assistance?

On the international level the report also leaves unanswered the critical question of the Grenada situation. What should have been the role and function of sympathetic and influential governments when that small state ran afoul of the United States, and when attempts at reconciliation were rejected, thereby weakening the internal position of the government involved?

Inadvertent intervention

Further, while the relationship between sovereignty and external assistance is implicitly acknowledged throughout the document, that is the very issue at the heart of the Caribbean debate on Grenada, and of the division over the security question. It is true that small states will need all the external

assistance they may receive; it is a given in the report that wherever possible that assistance should be negotiated on a regional basis, and dispatched through impartial regional arrangements. But when the relationship is as asymmetrical as is the one between the Eastern Caribbean and the United States, even programs regionally or federally developed, negotiated and delivered, may not insure the sovereign independence of the small countries in the medium and long term. Today's limited security arrangements may become tomorrow's hegemony, and the change may be in the the geopolitical environment and so have very little to do with the participating sovereignties. Intervention in that situation may be more Latin American style punitive action (uninvited, and unwanted) than Eastern Caribbean rescue mission. The question facing the Eastern Caribbean is one of how assistance may be obtained without entrenching the long-term potential for bartering sovereignty — or as the poet Derek Walcott has put it, without ensuring that the Caribbean becomes a "green pond . . . mantling behind the Greek facades of Washington." In this context the report's gentle reminder that the collective security arrangements of the United Nations, which have yet to be made fully operational or effective, are of great potential benefit to some of its smaller members, is apposite.

Role of international community

Although the report's recommendations for regional action leave a host of questions unanswered, and despite the obvious gaps in the framework established, the report's greatest significance (and therefore value to the Caribbean) is in its outreach to the international community. It documents almost poignantly the problems confronting small states, even though it does not in all cases convince the reader of their exclusiveness. For that reason it is with sympathetic bilateral donors (of which Canada is certainly one) that the report may have its greatest significance. It has also successfully made the case for assisting small states in their attempts to establish effective representation at international forums, and has kept alive the issue of the potential graduation of several Caribbean countries from the concessional lending practices of the International Development Association (IDA) on the basis of per capita (therefore arguably inappropriate) criteria. And while it leaves unanswered several long-term issues facing the Commonwealth Caribbean, it has probably proven that there is no such thing as small-state security. Finally, in advocating regional arrangements already undertaken by both the Caribbean Community and the OECS states, it has reaffirmed to a skeptical external world the legitimacy of those arrangements even while recognizing their limitations. The diplomatic exercise has succeeded where scholarly conceptualism may have failed. □