



INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Date: November 23rd, 2020

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KEY EVENTS

On November 23, 2020, Brigadier-General Archilus Phillips presented *Interagency Collaboration and National Security* at the 2020 CASIS West Coast Security Conference. Key points of discussion included the perspective of a small state, Trinidad & Tobago, and their security strategies; achievements; challenges; Interagency Collaboration (IAC); the history of Trinidad & Tobago; and Caribbean security. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period.

NATURE OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

Brigadier-General Archilus Phillips discussed the perspective of a small state, Trinidad & Tobago, and their security strategies, successes, and challenges. He also included the importance of IAC among international, local, and regional bodies. A historical overview was presented through highlighting the work of retired Colonel Jaimie SA Ogilvie OD, MSc, MMAS, MSS. A tabulated historical review of the emergence of a strategic or operational framework, as noted by retired Lieutenant Colonel CW Bishop, was also examined. The organizational structure of Trinidad & Tobago's Ministry of National Security was also examined as well as the strategic framework for the Fifth Summit of the Americas (VSOA). In conclusion, Brigadier-General Archilus Phillips discussed the issue of illicit drug trafficking, including the Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago (GORTT) responses to the drug problem.

Question and Answer Period

The main discourse during the question and answer period surrounded the difficulty of amending historical issues between countries, despite the potential

need for this to occur to achieve collaboration between nations and possibly improve a country's security.

BACKGROUND

Presentation

The focus of this presentation was on the perspective of a small state, Trinidad & Tobago, and their security strategies. Due to their small size, diversity, and possibly having fewer resources than developed nations, IAC may be considered imperative in addressing security challenges in Caribbean countries. IAC in Trinidad has evolved and has presented some challenges on a tactical level. Despite this, small island developing states (SIDS), like Trinidad & Tobago, have possibly had both successes and failures at optimizing the elusive pursuit of IAC. Despite the challenges faced, Trinidad & Tobago, along with a few larger regional islands, are the leading countries in security in the Caribbean.

In a literature review done by Colonel Ogilvie some years ago, he discussed a historical overview of security partnerships' efforts with other states. Before post World War II, as early as 1947, the Rio Treaty was signed, with the Organization of American States (OAS) being formed the following year. Both had similar objectives for the Western Hemisphere at that time, with efforts to promote hemispheric security by confronting shared problems. After this period, with Trinidad & Tobago being near to achieving independence, the short-lived West Indian Regiment was formed in 1958. This potentially signaled the recognition of a need for a cooperative approach to safeguard the security interests of the region. Later, in 1973, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was formed. It included a multitude of Caribbean countries, of which Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago were members. Although this arrangement was primarily economic in nature, its establishment also played a key role in the provision of security through the coordination of foreign policy. In 1979, there was a coup in Grenada that resulted in several security entities being formed. In 1981, both the Regional Security System (RSS) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) were developed, with the prior being developed in Dominica, and the latter developing as a subgroup of the RSS.

The OECS, was established through the Treaty of Basseterre to, inter alia, and emphasized the desire to solidify the existing security arrangements in that part of the sub-region. This potentially assisted in dealing with security challenges at that time. Subsequent collective military groupings with broader participation were also involved in restoring democracy and security in Grenada in 1983, in Trinidad & Tobago in 1990 after an attempted Coup, and in Haiti in 1994,

through the first large-scale deployment under US leadership of a multi-nation CARICOM battalion. Subsequently, the Trinidad & Tobago Defense Force (TTDF) led humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Grenada post-Hurricane Ivan in 2004. In 2006, the Treaty on Security Assistance among Caribbean Member States and its subsequent Protocol established the CARICOM Operations, Planning and Coordination Staff (COPACS). Some of the specific objectives of this treaty were recently exercised in the pursuit of regional cooperation aimed at guaranteeing security during the hosting of the International Cricket Council's Cricket World Cup 2007 (ICC CWC 2007). Since then, Trinidad & Tobago has played host to at least three other significant events in which the operational coordination of a collective grouping of regional military, paramilitary, and law-enforcement entities in a Joint Interagency Multinational Task Force (JIMTF) security arrangement was paramount. The hosted events for which such security corporation was necessary, were VSOA 2008, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), 2009, and Exercise Fused Response 2018, a bilateral security corporation exercise between the GORTT and the United States Government in April 2018.

The role of the military historically in progressing the security of Trinidad & Tobago was also discussed. Lieutenant Colonel Bishop's work on challenges of regional security framework, specifically amongst the military was presented. At that time, there were challenges to improving the security system. For this to occur, the military had a major role to play. Lieutenant Colonel Bishop attempted to create a formal military security arrangement in the Caribbean based on either the collective or the cooperative concept. The framework included Bishop's research observations; issues considered and conclusions drawn by Bishop; and comparisons to the emergence of the Generic JIMTF Strategic and Operational Framework. Firstly, Bishop observed that there was continued ambivalence at the political level that resulted in various challenges for regional security at that time. From this, Bishop concluded that the traditional concepts of security seemed unsuited for the Caribbean milieu and that it relied on common perceptions of threats. Additionally, they were centred on arrangements between states and on coercive measures to respond to those security threats. In the Caribbean, there was neither agreement on a regional threat perception, nor capacity to coerce or use military force if required and regional countries focused on their own interests. Also, given non-traditional domestic concerns that seemed more challenging, regional collective and/or cooperative measures that were unlikely to alleviate the dire socio-economic conditions, garnered no political appeal.

The need for political consensus has emerged as a prerequisite to the effective functioning of collective and cooperative security arrangement and achieving this has, according to Bishop, proven over time to be very elusive in the Caribbean. Additionally, Bishop has observed professional eagerness to work together and benefit from available opportunities across the hemisphere at the military leadership level. The experiences of Haiti, from professional military interaction through meetings and conferences, and the annual Tradewinds' exercises had all helped to expand military cooperation in the region. This also led to a potential expansion in trade in the region. A third observation made by Bishop was related to the role of collaboration amongst the region's militaries. He concluded that these military interactions had helped to build possible capacity among Caribbean forces and had also helped to maintain the image of strong institutions that could support the internal structures of countries. A fourth observation was the catalytic role of continued military level operational coordination. Bishop noted that cohesive arrangements would bring together limited capacities to help the small countries maintain international political relevance for the region. Believing that the militaries in the region had recognized the benefits of working together. Bishop's thesis had supported the view that operational level coordination should have been able to meet the military requirements and challenges of the threat agenda in the Caribbean, then and in the future. Moreover, operational level coordination, he contended, could have built cohesion and further cemented the embryonic military practice that had emerged in the region and could have provided the basis for a regional response to any international event such as the 1994 Haitian Coup. A fifth observation made by Bishop was at the political level. He noted that an operational arrangement would have allowed governments to maintain control of their forces and other national military assets and that there would have been opportunities for dissenting views. He argued that there could have been accountability to national capitals and that individual governments could have maintained control over the participation of their forces in any action, for whatever purpose they desired.

On the political level, Bishop noted that an operational arrangement overtime would have allowed for all countries to be included in planning and decision-making regardless of size and capacity constraints. Bishop thought it could potentially minimize the burden on a country's financial resources as states may contribute existing capacity and any additional contribution would be based on individual national needs. Operational level coordination could have responded to many of the concerns raised in his research. Finally, Bishop believed that at that time military cooperation was necessary to provide many advantages to the region. He argued that this would require possible pooling of resources to

execute. The generic strategic framework for Trinidad & Tobago's operational model was presented with great potential for use but possibly not greatly recognized yet.

Trinidad & Tobago's branches of the Ministry of National Security were also examined. These branches included the Trinidad & Tobago Police Force (TTPS), Strategic Services Agency (SSA), Trinidad & Tobago Defense Force (TTDF), Trinidad & Tobago Fire Services (TTFS), Immigration Division, Office of Disaster and Preparedness (ODPM), Trinidad & Tobago Cadet Force (TTCF), Trinidad & Tobago Prison Services (TTPRS), Forensic Science Center, and General Administration. Additionally, the VSOA strategic framework was also discussed, involving the Joint Intelligence Group (JIG), the group of intelligence agencies that functions in Trinidad & Tobago. Under the strategic command group is the strategic command intelligence group (SCIG). Their work involved collaborating with various countries including the USA, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, and other CARICOM member states. The Strategic Command Operations Group (SCOG) emerged with 3 lines: forces coordination line, forces generation line and forces employment line. This showed how various entities were pulled together, with the help of various sectors to result in the Bronze sectors of the model. The SCOG model was utilized for discussions that took place at the VSOA. To conclude GORTT's responses to the drug problem were examined. This model depicted the efforts to address the supply side and demand reduction that contribute to money laundering, which is a key factor to address.

Question and Answer Period

When Brigadier General Archilus Phillips was asked whether he believed that collaboration between nations that have unresolved historical issues will aid in promoting positive relationships between the nations, he responded with discussions surrounding the challenges of achieving this. He explained that although this could be challenging, it is not impossible. He indicated that it would potentially involve various types of networking to build new relationships. He explained it would not be simple to achieve positive relationships because building trust between groups and nations that have a history of conflict may be difficult.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Presentation

- Although there are tactical level challenges with IAC, it may be considered imperative in addressing security challenges in Caribbean countries.

- As Trinidad and Tobago reached its independence, this also signaled the need for a cooperative approach to safeguard the security interests of the region.
- According to Lieutenant Colonel Bishop, the traditional concepts of security seemed unsuited for the Caribbean milieu relying on common perceptions of threats.
- Non-traditional domestic concerns that seemed more challenging and/or cooperative measures that were unlikely to alleviate the dire socioeconomic conditions, garnered no political appeal.
- The GORTT's response to drug supply and demand reduction, which contribute to money laundering, is a key factor to address.

Question Period

- Although collaboration between countries that have historical conflict may be potentially challenging to address, it may not be impossible to achieve.



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Published by the Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare and Simon Fraser University

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