
COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES CARIBBEAN (COMUSFORCARIB)
IN THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sunshine and tradewinds wafting through palm trees may be the scene for vacations for most people, but for the men and women assigned to COMUSFORCARIB, those things constitute the working environment. With its headquarters located in Key West, Florida, COMUSFORCARIB is the United States command responsible for the Caribbean.



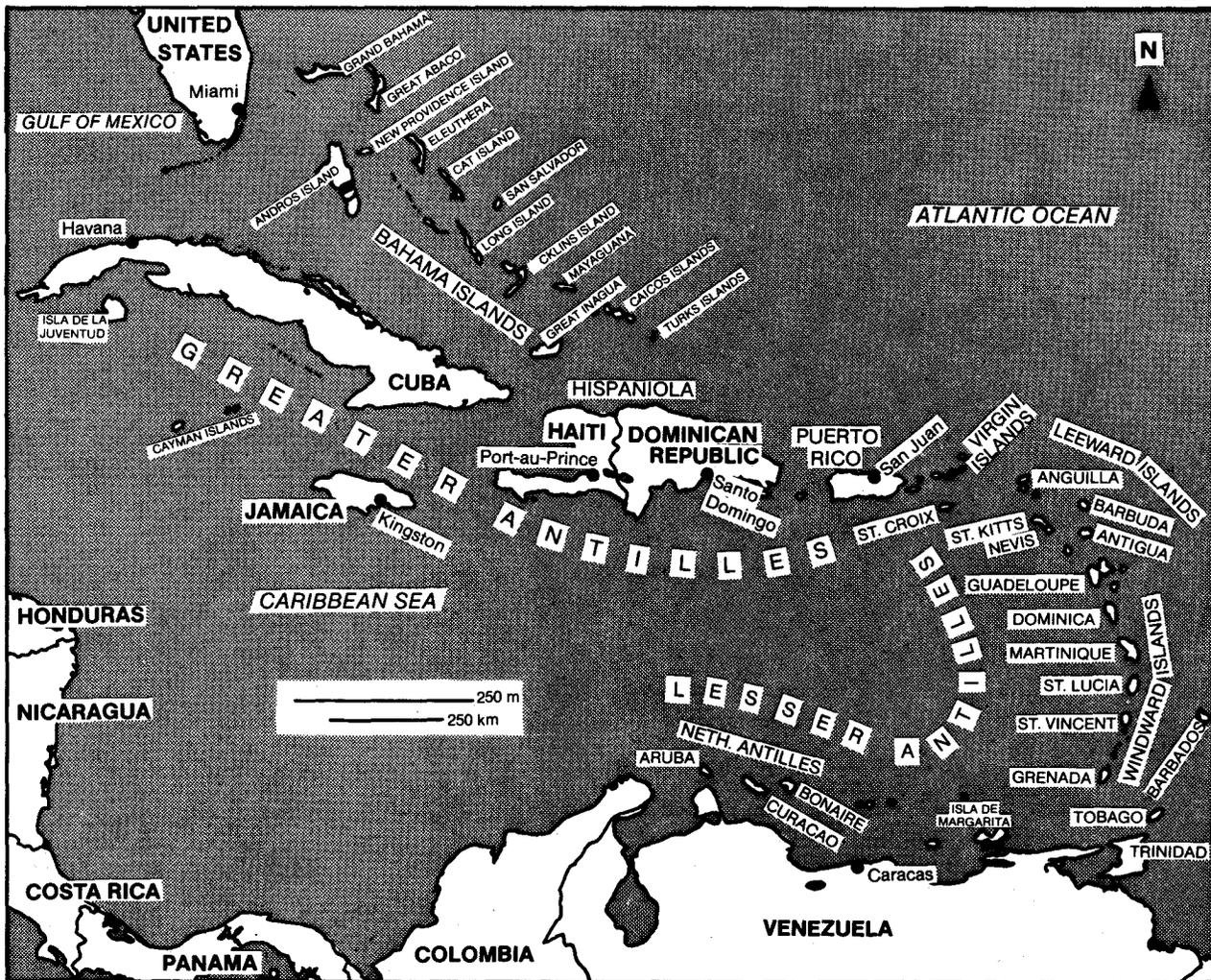
Headquarters Building, COMUSFORCARIB,
Key West Naval Air Station, Florida

A result of the 1981 consolidation of the former Antilles Defense Command in Puerto Rico and the former Caribbean Contingency Joint Task Force located in Key West, the U.S. Forces Caribbean serves as a sub-unified command of Commander-in-Chief Atlantic. The purpose of the realignment was to streamline the Unified Command structure by placing responsibility for the entire Caribbean basin under one Commander. Rear Admiral Ralph R. Hedges is the commander of U.S. Forces Caribbean, and his staff is made up of officer and enlisted personnel from all five uniformed services of the United States.

The fact that COMUSFORCARIB has no operational units permanently assigned to it does not diminish the importance of the command or its responsibilities. The fact that many different types of forces will be assigned to the command to respond to varied contingencies as they arise, increases the complexity of the staff's planning and execution of its various missions.

The command's area of responsibility includes the waters and islands of the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and a portion of the Pacific Ocean bordering Central America. Thus, COMUSFORCARIB's area encompasses more than a dozen nations. What one should keep in mind, however, when examining the USFORCARIB area of responsibility is that it is in large measure a maritime zone. Although the diverse nature of the political, geographic, and demographic features of the nations in USFORCARIB's area of responsibility pose a considerable challenge, the sea lines of communication and the over one-and-a-half million square miles of open ocean encompassed by COMUSFORCARIB's area necessarily make a maritime strategy of high concern.

THE CARIBBEAN



Sixty-five percent of all the petroleum bound for the United States must pass through the Caribbean, as must also seventy-five percent of the nation's aluminum requirements. In the event of global war, eighty-five percent of the Army's combat logistics required to re-enforce NATO will have to pass through the Straits of Florida or the Caribbean. Additionally, access to the Panama Canal, which serves as a funnel for Atlantic-Pacific ship traffic, must be maintained. Not only does the canal provide needed transit for the logistics which must pass through it, the canal is also essential for any potential shifting of maritime forces between the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. Finally,

the existence of an inimical Cuba astride two critical Caribbean ocean passages (the Yucatan Channel on the west and the Windward Passage on the east) only serves to increase the strategic importance and problems which exist for COMUSFORCARIB.

In addition to the potential wartime implications in the USFORCARIB area, there are a number of very real daily peacetime problems and activities confronting this region. Illegal drugs in multi-ton quantities are smuggled through the Caribbean every day. Extensive human migrations into the United States (most noticeably from Haiti and El Salvador) originate in Caribbean Basin countries. Finally, the rescue operation in Grenada in October of 1983 proved once more the importance the United States places on the Caribbean. Thus, it is the day to day effort to maintain peace and stability in the region which drives the U.S. Security Assistance Program in the COMUSFORCARIB area of responsibility.

In fact, security assistance constitutes a large and significant portion of the Command's daily peacetime operations. COMUSFORCARIB, in consultation with various host nations and country teams, has developed the following security assistance goals:

- Strengthen each country's armed forces capabilities to deal with an insurgency and maintain public order, as well as to provide a useful complement to U.S. capabilities during contingencies.
- Promote the modernization of each country's armed forces as well as the professionalization and continued orientation of their military leaders toward free world values.
- Facilitate the acquisition of needed military equipment from U.S. sources.
- Preclude the establishment of military bases or other activities hostile to both the United States and free world interests.

Nature of the Area

What is the character of these island nations for which COMUSFORCARIB has security assistance responsibility? Certainly from reading the travel sections of large newspapers and magazines one gets the impression (at least partially correct) that these islands possess great natural beauty, clean air and water, a year-round warm climate, and an abundance of naturally available foods (vegetables, fruits, and seafood). What one does not see in such advertisements is the comparative poverty of many of the inhabitants and thus the nations themselves. This underdevelopment has been brought on in part by centuries of often exploitative colonialization (many of the islands of the Lesser Antilles have earned their freedom only in the last six years), overpopulation (children still serve as "social security" in many islands), small size and a tropical climate which limits product diversity, limited natural resources, export dependent economies, dependence on food and petroleum imports (save for Trinidad and Tobago, an oil exporter), and the fragile ecology of "paradise."

Natural catastrophes, most noticeably hurricanes, can and do wreak havoc on these small, somewhat isolated nations. Hurricanes David and Frederick, for instance, which swept through the Caribbean back-to-back in 1979 nearly destroyed the agricultural economy of Dominica along with most of its fishing fleet, and caused widespread flooding (resulting in isolation, lack of food, and destruction of crops) on even the large island of Hispaniola.

Tourism is a significant source of income in many of these nations. However, tourism is seasonal in nature and dependent on the economic health of developed western nations. Moreover, tourism does not provide the broad economic base needed to allow these nations to develop. The result is that, collectively, these nations are poor and in some cases lack the organizational and economic base to field an effective defense or security force. In fact, the countries of the Caribbean Basin have the world's smallest military establishments relative to their size. Thus, the U.S. Security Assistance Program is absolutely essential to the maintenance of stability in this region which is critical to American security.

Security Assistance Program

In October, 1983, CINCLANT transferred responsibility for the Security Assistance Program in the Caribbean to COMUSFORCARIB. Though coincidental, the timing of this shift, almost concurrent with the Grenada rescue mission, put USFORCARIB security assistance activities at the forefront of a renewed United States' commitment to security assistance in the region.

The most immediate and direct result was the USFORCARIB security assistance staff's assumption of control over Project Island Breeze. In the simplest terms, Project Island Breeze involves the maintenance of the multinational Caribbean Peacekeeping Force (CPF) stationed in Grenada. The CPF is scheduled to remain there until such time as elections are held and the new government is stabilized in power. Due to the disintegration of the Grenadian security forces, the Interim Commission in Grenada, which was established to perform governmental functions at the end of hostilities, required the support of a peacekeeping force. That force, consisting of personnel from Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St Christopher-Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, has been in Grenada since October of 1983 and has, of course, required substantial logistic support. [Editor's Note: \$5 million has been appropriated for CPF operations for FY 1985.]

An adjunct to the Island Breeze program has been the development of training programs for Special Service Units (SSUs) for each of the eight nations in the CPF. These SSUs have been trained by United States military members to serve as a quick-response, highly-skilled nuclei for defense forces for each of the islands. The development of these forces is part of an overall security assistance goal for the development of regional forces with the capability of self-defense, self-sufficiency, and internal stability for the island nations of the Lesser Antilles.

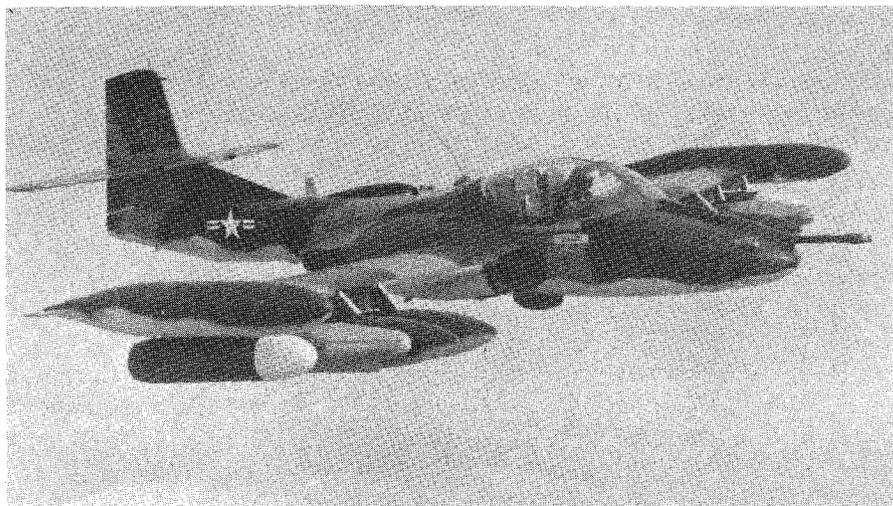
Probably the most visible security assistance program handled by COMUSFORCARIB in the Eastern Caribbean to date has been the acquisition and transfer of three 65-foot patrol boats to the island-nations of Antigua, Dominica, and St. Lucia in April/May 1984. The new boats (manufactured by Swiftships of Morgan City, Louisiana) were moved from the United States to

their new homes by crews from each of the islands accompanied by U.S. Coast Guard three-man Technical Assistance Field Teams (TAFTS). These TAFTS then remained on each island to help teach maintenance and operations for a total training period of one year.



Patrol Boats Liberta (Antigua, P-01), Melville (Dominica, D-4), and Defender (St. Lucia, P-02). (Photo courtesy of Swiftships and Skeets Photo Service.)

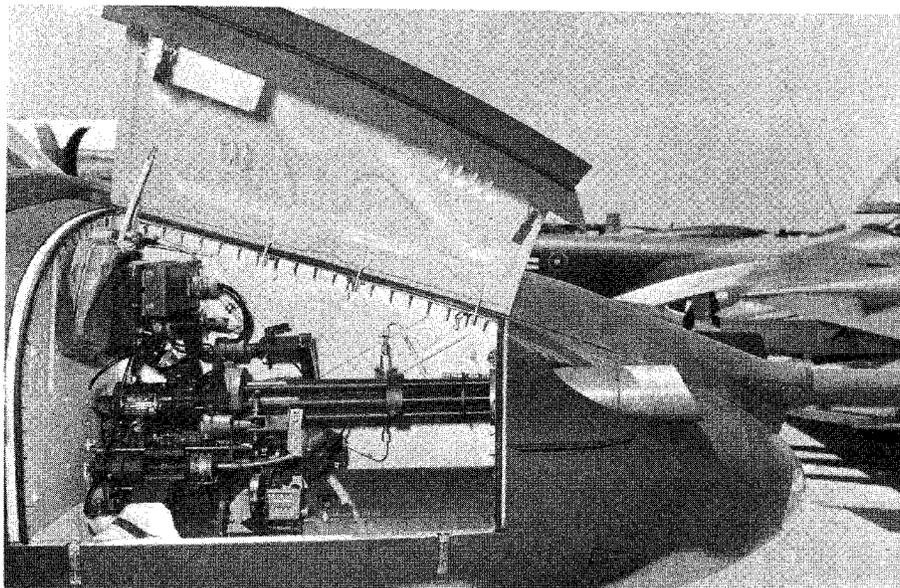
Coast Guard personnel were selected for the TAFTs primarily because U.S. Coast Guard missions and procedures most closely approximate those needed by the small island navies/coast guards in the Eastern Caribbean. This development of Eastern Caribbean island navies/coast guards is an ongoing Security Assistance program for COMUSFORCARIB. Presently underway are acquisition procedures for patrol boat procurements for Grenada and St. Christopher-Nevis. Both of these nations will also likely receive long-term training from Coast Guard TAFTs.



A-37B aircraft of the same type as that provided to the Dominican Republic. (Photo courtesy of Cessna Aircraft.)

The larger islands in the Caribbean have not been neglected in the Security Assistance program managed by COMUSFORCARIB. The Dominican Republic (which shares the Island of Hispaniola with Haiti) received four Cessna A-37 aircraft in July of 1984. The acquisition of these aircraft

(known officially as "Peace Quisqueya") constitutes the largest single transaction yet made by the Dominican Republic through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. The total Peace Quisqueya program amounted to \$5.5 million, of which \$1.8 million was for the aircraft, the balance being used for follow-on training, equipment, and spare parts. Peace Quisqueya is a fine example of the Total Package Approach to FMS.



7.62MM rapid-fire machine gun mounted in the nose of the A-37B aircraft. (Photo courtesy of Cessna Aircraft.)

Also, in June and August 1984, the Dominican Republic Navy accepted two new 110-foot patrol boats through the FMS program. These two vessels were also constructed by Swiftships.



Patrol vessel Orion, one of two 110-foot long sister ships delivered to the Dominican Republic. (Photo courtesy of Swiftships and Skeets Photo Service.)

Security Assistance support does not always come in such large doses, however. For instance, the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program for Jamaica has yet to exceed \$250,000 for any fiscal year, even though the training for Jamaicans is considered to be especially valuable and effective. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, and in the Bahamas, the projected annual IMET funding is only \$50,000 per nation.

COMUSFORCARIB
SECURITY ASSISTANCE FUNDING
 (All figures in thousands of dollars)

	FY-1983		FY-1984		FY-1985 Programmed[1]		FY-1986 Projected	
	MAP	IMET	MAP	IMET	MAP	IMET	MAP	IMET
Eastern Caribbean (Less Grenada)	2,100	173	5,000	300	5,000	370	10,000	400
Jamaica	2,250	176	4,000	200	5,000	250	7,500	300
Dominican Republic	0	597	2,500	700	5,000	725	8,500	780
Haiti	0	387	300	450	---	450	2,500	600
Grenada[2]	0	0	2,000	100	---	---	---	---

Notes:

1. Represents Allocations of MAP and IMET Appropriations for FY 1985 Security Assistance Program.
2. FY85/86 MAP and IMET for Eastern Caribbean includes Grenada.

Military Liaison Office Participation

As is true with any security assistance program, success is dependent in large measure on the local management supplied by the U.S. Military Liaison Office (MLO) in each country. COMUSFORCARIB works with four MLOs: one each in Bridgetown, Barbados; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and Kingston, Jamaica.

Interestingly, two of these MLOs (Bridgetown and Kingston) have U.S. Coast Guard officers on their staffs, a situation arising in part from the previously noted need for Coast Guard experience and expertise when dealing with these nations. The Bridgetown MLO is also unique because its members act as the local managers for the security assistance programs for a number of admittedly small but, nonetheless, independent nations: Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Christopher-Nevis, and St. Vincent. In fact, the only nation in the extreme Eastern Caribbean for which the Bridgetown MLO does not currently have responsibility is Grenada. Grenada has, of course, been the recipient of special attention since October, 1983, including the establishment of an American Embassy there and the creation of a Security

Assistance Control Team (SACT). Basically, SACT's mission is to function as an MLO for that nation. Ultimately, once stability is assured and all peace-keeping forces are withdrawn from Grenada, the security assistance program for Grenada will devolve to MLO Bridgetown.

The MLOs in the COMUSFORCARIB are of extreme value in the establishment and maintenance of IMET programs. Because many of these nations have only the most basic levels of sophistication with regard to military equipment and procedures, the proper and effective employment of IMET programs is essential.

There are some problems which presently plague the IMET programs in the Caribbean. One is the monetary exchange rate: the recent strength of the U.S. dollar on the world currency market makes it difficult for these small nations to fund the travel and living allowance portions of student training in the U.S. Accordingly, when Travel and Lodging Allowance (TLA) costs are funded from the relatively small IMET programs, there is a concomitant drastic reduction in the amount of training available from their IMET dollars.

Another difficulty, but one which is not peculiar to the Caribbean, is English Language competency. The various nations in the USFORCARIB area of responsibility speak not only English but also French, Spanish, Dutch, and a host of creole amalgamations, all with varying local dialects. Naturally, these language problems can be overcome through the use of English Language training, but here again the monetary expenditure has a strong adverse impact on overall IMET funds.

Some of these problems can be, and have been, overcome by the use of Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) from the U.S. Navy Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (SCIATTS) in Panama and from other sources. Although an exception to general security assistance policy, it is certainly less expensive to bring two or three trainers to a nation to conduct classes which will be attended by forty than it is to attempt to send forty students stateside or elsewhere to get similar training.

Additionally, MLOs can take advantage of port calls by Navy and Coast Guard ships for professional exchanges and demonstrations of equipment and techniques. During late 1984, six of the island-nations of the Eastern Caribbean participated in UNITAS XXV, the annual U.S.-Latin American naval exercise.

Summary

The COMUSFORCARIB area obviously encompasses a wide variety of national characters, languages, economic development levels, and strategic challenges. The burden of COMUSFORCARIB is to meet these diverse problems with a flexible range of responses. There is no question that the Security Assistance program is an essential element in the overall COMUSFORCARIB plan for stability and security on the United States' "third border."