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Caribbean Region: Issues in U.S. Relations

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Summary

With some 34 million people and 16 independent nations sharing an African ethnic heritage, the Caribbean is a diverse region that includes some of the hemisphere's richest and poorest nations. The region consists of 13 island nations, from the Bahamas in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south; Belize, which is geographically located in Central America; and the two nations of Guyana and Suriname, located on the north central coast of South America. With the exception of Cuba and Haiti, Caribbean governments have generally respected the human rights of their citizens. Regular elections are the norm, and for the most part have been free and fair. Nevertheless, while many Caribbean nations have long democratic traditions, they are not immune to threats to their political stability, including terrorism. Many nations in the region experienced economic decline in 2001-2002 due to downturns in the tourism and agriculture sectors. With the exception of Haiti, most Caribbean economies have rebounded since 2003, although the extensive damage resulting from several storms in 2004 caused economic difficulties for several Caribbean nations.

U.S. interests in the Caribbean are diverse, and include economic, political, and security concerns. The Bush Administration describes the Caribbean as America's "third border," with events in the region having a direct impact on the homeland security of the United States. It maintains that Caribbean nations are "vital partners on security, trade, health, the environment, education, regional democracy, and other hemispheric issues."

The U.S.-Caribbean relationship is characterized by extensive economic linkages, cooperation on counter-narcotics efforts and security, and a sizeable U.S. foreign assistance program. U.S. aid supports a variety of projects to strengthen democracy, promote economic growth and development, alleviate poverty, and combat the AIDS epidemic in the region. Despite close U.S. relations with most Caribbean nations, there has been tension at times in the relationship. For example, relations between Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations and the United States became strained in the aftermath of the departure of Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide from power in February 2004. In the aftermath of several devastating storms in 2004, the United States is providing humanitarian assistance to the afflicted countries, including Haiti, Grenada, and Jamaica. Congress approved \$100 million in emergency supplemental funding for the region in the aftermath of the storms (P.L. 108-324).

This report deals with broader issues in U.S. relations with the Caribbean and does not include an extensive discussion of Haiti and Cuba. U.S. policy toward these Caribbean nations is covered in two CRS products: CRS Report RL32294, *Haiti: Developments and U.S. Policy Since 1991 and Current Congressional Concerns*, by Maureen Taft-Morales; and CRS Report RL32730, *Cuba: Issues for the 109th Congress*, by Mark P. Sullivan.

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Caribbean Region: Issues in U.S. Relations

Conditions in the Region

The Caribbean, encompassing 16 independent nations, is a diverse region of some 34 million people that includes some of the hemisphere's richest and poorest nations (see **Table 1**). The region consists of 13 island nations, from the Bahamas in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south; Belize, which is geographically located in Central America; and the two nations of Guyana and Suriname, located on the north central coast of South America. Many countries in the region share a common African ethnic and British colonial heritage, while Cuba and the Dominican Republic were Spanish colonies, Haiti was French, and Suriname was Dutch. The dates of independence of these countries range from Haiti in 1804 to St. Kitts and Nevis in 1983. The largest nations in terms of land area are Guyana and Suriname, while those with the largest populations are Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. The island nations of the Eastern Caribbean are among the smallest countries in the world. Politically, all Caribbean nations, with the exception of communist Cuba, have elected democratic governments. Most of the former British colonies have parliamentary forms of government, with the exception of Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Suriname, which are republics headed by presidents.

In terms of regional integration, 14 of the region's independent nations belong to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with the exception of the Dominican Republic (which has observer status) and Cuba. CARICOM was formed in 1973 to spur regional economic integration. Some critics argue that it has been slow to promote integration, compared to other regional economic groupings, but progress has been made in moving toward a single economic market and in establishing a Caribbean Court of Justice. In addition to CARICOM, six Eastern Caribbean nations are members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the subregional organization designed to stimulate economic integration and foreign policy harmonization. The six OECS nations also share a common currency, the Eastern Caribbean dollar, with monetary policy managed by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), headquartered in Barbados, promotes economic development and regional integration.

With the exception of Cuba and Haiti, Caribbean governments generally respect the human rights of their citizens. Regular elections are the norm, and for the most part have been free and fair. In 2004, Antigua and Barbuda held free and fair elections in March (this contrasted to the 1999 elections in Antigua and Barbuda that were tainted by irregularities involving inflated voting rolls); the Dominican Republic held presidential elections in May; and St. Kitts and Nevis held general elections in late October. In 2005, Dominica and Suriname held elections in May,

and St. Vincent and the Grenadines held elections on December 7. Haiti was expected to hold elections in 2005, but significant problems and political instability resulted in those elections being postponed until January 8, 2006. Also in 2006, Guyana is due to have elections by August and parliamentary elections in St. Lucia are due by the end of the year.

Although many Caribbean nations have maintained long democratic traditions, they are not immune from terrorist and other threats to their political stability. In 1993, stability on St. Kitts was threatened following violent protests after disputed elections; order was restored with the assistance of security forces from neighboring states. In 1990, the government of Trinidad and Tobago was endangered by a coup attempt by a radical Muslim sect. Earlier in the 1980s, the government of Eugenia Charles in Dominica was threatened by a bizarre coup plot involving foreign mercenaries. And of course, Grenada, under the socialist-oriented government of Maurice Bishop, experienced a break from the democratic norm after it assumed power in a nearly bloodless coup in 1979 and installed a people's revolutionary government. After the violent overthrow and murder of Bishop in 1983, the United States intervened to restore order and end the Cuban presence on the island.

Many Caribbean nations experienced an economic slump in 2001-2002 due to downturns in the tourism and agriculture sectors, although most Caribbean economies, with the exception of Haiti, have rebounded since 2003. Countries that depend on tourism were hurt by the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the subsequent U.S. economic recession and sluggish recovery. The banana and sugar sectors in the Eastern Caribbean were damaged by a tropical storm in 2002 and a drought in 2003. Both sectors face uncertain futures in light of the European Union's plan to phase out preferred market access from former Caribbean colonies for bananas by 2006 and for sugar by 2009. The Haitian economy has been in decline since 2001, with political instability exacerbating already difficult economic conditions in the hemisphere's poorest nation. The strongest performing economies in recent years have been those of the Dominican Republic, fueled by the apparel sector, and Trinidad and Tobago, with substantial energy resources. In 2003, however, the Dominican economy experienced a decline in economic growth due to the financial strains caused by the collapse of one of the largest domestic banks.

In 2004, the region's strongest economic performers were Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Kitts, with growth rates over 6%, and St. Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda with growth rates over 5%. Those countries not faring well economically included Haiti, with an estimated 3.8% decline in gross domestic product (GDP), and Grenada, with a GDP decline of 2.8% because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan.

Preliminary estimates for 2005 show continued economic growth in the region, with Grenada's recovery resulting in growth over 9% and the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago registering growth rates of 7% or more. Those countries faring poorly are Guyana, with an estimated GDP decline of 2.9%, and Haiti and Jamaica, registering only modest growth rates of 1.5% and 1.4%

respectively.¹ Concern that rising oil prices could cause an economic setback for some countries has been alleviated to some extent by Venezuela's new subsidized oil program for Caribbean countries known as PetroCaribe. Some observers have also been concerned about the region's high level of public debt, with several Caribbean nations having debt levels that exceed 100% of their GDP.²

Overview of U.S.-Caribbean Relations

U.S. interests in the Caribbean are diverse, and include economic, political, and security concerns. During the Cold War, security concerns tended to eclipse other policy interests. In the aftermath of the Cold War, other U.S. policy interests emerged from the shadow of the East-West conflict in the Caribbean that focused on concerns about the Soviet and Cuban threat. U.S. policy priorities shifted from one emphasizing security concerns to a new focus on strengthened economic relations through trade and investment. Today, in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, security concerns have re-emerged as a major U.S. interest in the Caribbean. The Administration describes the Caribbean as America's "third border," with events in the region having a direct impact on the homeland security of the United States. It describes Caribbean nations as "vital partners on security, trade, health, the environment, education, regional democracy, and other hemispheric issues."³

The United States has close relations with most Caribbean nations, with the exception of Cuba under Fidel Castro. The U.S.-Caribbean relationship is characterized by extensive economic linkages, cooperation on counter-narcotics efforts and security, and a sizeable U.S. foreign assistance program supporting a variety of projects to strengthen democracy, promote economic growth and development, alleviate poverty, and combat the AIDS epidemic in the region. The region has had preferential treatment of its exports to the U.S. market since the early 1980s, and U.S. efforts are now focused on helping the region prepare for hemispheric free trade. Despite close U.S. relations with most Caribbean nations, there has been tension at times in the relationship. For example, relations between Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations and the United States became strained in the aftermath of the departure of President Jean Bertrand Aristide from power in February 2004. CARICOM nations called for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Aristide's departure, and Haiti's participation in CARICOM remains suspended pending the election of a new government.

U.S. relations with Haiti were strained under the government of Jean Bertrand Aristide because of concerns over corruption and human rights, but there has been

¹ U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Balance Preliminar de las Economías de América Latina y el Caribe, 2005," December 2005.

² "Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, September 2005.

³ U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations, FY2006*, "Third Border Initiative," p. 548.

renewed cooperation under the interim Haitian government that took office in February 2004. A U.S.-led Multilateral Interim Force was superceded with a United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in June 2004. The mission's goals are to provide security for humanitarian aid workers and maintain stability as the country prepares for elections. Those elections, originally planned for 2005, have been postponed several times because of political instability and technical difficulties and are now scheduled for January 8, 2006. Migrant interdiction has been a key component of U.S. policy toward Haitian migrants. (For further on U.S. policy toward Haiti, see CRS Report RL32294, *Haiti: Developments and U.S. Policy Since 1991 and Current Congressional Concerns*; CRS Report RL33156, *Haiti: International Assistance Strategy for the Interim Government and Congressional Concerns*, both by Maureen Taft-Morales; and CRS Report RS21349, *U.S. Immigration Policy on Haitian Migrants*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem.)

Since the early 1960s, U.S. policy toward Cuba has consisted largely of isolating the island nation through economic sanctions, including a trade embargo. The Bush Administration has essentially continued this policy, although it has further tightened economic sanctions, especially on travel. Another component of U.S. policy consists of support measures for the Cuban people, including private humanitarian donations, U.S.-sponsored radio and television broadcasting to Cuba, and U.S. funding to support democracy and human rights. U.S. immigration policy toward Cuban migrants has been described as a "wet foot/dry foot policy," with the U.S. Coast Guard interdicting Cuban migrants at sea and returning them to Cuba, while those Cubans who reach shore are generally allowed to apply for permanent resident status. (For further information on policy toward Cuba, see CRS Report RL32730, *Cuba: Issues for the 109th Congress*; CRS Report RL31139, *Cuba: U.S. Restrictions on Travel and Remittances*, both by Mark P. Sullivan; and CRS Report RS20468, *Cuban Migration Policy and Issues*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem.)

U.S. Foreign Assistance

The United States has provided considerable amounts of foreign assistance to the Caribbean since the 1980s, although the annual level of assistance has declined in recent years. In the 1980s, U.S. assistance to the region amounted to about \$3.2 billion, with most concentrated in Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. An aid program for the Eastern Caribbean also provided considerable assistance, especially in the aftermath of the 1983 U.S.-led military intervention in Grenada. In the 1990s, U.S. assistance to Caribbean nations declined to about \$2 billion, or an annual average of \$205 million. Haiti was the largest recipient of assistance during this period, receiving about \$1.1 billion in assistance or 54% of the total. Jamaica was the second largest U.S. aid recipient in the 1990s, receiving about \$507 million, almost 25% of the total, while the Dominican Republic received about \$352 million, about 17% of the total. Eastern Caribbean nations received about \$178 million in assistance, almost 9% of the total. The bulk of U.S. assistance was economic assistance, including development aid, economic support funds (ESF), and food aid. Military assistance to the region amounted to less than \$60 million during the 1990s.

Since FY2000, U.S. aid to the Caribbean region (including FY2005 aid estimates) has again increased, amounting to about \$1.2 billion, because of increased HIV/AIDS assistance to the region (especially to Guyana and Haiti), disaster and reconstruction assistance in the aftermath of several hurricanes and tropical storms in 2004, and increased support for the interim government in Haiti following the departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from power. Haiti accounted for some 47% of assistance to the Caribbean region during this period. As in the 1990s, the bulk of assistance to the region consisted of economic assistance. With regard to hurricane disaster assistance, Congress appropriated \$100 million in October 2004 in emergency assistance for Caribbean nations (P.L. 108-324), with \$42 million for Grenada, \$38 million for Haiti, \$18 million for Jamaica, and \$2 million for other countries affected by the storms. (See **Tables 4 and 5.**)

The FY2005 omnibus appropriations measure (P.L. 108-447, Division D) earmarked ESF assistance for several countries and programs in the Caribbean, including \$9 million for the Third Border Initiative, \$9 million for Cuba democracy programs, \$3 million for the Dominican Republic, and \$40 million for Haiti for judicial reform, police training, and national elections. The measure also earmarked \$20 million in Child Survival and Health funds and \$25 million in Development Assistance for Haiti.

For FY2006, the Bush Administration requested about \$316 million in assistance for the region, with \$196 million for Haiti, \$28 million for the Dominican Republic, \$27 million for Guyana, and \$19 million for Jamaica. Assistance to the seven small nations of the Eastern Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) would be provided through USAID's Caribbean Regional program, which also funds some region-wide projects; for FY2005, the Administration requested almost \$10 million for the regional program. The Eastern Caribbean would also receive almost \$5 million in military assistance and a Peace Corps program.

The FY2006 request of \$6 million for a "Third Border Initiative" (TBI) would fund regional projects for the 14-nation Caribbean Community (CARICOM) plus the Dominican Republic that focus on administration of justice; safety and security for the flow of people, goods, and services in the region; and disaster preparedness. The TBI program would also help support smaller economies move toward greater competitiveness and also support improvement in environmental management. Operation Enduring Friendship, a new military assistance program, would support efforts to increase maritime security in the region. For FY2006, the request would provide assistance to the Dominican Republic and Panama and to a lesser extent the Bahamas and Jamaica to help them improve maritime security.

Looking ahead to future years, several Caribbean nations are potential recipients for Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) assistance, an initiative to target foreign assistance to countries with strong records of performance in the areas of governance, economic policy, and investment in people. While Haiti and Guyana were potentially eligible for MCA funds in FY2004 (because their per capita income was below \$1,415) neither country was approved to participate. Guyana could be approved in future years, but Haiti would likely have difficulty meeting the criteria for MCA

funding. Beginning in FY2006, when the per capita income threshold for MCA-eligibility increases to \$3,255 or below, three additional Caribbean countries — the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Suriname — could become eligible for MCA funding.

One obstacle in the provision of U.S. military assistance to the Caribbean is that several Caribbean nations that are parties to the International Criminal Court (ICC) have not signed agreements to exempt Americans from ICC prosecution, so-called “Article 98 agreements.” Pursuant to the American Servicemembers’ Protection Act (P.L. 107-206, title II), the Administration terminated military assistance to these nations on July 1, 2003: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequently, Antigua and Barbuda signed an Article 98 agreement in September 2003; Belize signed one in December 2003; and Dominica signed one in May 2004. Trinidad and Tobago, which played a leading role in the establishment of the ICC, has strongly resisted signing an agreement, as has Barbados.

Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering Issues

Because of their geographic location, many Caribbean nations are transit countries for cocaine and heroin from South America destined for the U.S. and European markets. In addition, two Caribbean nations — Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines — are large producers and exporters of marijuana. Of the 16 countries in the Caribbean region, President Bush in September 2005 designated four of them as major drug-producing or drug-transit countries pursuant to annual legislative drug certification requirements: the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica. The President maintained that Haiti has made efforts to improve its performance, but he expressed concerns about the government’s inability to effectively organize law enforcement resources.⁴

All four designated Caribbean countries are major transit countries for illicit drugs to the U.S. market, and Jamaica is the largest marijuana producer and exporter in the Caribbean. The Bahamas cooperates extensively with the United States on counternarcotics measures, including interdiction efforts through Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos (OPBAT), a multinational interdiction effort, and efforts that target Bahamian drug trafficking organizations. The Dominican Republic, a major transit country for both cocaine and heroin, cooperates closely with the United States, although the State Department’s March 2005 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* notes that “corruption and weak governmental institutions remained an impediment to controlling the flow of illegal narcotics” through the country. Jamaican cooperation with U.S. law enforcement agencies on counternarcotics efforts is described by the State Department report as excellent in most cases, but areas of U.S. concern include the prosecution of drug traffickers, the amount of drug seizures, and eradication efforts. In Haiti, anti-drug efforts have been hampered over the years

⁴ White House, Press Release, “Memorandum for the Secretary of State: Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2006,” September 15, 2005.

by weak institutions, poor economic conditions, and political instability. Under the interim government of President Boniface Alexandre, Haiti arrested and expelled a major drug trafficker and established two new anti-drug law enforcement entities, but continued political instability has impeded the fight against drug trafficking.

Many other Caribbean nations, while not designated major transit countries, are still vulnerable to drug trafficking and associated crimes because of their geographic location. In particular, the State Department's March 2005 report maintains that such crimes have the potential to threaten the stability of the small states of the Eastern Caribbean, and to varying degrees, have damaged civil society in some of these countries. Given the poor outlook for the banana industry in the Caribbean, some observers believe that it will be difficult to contain marijuana production unless there is adequate support to diversify these economies away from banana production.

Efforts to crack down on money laundering also constitute a major component of U.S. anti-drug strategy, and became increasingly important as a counter-terrorist strategy in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The State Department's list of major money laundering countries (also categorized as "jurisdictions of primary concern") includes five Caribbean countries — Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti — and one British Caribbean dependency, the Cayman Islands. Being on the list (which includes the United States and many other industrialized countries) signifies that financial institutions in the country engage in transactions involving significant amounts of proceeds from all serious crimes, not just crimes involving drug money. The Department of State maintains that although Antigua and Barbuda has comprehensive legislation to regulate its financial sector, the country remains vulnerable to money laundering because the sector is loosely regulated and because of its Internet gaming industry. The Bahamas has enacted legislation substantial reforms that could make its large financial sector less susceptible to money laundering, but the State Department maintains that it needs to effectively implement these reforms. In Belize, money laundering is believed to occur primarily in the country's growing offshore financial center. Money laundering in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti stem from their roles as major drug transshipment points. In the Dominican Republic, financial institutions engage in transactions with money derived from illegal drug sales in the United States, with courier and wire transfers the primary methods for moving the funds.

Some Caribbean officials and others have complained that pressure to strengthen and enforce anti-money laundering regimes in the region will have a detrimental effect on its offshore financial sectors. They maintain that the anti-money laundering measures required have been indiscriminate and constitute an attack on legitimate business conducted in the small financial sectors of the region. In particular, after the U.S. congressional passage of new anti-money laundering provisions in the USA PATRIOT Act (P.L. 107-56, Title III), approved in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, some feared that the stricter scrutiny of transactions between U.S. and Caribbean financial institutions would threaten the

offshore financial industry in the Caribbean.⁵ The act's anti-money laundering provisions include a prohibition on U.S. correspondent accounts with shell banks (banks that have no physical presence in the chartering country) and tighter bank record keeping requirements. Since the anti-money laundering provisions require the Treasury Department to issue new regulations, which takes a significant amount of time, the full impact of the provisions will become known over time.⁶ For example, although the legislation was enacted in October 2001, the final rule on prohibitions on U.S. correspondent accounts with shell banks did not become effective until October 28, 2002.⁷ Rules for many other anti-money laundering provisions have yet to be finalized.⁸

Although there has been a decline in the number of offshore banks and the number of newly registered international business companies in the Caribbean⁹ and there are reports that business confidence in the offshore sector has fallen, the decline is likely attributable to the broad array of multilateral anti-money laundering efforts that have been going on for several years, and which only most recently includes new anti-money laundering provisions under the USA PATRIOT Act. Most significantly, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), an inter-governmental body with the objective of combating money laundering and terrorist financing, has published a list of non-cooperative countries and territories in the fight against money laundering since 2000. There also has been increasing collaboration between the FATF and the International Monetary Fund, which has been involved in conducting assessments of the adherence of offshore financial centers to international standards, including recommendations of the FATF.

The FATF evaluative process has been a major factor in Caribbean countries improving their anti-money laundering regimes. There were four Caribbean nations and one dependent territory on the first FATF non-cooperative list issued in 2000: the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and

⁵ For example, see "Barbados — Weighed Down by Money Laundering Controls — Bankers and Government Officials Are Worried that Hasty Decisions in the War Against Money Laundering Could Threaten the Financial Services Industry in Small Jurisdictions Like Barbados," *The Banker*, July 1, 2003; "U.S. Lawmaker: Antiterror Laws May Hurt Offshore Banking," *Dow Jones International News*, January 5, 2003.

⁶ CRS Report RL31208, *International Money Laundering Abatement and Anti-Terrorist Financing Act of 2002*, Title III of P.L. 107-56 (USA PATRIOT Act), by M. Maureen Murphy. For additional information on the USA PATRIOT Act's money laundering provisions, see CRS Report RS21032, *Money Laundering: Current Law and Proposals*, by M. Maureen Murphy, and CRS Report RS21547, *Financial Institution Customer Identification Programs Mandated by the USA PATRIOT Act*, by M. Maureen Murphy.

⁷ *Federal Register*, vol. 67, no. 187, September 26, 2002, pp. 60562-60579.

⁸ The website of the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network contains the various proposed and final rules of the PATRIOT Act [http://www.fincen.gov/reg_bsaregulations.html].

⁹ U.S. Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, Volume II: Money Laundering and Financial Crimes, March 2003; Ian James, "New Scrutiny on Caribbean Offshore Business, But Critics Warn that Crimes Continue," *Associated Press Newswires*, February 14, 2003.

the Grenadines. Grenada was added to the list in September 2001. Subsequent actions by all these nations to improve their anti-money laundering regimes resulted in all of them being removed from the list by June 2003. The Bahamas and the Cayman Islands were removed from the list in June 2001; St. Kitts and Nevis in June 2002; Dominica in October 2002; Grenada in February 2003; and St. Vincent in June 2003. Once a nation is removed from the list, the FATF continues to monitor developments in the country to ensure compliance.

Some observers maintain that the strengthening of anti-money laundering regimes in the Caribbean will have the end result of increasing the attractiveness of the region's offshore financial sectors for legitimate business transactions. According to this view, such efforts as the FATF evaluative process and the newer anti-money laundering measures under the PATRIOT Act will help change the reputation of the Caribbean as being a haven for money launderers and tax evaders.

Trade Issues

The United States has offered a one way duty-free preferential trade arrangement for a wide range of products from Caribbean Basin nations since the early 1980s as an incentive for increased investment and export production in the region. In 1983, Congress enacted the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) (P.L. 98-67), the centerpiece of a broader U.S. foreign policy initiative known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) linking Central America and Caribbean nations together under one preferential trade program. The CBERA allowed duty-free importation of many categories of products with certain exceptions. Most apparel and textile goods were ineligible under the CBERA, but in the late 1980s imports of apparel from CBERA countries that were assembled from U.S. components were eligible for reduced duties. These production-sharing arrangements boosted the apparel sectors of several Caribbean Basin countries, including most significantly the Dominican Republic. In 1990, Congress enacted so-called CBI II legislation, the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Expansion Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-382, Title II), that enhanced the benefits of CBERA and made its provisions permanent.

Congress enacted the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) (P.L. 106-200, Title II) in 2000, which expanded preferential tariff treatment for Caribbean Basin nations, providing them with NAFTA-like tariff treatment. This includes preferential treatment for qualifying textile and apparel products. The CBTPA benefits are scheduled to expire in September 2008, or upon entry into force of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, whichever comes first. Of the 15 independent Caribbean countries eligible for CBTPA benefits (Cuba is not eligible), only 8 have been designated to participate in the program because they fully meet the eligibility criteria¹⁰ set forth in the CBTPA. Belize, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica were designated in October 2000; Guyana was designated in November

¹⁰ The criteria cover a wide spectrum of issues, including WTO obligations; intellectual property rights; worker rights; child labor; and counter-narcotics, anti-corruption, and transparency efforts.

2000; Trinidad and Tobago was designated in February 2001; and Barbados and St. Lucia were designated in June 2001. The remaining Caribbean countries continue to benefit from the CBERA program, with the exception of Cuba, which is not eligible, and Suriname, a former Dutch colony which has never elected to participate in the CBI trade program. (For further information, see CRS Issue Brief IB95050, *Caribbean Basin Interim Trade Program: CBI/NAFTA Parity*, Vladimir N. Pregelj.)

Since the United States first implemented a preferential trade program for Caribbean Basin imports in 1984, the overall performance of exports has been mixed (see **Table 2**). The Dominican Republic has been the Caribbean country that has benefitted most from the program, and its apparel sector expanded significantly because of production-sharing arrangements. Overall U.S. imports from the Caribbean (not including Central America) amounted to about \$4.7 billion in 1984 and to about \$12.2 billion in 2004, an increase of about \$7.5 billion. The Dominican Republic accounted for \$3.5 billion of the increase. Trinidad and Tobago, an oil and gas exporter, increased its exports destined for the United States, from \$1.4 billion in 1984 to about \$5.9 billion in 2004. For other Caribbean nations, however, such as Haiti and the Bahamas, overall exports to the United States have declined since the early 1980s. Bahamian exports to the United States fell when the country's oil refinery closed in 1985; the country's economy remains based on tourism and financial services.

U.S. exports to the region rose from \$8.9 billion in 2001 to \$10.1 billion in 2004 (see **Table 3**). Four Caribbean countries — Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and the Bahamas — are the destination for the lion's share of U.S. exports to the region. In 2004, U.S. exports to these four countries accounted for 81% of total U.S. exports to the Caribbean. The United States ran a trade deficit of \$2.1 billion with the Caribbean in 2004, largely because of the increase in the value of oil and gas imports from Trinidad and Tobago. For most other Caribbean nations, the United States ran a trade surplus.

Movement Toward Free Trade

All Caribbean nations with the exception of Cuba are participating in the negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), although negotiations for that agreement have been stalled since 2004.¹¹ Within CARICOM, while some governments, like Trinidad and Tobago, are enthusiastic about the FTAA, other Caribbean governments, especially the smaller countries of the region, have reservations about the FTAA and its impact on the region. While participating in the FTAA negotiations, Caribbean nations argue for special and differential treatment for small economies, including longer phase-in periods. CARICOM has also called for a Regional Integration Fund to be established that would help the smaller economies meet their needs for human resources, technology, and infrastructure.

¹¹ For background and status of the FTAA negotiations, see CRS Report RS20864, *A Free Trade Areas of the Americas: Major Policy Issues and Status of Negotiations*, by J.F. Hornbeck.

In the meantime, CARICOM, which often has been criticized for acting too slowly, is trying to prepare itself for the hemispheric integration by moving ahead with its own regional integration. In April 2005, CARICOM members established the Caribbean Court of Justice, headquartered in Port-of-Spain in Trinidad and Tobago, that will serve as region's final court of appeal and replace the Privy Council based in London. The Court will play an important role in the region's economic integration by ruling on trade disputes in the forthcoming CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad are leading the way in moving ahead with the implementation of the CSME, which will become operational in January 2006.

In addition to the FTAA negotiations, the Dominican Republic and the United States completed negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement on March 15, 2004, that was ultimately integrated with a free trade agreement negotiated with Central American countries. Ultimately, Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-53) in July 2005 implementing the U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). The agreement had faced political uncertainty in Congress because of divergent U.S. views on relaxing trade rules for sensitive agricultural and textile imports and on labor provisions. The Dominican Republic views the agreement as a means of ensuring the continuation of U.S. preferential treatment for textiles and apparel and a means to attract U.S. investment. The Bush Administration views the agreement as a way for the region to help create jobs, attract foreign investment, and advance good governance. (For further information, see CRS Report RL31870, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)*, by J.F. Hornbeck; and CRS Report RL32322, *Central America and the Dominican Republic in the Context of the Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) with the United States*, by K. Larry Storrs, et al.)

In the 109th Congress, two identical bills referred to as the Caribbean Basin Trade Enhancement Act of 2005 — H.R. 1213 (Hyde), introduced March 10, 2005, and S. 704 (Martinez), introduced April 5, 2005 — would authorize up to \$10 million in FY2006 for the Organization of American States (OAS) to establish a Center for Caribbean Basin Trade and up to \$10 million for the OAS to establish a skills-training program for Caribbean Basin countries.

Third Border Initiative and Security Issues

As first announced by President Bush at the April 2001 Summit of the Americas, the "Third Border Initiative" (TBI) had the goals of deepening cooperation in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS, responding to natural disasters, and making sure the benefits of globalization are felt in even the smallest economies. The Caribbean was described as an often overlooked "third border," where illegal drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, and financial crime threaten U.S. and regional security interests. The initiative consisted of a package of programs to enhance diplomatic, economic, health, education, and law enforcement cooperation and collaboration. Most

significantly, the initiative included increased funding to combat HIV/AIDS in the region.¹²

In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the Third Border Initiative expanded to focus on issues affecting U.S. homeland security in the fields of administration of justice and security. Economic Support Funds (ESF) under the TBI have been used to help Caribbean airports modernize their safety and security regulations and oversight, which is viewed an important measure to improve the security of visiting Americans. TBI funds have also been used to support border security such as the strengthening of immigration controls; to help Caribbean economies move toward greater competitiveness; and to support an improvement of environmental management.¹³ TBI funding amounted to \$3 million in FY2003, almost \$5 million in FY2004, and an estimated \$8.9 million in FY2005. The FY2006 request for the TBI was for \$6 million. (See **Tables 4 and 5** on U.S. assistance to the Caribbean at the end of this report.)

In addition to the TBI, the United States has also provided support to improve port security in the Caribbean region, with the objective of helping ports comply with the more stringent set of maritime regulations embodied in new International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which went into effect on July 1, 2004. The ISPS is a set of maritime regulations for ships and port facilities with the objective of preventing terrorist incidents. There has been concern among Caribbean nations about the high cost of implementing these security regulations. Some of the larger, richer countries in the Caribbean will be better equipped to afford these extra security costs, while some of the smaller and poorer nations will have difficulty coming into compliance.

The U.S. Coast Guard has responsibility for conducting foreign port security assessments to see whether the ports are in compliance with the ISPS standards. Trade sanctions are an option if the port is not in compliance. By November 2004, all Caribbean nations had self-reported that they were in compliance with the more stringent standards of the ISPS Code. The Coast Guard is currently involved in visiting foreign ports worldwide to ensure that security practices are up to standards. The United States has provided some support to help Caribbean nations come into compliance with the ISPS Code: the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) in the Department of Transportation organizes, manages, and implements the Inter-American Port Security Training Program (IAPSTP) for the Organization of American States; the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs funds a port security technical assistance program for Western Hemisphere countries; and USAID has funded a project specifically for Eastern Caribbean nations to help assess the status of each port's security requirements and its security plans.

¹² U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, Washington File, "Fact Sheet: Caribbean Third Border Initiative," April 21, 2001.

¹³ U.S. Department of State. Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations. FY2003-FY2006.

In the 108th Congress, a legislative initiative called for additional foreign assistance in order to improve foreign port security worldwide, but no final action was completed before the end of the session. The Senate approved the Maritime Transportation Security Act, S. 2279 (Hollings), in September 2004, which would have provided for the Administrator of the Maritime Administration, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to identify foreign assistance programs that could facilitate implementation of port security antiterrorism measures in foreign countries. The act also would have called for a report on the security of ports in the Caribbean Basin, including an assessment of the effectiveness of the measures employed to improved security at such ports and an assessment of the resources and program changes needed to maximize security at Caribbean Basin ports.

In the 109th Congress, two bills would provide for foreign assistance programs for Caribbean Basin ports. S. 744 (Nelson, Bill), introduced April 11, 2005, would establish a Caribbean Basin Port Assistance Program. Under the legislative initiative, the Administrator of MARAD in the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of State, would identify foreign assistance programs that could facilitate implementation of port security antiterrorism measures at Caribbean Basin ports. The Administrator and the Secretary would establish a program for such assistance in consultation with the Organization of American States. In addition, the Secretary of Homeland Security would be required to submit a report to Congress on status of port security in Caribbean Basin countries. S. 1052 (Stevens), the Transportation Security Improvement Act of 2005, includes a provision (Section 504) that would establish a program to facilitate implementation of port security antiterrorism measures in foreign countries, with particular emphasis on ports in the Caribbean Basin; this bill was introduced May 17, 2005, and reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on November 17, 2005.

Crime

Rising crime is a major security challenge throughout the Caribbean. The murder rate in Jamaica continues to soar. In 2004, some 1,445 people were killed, while in 2005, as of November over 1,400 people were murdered. High levels of violent crime, including murder and kidnaping, also has plagued Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti. Even smaller Caribbean nations like St. Lucia have experienced a surge in violent crime.

Gangs involved in drug trafficking, extortion, and violence are responsible for much of the crime. Some observers believe that criminals deported from the United States have contributed to the region's surge in violent crime in recent years, although some maintain that there is no established link. Jamaica has advocated the development of an international protocol regarding the deportation of criminals.¹⁴

¹⁴ "Jamaica Wants Protocol to Deal with Deportation of Criminals," *BBC Monitoring Americas*, September 24, 2005.

Caribbean Energy Security

A major concern for Caribbean nations — the majority of which are net energy importers — has been the rising price of oil and the potential effect of such rising prices on economic growth and social stability. In the Caribbean region, only three nations — Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, and Barbados — have significant oil and gas reserves. Of these, only Trinidad and Tobago is a major oil and gas producer, accounting for 60% of proven oil reserves and 91% of natural gas reserves in the region. The country is also the largest supplier of liquified natural gas (LNG) to the United States, accounting for 75% of all U.S. LNG imports. Apart from Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba also produces oil, but still imports a majority of its consumption needs. Barbados also produces a small amount of oil, which is refined in Trinidad and Tobago, but it imports 90% of its oil consumption needs.¹⁵

Venezuela is now offering oil to Caribbean nations on preferential terms in a new program known as PetroCaribe, and there has been some U.S. concern that the program could increase Venezuela's influence in the Caribbean region. Since 1980, Caribbean nations have benefitted from preferential oil imports from Venezuela (and Mexico) under the San Jose Pact, and since 2001, Venezuela has provided additional support for Caribbean oil imports under the Caracas Energy Accord. PetroCaribe, however, would go further with the goal of putting in place a regional supply, refining, and transportation and storage network, and establishing a development fund for those countries participating in the program. Under the program, Venezuela announced that it would supply 190,000 barrels per day of oil to the region, with countries paying market prices for 50% of the oil within 90 days, and the balance paid over 25 years at an annual rate of 2%. When the price of crude oil is over \$50 a barrel, as it is now, the interest is cut to 1%.¹⁶ To date, eleven Caribbean nations are signatories of PetroCaribe. Barbados, which already receives discounted petroleum rates from Trinidad, has declined to sign the agreement, and Trinidad, which has its own significant energy resources, has declined to sign.

HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean

The AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean, where infection rates are among the highest outside of sub-Saharan Africa, has already begun to have negative consequences for economic and social development in the region. In 2005, an estimated 300,000 adults and children in the Caribbean were reported to be living with HIV, with the epidemic claiming 24,000 lives during the year, making it the leading cause of death among adults aged 15-44 years. The Caribbean countries with the highest adult prevalence or infection rates were Haiti, with a rate over 3%; the Bahamas, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago with rates over 2%; and Barbados,

¹⁵ "Caribbean Fact Sheet," U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, July 2005.

¹⁶ "Venezuela: Caribbean Will Receive 190,000 bpd," *Latinnews Daily*, September 8, 2005.

Belize, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Suriname with rates over 1%.¹⁷ In contrast to other parts of Latin America, the mode of transmission in several Caribbean countries has been primarily through heterosexual contact, making the disease difficult to contain, because it affects the general population.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic account for the majority of the region's infected population. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) notes that Haiti's poverty, conflict, and unstable governance have contributed to the rapid spread of AIDS; in some urban areas, HIV infection rates are almost 10%. In both countries, however, there are indications that the epidemic could be reaching a turning point because of prevention efforts.¹⁸

In Haiti, life expectancy is almost six years lower than it would be without the epidemic, and in the Bahamas and Guyana, the number of deaths among 15-34 year olds is two and one half times higher because of the epidemic.¹⁹ As the epidemic continues, already-strained health systems will be further burdened with new cases of AIDS. As a result of the epidemic, there are some 250,000 AIDS orphans in the Caribbean, with 200,000 of those in Haiti.

Sex tourism is reportedly a factor contributing to rising HIV infection rates in some Caribbean countries. Officials in Trinidad and Tobago have expressed concern about the growth of sex tourism, the so-called "beach bum" phenomenon, and the link to the spread of AIDS.²⁰ In Jamaica, the resort town of Montego Bay has the highest HIV infection rates in the country.²¹ In the Dominican Republic, AIDS activists are concerned about child prostitution in resort areas and the spread of HIV.²²

According to the World Bank, continued increases in HIV prevalence in the Caribbean will negatively affect economic growth. The epidemic, according to the Bank, will have a negative impact on such economic sectors as agriculture, tourism, lumber production, finance, and trade because of lost productivity of economically active adults with the disease. In particular, the labor market in the region will be dealt a shock because of deaths from AIDS. The Prime Minister of St. Kitts and

¹⁷ UNAIDS, "AIDS Epidemic Update," December 2005, p. 53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

¹⁹ UNAIDS, *Latin America and the Caribbean Fact Sheet*, July 2002.

²⁰ "Sex Tourism Cause of HIV Spread, Says T&T Minister," *The Weekly Gleaner* (Jamaica), February 19, 2003. The commercial sex industry linked to tourism reportedly is well established in the Caribbean, with increasing male prostitution by so-called "beach boys." See "The Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework for HIV/AIDS," Pan Caribbean Partnership on HIV/AIDS and CARICOM, March 2002, p. 7. Also see Annan Boodram, "The Beach Bum Phenomena," *Caribbean Voice*, August 3, 2002, and Julie Bindel, "The Price of a Holiday Fling," *Guardian* (London), July 5, 2003.

²¹ "Rising Rate of AIDS in the Caribbean," *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, July 2, 2003.

²² "AIDS Activists Worried Over Child Prostitution in Dominican Republic," *Boston Haitian Reporter*, January 31, 2003.

Nevis, Denzil Douglas, maintains that the epidemic threatens to cripple the labor force just as the region needs to become more competitive in world markets amid the momentum toward hemispheric free trade.²³ Looking ahead, the World Bank warned in 2001 that “what happened in Africa in less than two decades could now happen in the Caribbean if action is not taken while the epidemic is in the early stages.”²⁴

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been the lead U.S. agency fighting the epidemic abroad since 1986. U.S. funding for HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean region rose from \$11.3 million in FY2001 to \$23.4 million in FY2003. Because of the inclusion of Guyana and Haiti as focus countries in the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), U.S. assistance to the Caribbean for HIV/AIDS increased to \$36 million in FY2004 and \$64 million in FY2005, with Guyana and Haiti accounting for the lion’s share. The FY2006 request was for \$80 million, with Guyana and Haiti accounting for \$68 million.

Some Members of Congress want to expand the list of Caribbean countries beyond Guyana and Haiti that were cited in 2003 HIV/AIDS legislation, the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-25). In the 108th Congress, both the House-passed FY2004-FY2005 Foreign Relations Authorization Act, H.R. 1950 (Section 1818), and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s reported FY2005 Foreign Relations Authorization Act, S. 2144 (Section 2518), had provisions that would have added 14 Caribbean countries to those listed in the 2003 legislation, but no final action was taken on these measures. In the 109th Congress, S. 600, the Foreign Affairs Authorization Act, FY2006 and FY2007, contains a provision (Section 2516) that would add 14 Caribbean countries to the list of focus countries targeted for increased HIV/AIDS assistance.

Other legislative initiatives in the 109th Congress include the following: P.L. 109-95 (H.R. 1409, Lee), approved by both houses in October 2005, and signed into law November 8, 2005, amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide assistance for orphans and other vulnerable children in developing countries, including in the Caribbean; H.R. 164 (Millender-McDonald), introduced January 4, 2005, would amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide for the establishment of pediatric centers in certain developing countries, including Guyana, to provide treatment and care for children with HIV/AIDS; and S. 350 (Lugar) and H.R. 945 (Lee), both introduced in February 2005, would provide assistance to combat infectious diseases in Haiti, including HIV/AIDS, and to establish a comprehensive health infrastructure.

For further information, see CRS Report RL32001, *AIDS in the Caribbean and Central America*, by Mark P. Sullivan; and CRS Report RS21181, *HIV/AIDS International Programs: Appropriations, FY2003-FY2006*, by Raymond W. Copson.

²³ “Caribbean Leaders Call AIDS ‘Single Biggest Threat’ to Development, Announce Push for Low-Cost Antiretrovirals,” *Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report*, July 8, 2003.

²⁴ World Bank, *HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean: Issues and Options*, March 2001, p. xii.

Hurricane Disaster Assistance

Several Caribbean nations, especially Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, and the Bahamas, were hard hit by devastating hurricanes in 2004. Hurricane Charley struck western Cuba in mid-August 2004 causing damage to over 70,000 homes and thousands of hectares of crops. Hurricane Frances struck the Bahamas in September 2004, causing widespread damage throughout the country's islands. Hurricane Ivan caused severe damage across the Caribbean in September 2004: it devastated Grenada with some 80%-90% of the nation's buildings destroyed; it passed over Jamaica causing damage in the western part of the island and in southern coastal towns; it struck the British dependency of the Cayman Islands causing damage to 50% of homes on the island of Grand Cayman; and it affected western Cuba, damaging houses and crops. Tropical Storm Jeanne caused devastating mudslides and floods in northern Haiti in September 2004 that killed some 3,000 people, with over 2,800 of those in the city of Gonaives. To date in 2005, Hurricane Dennis heavily damaged Cuba and Grenada.

The United States provided humanitarian assistance to several Caribbean nations in the aftermath of these storms and floods. USAID set up a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to respond to the disasters, with team members located in the various islands. In addition, the 108th Congress appropriated \$100 million in emergency assistance (P.L. 108-324) in late October 2004 for Caribbean nations afflicted by the storms. The State Department announced that the \$100 million would be targeted as follows: \$42 million for Grenada, \$38 million for Haiti, \$18 million for Jamaica, and \$2 million for other countries affected by the storms, such as the Bahamas. In the aftermath of the 2004 hurricane season, Congress approved funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to deploy new hurricane buoys to enhance monitoring in the Caribbean. In addition, for several years, USAID has provided support for disaster preparedness and mitigation in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Some observers and Members of Congress had criticized current U.S. assistance efforts for the Caribbean as too small in light of the devastation caused by the storms. At the time, the Congressional Black Caucus called for \$500 million in assistance to Caribbean nations affected by the storms.²⁵ Former President Jimmy Carter urged the United States and other international lenders to forgive part of Grenada's foreign debt. In addition to assistance, some called on the Bush Administration to provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or "deferred enforced departure" to nationals of several of the affected countries, especially Haiti.²⁶

²⁵ *Congressional Record*, October 4, 2004, p. H7999.

²⁶ Jacqueline Charles and Alfonso Chardy, "Immigration Advocates: Allow Migrants from Storm Damaged Islands to Stay in the United States," *Miami Herald*, September 22, 2004; For further background on TPS, see CRS Report RS20844, *Temporary Protected Status: Current Immigration Policy and Issues*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem.

Legislative Initiatives in the 109th Congress

General. *H.Con.Res. 71 (Lee)*, introduced February 17, 2005, and passed by the House on June 27, 2005, expresses the sense of Congress that there should be established a Caribbean-American Heritage Month. *H.Con.Res. 175 (Rangel)*, introduced June 8, 2005, and passed by the House (382-6, 2 present), acknowledges African descendants of the transatlantic slave trade in all of the Americas with an emphasis on descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean, recognizes the injustices suffered by these African descendants, and recommends that the United States and the international community work to improve the situation of Afro-descendant communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. *H.R. 953 (Menendez)*, introduced February 17, 2005, and *S. 682 (Dodd)*, introduced March 17, 2005, would authorize the establishment of a Social Investment and Economic Development Fund for the Americas to provide assistance to reduce poverty and foster increased economic opportunity in Western Hemisphere countries, including in the Caribbean. *H.R. 1130 (Waters)*, introduced March 3, 2005, would provide for the cancellation of debts owed to international financial institutions by eligible poor countries, including the Caribbean nations of Guyana, Haiti, and Jamaica.

Trade. *P.L. 109-53 (H.R. 3045)*, the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act; both houses approved in July 28, 2005, and the measure was signed into law August 2, 2005. Two identical bills referred to as the Caribbean Basin Trade Enhancement Act of 2005 — *H.R. 1213 (Hyde)*, introduced March 10, 2005, and *S. 704 (Martinez)*, introduced April 5, 2005 — would authorize up to \$10 million in FY2006 for the Organization of American States (OAS) to establish a Center for Caribbean Basin Trade and up to \$10 million for the OAS to establish a skills-training program for Caribbean Basin countries. *H.R. 3176 (Menendez)*, introduced June 30, 2005, would amend the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act to provide for preferential treatment for certain apparel articles that are both cut (or knit to shape) and sewn or otherwise assembled in a beneficiary country under the act from fabrics or yarn not widely available in commercial quantities.

Port Security. *S. 1052 (Stevens)*, the Transportation Security Improvement Act of 2005, introduced May 17, 2005, and reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on November 17, 2005, includes a provision (Section 504) that would establish a program to facilitate implementation of port security antiterrorism measures in foreign countries, with particular emphasis on ports in the Caribbean Basin. *S. 744 (Nelson, Bill)*, introduced April 11, 2005, would establish a Caribbean Basin Port Assistance Program.

HIV/AIDS. *P.L. 109-95 (H.R. 1409, Lee)*, introduced March 17, 2005, approved by both houses in October 2005, and signed into law November 8, 2005, amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide assistance for orphans and other vulnerable children in developing countries, including in the Caribbean. *H.R. 164 (Millender-McDonald)*, introduced January 4, 2005, would amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide for the establishment of pediatric centers in certain developing countries, including Guyana, to provide treatment and care for children with HIV/AIDS. *H.R. 945 (Lee)*, introduced February 17, 2005, would provide assistance to combat infectious diseases in Haiti, including HIV/AIDS, and to

establish a comprehensive health infrastructure. *S. 600 (Lugar)*, introduced March 10, 2005, the Foreign Affairs Authorization Act, FY2006 and FY2007, contains a provision (Section 2516) that would add 14 Caribbean countries to the list of focus countries targeted for increased HIV/AIDS assistance. The list already includes Guyana and Haiti.

Tsunami Detection and Warning. *P.L. 109-13 (H.R. 1268)*, Emergency Supplemental for FY2005, signed into law May 11, 2005, provided \$10.2 million for buoys for the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea for observing ocean conditions at depth. Several legislative initiatives have been introduced in the 109th Congress regarding support for a U.S. tsunami detection and warning system, including *S. 50 (Inouye)*, passed by the Senate July 11, 2005; *H.R. 1674 (Boehlert)*, ordered reported by the House Committee on Science May 4, 2005. For analysis of these initiatives, and information on additional legislative initiatives, see CRS Report RL32739, *Tsunamis: Monitoring, Detection, and Early Warning Systems*, by Wayne A. Morrissey.

Cuba. Numerous legislative initiatives have been introduced in the 109th Congress regarding Cuba's human rights situation, U.S. economic sanctions (including the overall embargo, travel restrictions, and restrictions on financing for U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba), and radio and television broadcasting. For a listing of legislative initiatives and action, see CRS Report RL32730, *Cuba: Issues for the 109th Congress*, by Mark P. Sullivan.

Guyana. *H.Con.Res. 74 (Meeks)*, introduced February 17, 2005, would express the sense of Congress with respect to the urgency of providing adequate assistance to Guyana, devastated by severe flooding. Also see *H.R. 164* in the "HIV/AIDS" section above; and *H.R. 1130* in the "General" section above.

Haiti. Numerous legislative initiatives have been introduced in the 109th Congress regarding Haiti, including on migration, reconstruction assistance, health assistance, and on the establishment of an independent commission examining the U.S. role in the 2004 "coup" in Haiti. For a listing of legislative initiatives and action, see CRS Report RL32294, *Haiti: Developments and U.S. Policy Since 1991 and Current Congressional Concerns*, by Maureen Taft-Morales.

Montserrat. Two bills — *H.R. 342 (Owens)*, introduced January 25, 2005, and *S. 297 (Schumer)*, introduced February 7, 2005, would provide for adjustment of immigration status for certain aliens granted temporary protected status in the United States because of conditions in Montserrat.

For Additional Reading

CRS Report RL30935, *Agricultural Trade in the Free Trade Area of the Americas*, by Remy Jurenas.

CRS Report RL32001, *AIDS in the Caribbean and Central America*, by Mark P. Sullivan.

CRS Issue Brief IB95050, *Caribbean Basin Interim Trade Program: CBI/NAFTA Parity*, by Vladimir Pregelj.

CRS Report RL32322, *Central America and the Dominican Republic in the Context of the Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) with the United States*, coordinated by K. Larry Storrs.

CRS Report RL32730, *Cuba: Issues for the 109th Congress*, by Mark P. Sullivan.

CRS Report RS21718, *Dominican Republic: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, by Clare Ribando.

CRS Report RL31870, *The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA)*, by J.F. Hornbeck.

CRS Report RS21930, *Ethanol Imports and the Caribbean Basin Initiative*, by Brent D. Yacobucci.

CRS Report RS20864, *A Free Trade Area of the Americas: Major Policy Issues and Status of Negotiations*, by J.F. Hornbeck.

CRS Report RL32294, *Haiti: Developments and U.S. Policy Since 1991 and Current Congressional Concerns*, by Maureen Taft-Morales.

CRS Report 98-684, *Latin America and the Caribbean: Fact Sheet on Leaders and Elections*, by Mark Sullivan and Barbara Salazar Torreon.

CRS Report RL32733, *Latin America and the Caribbean: Issues for the 109th Congress*, coordinated by Mark P. Sullivan.

CRS Report RL33162, *Trade Integration in the Americas*, by M. Angeles Villarreal.

CRS Report RL32739, *Tsunamis: Monitoring, Detection, and Early Warning Systems*, by Wayne A. Morrissey.

CRS Report RL32487, *U.S. Foreign Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean*, coordinated by Connie Veillette.

Table 1. Caribbean Countries: Basic Facts

Country	Area (sq. miles)	Population (2004, thousands)	Per Capita Income (U.S. \$, 2004 est.)	Head of Government	Last Election
Antigua and Barbuda	170	80	10,000	Baldwin Spencer	Mar. 2004
Bahamas	5,382	320	14,920	Perry Christie	May 2002
Barbados	166	272	9,270	Owen Arthur	May 2003
Belize	8,867	283	3,940	Said Musa	Mar. 2003
Cuba	44,200	11,365	a	Fidel Castro	b
Dominica	290	71	3,650	Roosevelt Skerrit	May 5, 2005
Dominican Republic	18,704	8,900	2,080	Leonel Fernandez	May 2004
Grenada	133	106	3,760	Keith Mitchell	Nov. 2003
Guyana	82,980	772	990	Jagdeo Bharrat	Mar. 2001
Haiti	10,714	8,600	390	Boniface Alexandre ^c	Nov. 2000
Jamaica	4,244	2,700	2,900	Percival James Patterson	Oct. 2002
St. Kitts and Nevis	101	47	7,600	Denzil Douglas	Oct. 2004
St. Lucia	238	164	4,310	Kenny Anthony	Dec. 2001
St. Vincent	130	108	3,650	Ralph Gonsalves	Dec. 7, 2005
Suriname	63,037	443	2,250	Ronald Venetiaan	May 25, 2005
Trinidad and Tobago	1,980	1,323	8,580	Patrick Manning	Oct. 2002

Sources: Area statistics are drawn from the U.S. Department of State Background Notes for each country; population and per capita income statistics are from the World Bank's *World Development Report 2006*.

a. Estimated by the World Bank to be between \$826-\$3,255.

b. Castro has served as head of government since the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Since that time, there have been no elections for head of government.

c. Alexandre became president February 29, 2004, following the resignation of President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Table 2. U.S. Imports from Caribbean Countries
(U.S. \$ millions)

Country	1984	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antigua and Barbuda	7.898	3.741	3.527	12.767	4.366
Bahamas	1,154.282	313.889	449.697	479.305	637.331
Barbados	252.598	39.546	34.438	43.428	36.872
Belize	42.843	97.401	77.668	101.443	107.103
Dominica	.086	5.268	4.670	5.252	2.883
Dom. Republic	994.427	4,183.435	4,168.881	4,455.230	4,528.420
Grenada	.766	24.117	6.886	7.602	5.101
Guyana	74.417	140.344	115.615	118.690	122.667
Haiti	377.413	263.108	255.007	332.340	370.666
Jamaica	396.949	460.559	396.317	422.749	320.304
St. Kitts and Nevis	23.135	41.096	48.627	44.588	41.701
St. Lucia	7.397	28.911	19.180	12.999	14.347
St. Vincent	2.958	22.493	16.475	4.142	4.130
Suriname*	104.636	142.918	132.722	140.064	140.804
Trinidad and Tobago	1,360.106	2,380.010	2,440.304	4,333.753	5,854.311
Total	4,695.275	8,146.836	8,170.016	10,514.352	12,191.006

Source: 1984 statistics are from U.S. International Trade Commission, *The Impact of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, Fifteenth Report*, 1999-2000, September 2001; 2000-2004 trade statistics are from the Department of Commerce, as presented by World Trade Atlas.

* Suriname has not been a beneficiary of the Caribbean Basin Initiative preferential trade program.

Table 3. U.S. Exports to Caribbean Countries
(U.S. \$ millions)

Country	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antigua and Barbuda	95.526	81.359	127.314	125.270
Bahamas	1,026.342	975.309	1,074.694	1,182.066
Barbados	286.613	267.646	300.095	347.579
Belize	173.167	137.667	198.808	151.675
Dominica	30.690	44.972	34.332	35.890
Dominican Republic	3,757.045	4,250.068	4,205.449	4,342.882
Grenada	59.873	56.406	68.420	69.910
Guyana	141.252	128.208	117.148	135.620
Haiti	550.383	573.185	639.441	663.001
Jamaica	1,405.522	1,420.187	1,469.545	1,431.596
St. Kitts and Nevis	46.338	49.461	58.768	60.417
St. Lucia	86.743	99.499	119.544	103.304
St. Vincent	38.836	40.449	46.216	45.396
Suriname	155.306	124.757	192.655	178.561
Trinidad and Tobago	1,087.143	1,020.211	1,063.297	1,207.194
Total	8,940.779	9,269.384	9,715.726	10,080.361

Source: Trade statistics are from the Department of Commerce, as presented by World Trade Atlas.

**Table 4. U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Caribbean,
FY2002-FY2006**
(U.S. \$ millions)

Country	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005 (estimate)	FY2006 (request)
Bahamas	1.444	1.336	1.264	1.331	0.840
Belize	1.876	2.046	2.082	2.116	2.085
Cuba	5.000	6.000	21.369	8.928	15.00
Dominican Republic	22.280	28.099	33.968	29.095	28.078
Guyana	5.677	8.407	11.590	18.548	27.215
Haiti	55.925	71.887	132.324	163.596	196.473
Jamaica	19.102	22.337	24.186	23.151	19.364
Suriname	1.140	1.397	1.471	1.504	1.495
Trinidad and Tobago	0.432	0.540	0	0	0.050
Caribbean Regional	3.550	13.008	10.310	107.540	9.655
Eastern Caribbean ^a	15.491	4.255	6.900	4.851	4.978
Third Border	—	3.000	4.976	8.928	6.000
OAS Special Mission in Haiti	—	—	4.971	—	—
Operation Enduring Friendship	—	—	—	—	5.00
Total	131.917	162.312	255.411	369.588	316.233

Source: U.S. Department of State, FY2004-FY2006 Congressional Budget Justifications for Foreign Operations.

- a. The Eastern Caribbean category funds military assistance and Peace Corp programs for seven countries. Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Development assistance for these nations is funded under U.S. AID's Caribbean Regional program.

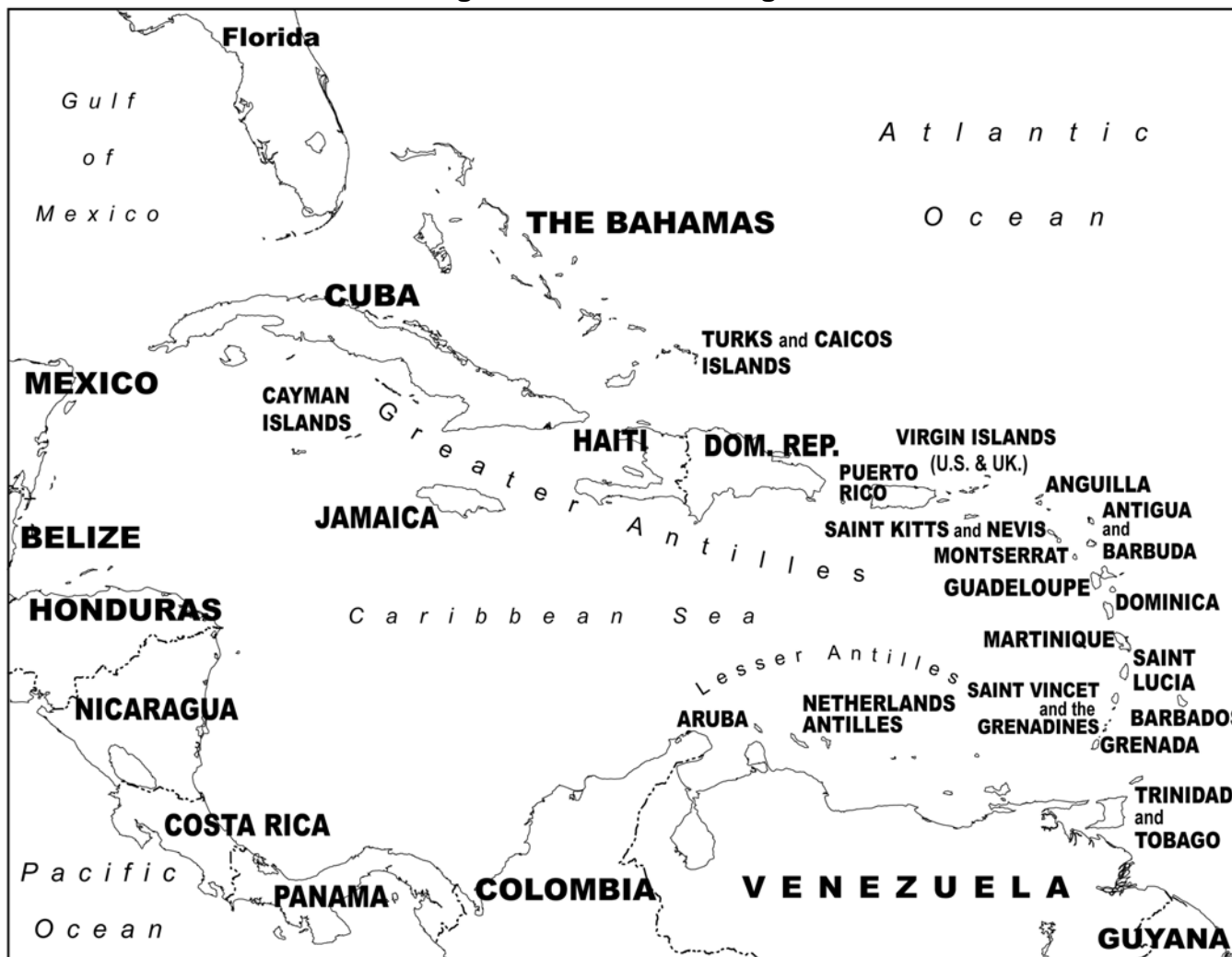
**Table 5. U.S. Foreign Assistance to the Caribbean by Program,
FY2005 Estimates and FY2006 Requests**
(U.S. \$ millions)

Country	DA	CSH	GHAI	ESF	PL 480	IMET	INCLE	FMF	Other	Total
Bahamas										
FY2005 Est.						.24	.99	.10		1.33
FY2006 Req.						.24	.50	.10		.84
Belize										
FY2005 Est.						.20		.20	1.72	2.12
FY2006 Req.						.20		.20	1.69	2.09
Cuba										
FY2005 Est.				8.93						8.93
FY2006 Req.				15.00						15.00
Dominican Republic										
FY2005 Est.	7.06	13.00		2.98		1.10		.99	3.36	29.09
FY2006 Req.	9.08	10.55		3.00		1.10		1.00	3.35	28.08
Guyana										
FY2005 Est.	3.46		13.15			.30		.10	1.54	18.55
FY2006 Req.	3.94		21.36			.30		.10	1.52	27.22
Haiti										
FY2005 Est.	25.00	20.00	39.37	39.68	37.70	.15		.30	1.39	163.59
FY2006 Req.		19.32	47.00	50.00	32.53	.22	15.00	1.00	31.41	196.48
Jamaica										
FY2005 Est.	12.88	4.56				.70	1.48	.60	2.93	23.15
FY2006 Req.	10.91	3.29				.70	1.00	.60	2.87	19.37
Suriname										
FY2005 Est.						.15		.10	1.26	1.51
FY2006 Req.						.15		.10	1.25	1.50
Trinidad & Tobago										
FY2005 Est. ^a										
FY2006 Req.						.05				.05
Third Border Initiative										
FY2005 Est.				8.93						8.93
FY2006 Req.				6.00						6.00
Operation Enduring Friendship										
FY2005 Est.										
FY2006 Req.								5.00		5.00
Caribbean Region										
FY2005 Est.	2.81	4.73							100.00	107.54
FY2006 Req.	4.92	4.73								9.65
Eastern Caribbean										
FY2005 Est.						.80		.99	3.06	4.85
FY2006 Req.						.78		1.25	2.95	4.98
Total - FY2005	51.81	42.29	52.52	60.52	37.70	3.64	2.47	3.38	115.26	369.59

Country	DA	CSH	GHAI	ESF	PL 480	IMET	INCLE	FMF	Other	Total
Total - FY2006	28.85	37.89	68.36	74.00	32.53	3.74	16.50	9.35	45.04	316.26

Source: Figures are drawn from Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations, Summary Tables, Fiscal Year 2006 U.S. Department of State. Table prepared by CRS, March 29, 2005. "Other" includes Peace Corps; \$100 million for Caribbean Regional assistance was for disaster assistance; and \$30 million for Haiti is for Transition Initiatives. Operation Enduring Friendship includes activities in Panama.

Figure 1. Caribbean Region



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (K.Yancey 9/7/04)