

A New World Order

What's New, Which World,
and Who Gives the Orders?



By

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A TOPSY TURVY WORLD

The kidnapping of President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela and his wife in the early hours of January 3, 2026, by the armed forces of the United States of America is widely acknowledged as a breach of international law. The American authorities have conflated a military/political operation with law enforcement. They insist, on the one hand, that President Maduro was wanted by the Federal prosecutors in the USA to stand trial in New York for alleged egregious breaches of American criminal law and, on the other hand, they are not reticent in proclaiming that the abduction of President Maduro was about “regime change”, the forced acquisition of the bounty of oil and other minerals in Venezuela, the reaffirmation of the Monroe Doctrine and its expansive “Trump corollary” (“the Donroe Doctrine”) in the Western Hemisphere, and the checkmating of its global competitors, principally the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

The American government’s snatching of President Maduro and his wife has, at one stroke, dramatically up-ended multilateralism, international law, the fundamental precepts undergirding the Charter of the United Nations, and well-established norms of State-to-State relations. All this has been replaced, at least in America’s backyard (the Caribbean, Latin America, and Antarctica) or its frontyard (Canada and Greenland) by a robust unilateralism and a Manichean world of a struggle between “good” represented by America’s self-proclaimed, providentially-divined manifest destiny, and “evil”, defined as everything contrary to perceived American interests.

It is thus pleasing to note that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, rebuffed this undiluted unilateralism and self-interested doctrinal assertions, and rightly exalted yet again the primacy of multilateralism and international law in the conduct of civilised international relations in pursuance of peace, collective security, and shared prosperity. It was heartening, too, that the Bureau of the Heads of Government of CARICOM restated its commitment to the fundamentals of international law. I regret, though, that CARICOM has not as yet gone further in explicitly denouncing or criticising the forced removal of President Maduro and his wife as an egregious breach of international law.

It is clear that however one dices the actions of the American government, a “New World Order” has been enthroned, not only in our hemisphere, but globally too. The world has gone topsy turvy; the world is now less safe and more susceptible to the use of capricious, hegemonic power than before. Other hegemons or wannabe hegemons in their respective spheres of influence are applauding quietly on the sidelines and are chomping at the bit to get in on the action, despite their vociferous denunciations of the recent ignoble American adventure. Hypocrisy and asymmetrical power ride in tandem with the horsemen of the Apocalypse (conquest/pestilence, war, famine, and death). Eschatology, the study of “last things” or “the end of times”, now assumes centre-stage alongside the academic disciplines of the global political economy and international relations, and their dialectical material contradictions.

THE “DONROE DOCTRINE” ARISES

In this mix arises, in the new period in our hemisphere, an extraordinary assertive power of the USA under the “Donroe Doctrine”. The apotheosis of the exercise of American power under President Donald Trump in relation to Venezuela is but a near end-point manifestation of a fuse lit by President Barack Obama in February 2015 when he issued an Executive Order, not in accord with any known facts, and evidently ludicrous, that Venezuela under President Nicolas Maduro was “a security threat to the United States of America”; President Obama was unable to exorcise the ghost of President Monroe and his imperial doctrine in our hemisphere. President Trump in his first term fanned the flames of the fire ignited by President Obama; President Biden subsequently poured gasoline on it; and now President Trump in his second term has fuelled it further into a giant conflagration which threatens to engulf Latin America and the Caribbean, with dangerous ramifications in the world beyond.

President Trump had made pellucid his designs on Venezuela with the build-up of an intimidating armada, and more, accompanied by extra-judicial killings at sea, framed in uncompromising, bellicose, apocalyptic language. With the certainty of an Old Testament prophet, he armed himself with a supposedly sacrosanct, 33-page tablet of stone known as The National Security Strategy of the USA issued from the loftiest perches of the White House in November 2025.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (NSS)

President Trump's NSS having summarily critiqued his predecessor's strategy that "went astray", swiftly got down to the immediate and prospective business-at-hand. The NSS poses the question: What Does the USA Want Overall? Its answer is clear and concise:

"First and foremost, we want the continued survival and safety of the United States as an independent, sovereign republic whose government secures the God-given natural rights of its citizens and prioritizes their well-being and interests.

"We want to protect this country, its people, its territory, its economy, and its way of life from military attack and hostile foreign influence, whether espionage, predatory trade practices, drug and human trafficking, destructive propaganda and influence operations, cultural subversion, or any other threat to our nation."

Then come further queries: "What are America's core foreign policy interests? What do we want in and from the world?" At the top of its list the NSS is emphatic:

"We want to ensure that the Western Hemisphere remains reasonably stable and well-governed enough to prevent and discourage mass migration to the United States; we want a Hemisphere whose governments cooperate with us against narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal organizations; we want a Hemisphere that remains free of hostile foreign incursion or ownership of key assets, and that supports critical supply chains; and we want to ensure our continued access to key strategic locations. In other words, we will assert and enforce a 'Trump Corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine;" [*My Emphasis*]

In the specific section on "Western Hemisphere: The Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine", the NSS is unambiguous:

"After years of neglect, the United States will reassert and enforce the Monroe Doctrine to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, and to protect our homeland and our access to key geographies throughout the region. We will deny non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or other threatening capabilities, or to own or control strategically vital assets, in our Hemisphere. This 'Trump Corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine is a common-sense and potent restoration of American power and priorities, consistent with American security interests.

"Our goals for the Western Hemisphere can be summarized as 'Enlist and Expand.' We will enlist established friends in the Hemisphere to control migration, stop drug

flows, and strengthen stability and security on land and sea. We will expand by cultivating and strengthening new partners while bolstering our own nation's appeal as the Hemisphere's economic and security partner of choice." [My Emphasis]

The NSS then proceeds to detail the programmatic elements in its "Enlist and Expand" strategic frame.

In the pursuance of its priorities, in our hemisphere and globally, the NSS emphasizes: The Era of Mass Migration Is Over; Protection of Core Rights and Liberties; Burden-Sharing and Burden-Shifting; Realignment Through Peace; Economic Security (Balanced Trade; Securing Access to Critical Supply Chains and Materials; Reindustrialisation; Reviving our Defense Industrial Base; Energy Dominance; Preserving and Growing America's Financial Sector Dominance).

The NSS prefaces its strategic thrust with a succinct statement of its core principle:

"President Trump's foreign policy is pragmatic without being 'pragmatist,' realistic without being 'realist,' principled without being 'idealistic,' muscular without being 'hawkish,' and restrained without being 'dovish.' It is not grounded in traditional, political ideology. It is motivated above all by what works for America—or, in two words, "America First." [My Emphasis]

Its focus here is: America First. The prefatory statements are a mishmash of contradictory, incoherent postulates, dressed up to beguile or mesmerize the politically innocent. The core principle plain and simple is: America First Unilateralism!

THE NSS AND THE NATION-STATE

The NSS stresses that President Trump has established that American foreign, defense, and intelligence policies must be driven by the following ten principles:

1. A focused Definition of the National Interest.
2. Peace through Strength.
3. A Predisposition to Non-Interventionism but "for a country whose interests are as numerous and diverse as America's, rigid adherence to non-intervention is not possible." So, there is a case for what America considers "justified intervention".
4. Flexible Realism.

5. Sovereignty and Respect: “The United States will unapologetically protect our own sovereignty... The United States will chart our own course in the world and determine our own destiny, free of outside interference.”
6. Balance of Power: “The United States cannot allow any nation to become so dominant that it could threaten our interests.”
7. Pro-American Worker.
8. Fairness.
9. Competence and Merit.
10. Primacy of Nations: “The world’s fundamental political unit is and will remain the nation-state... The world works best when nations prioritize their interests... We stand for the sovereign rights of nations, against the sovereignty-sapping incursions of the most intrusive transnational organizations, and for reforming those institutions so that they assist rather than hinder individual sovereignty and further American interests.”

In its articulation of the “primacy of nations”, the NSS stakes out a stance of robust national sovereignty for America which eschews multilateralism. But the major threats to peace, security, and shared prosperity such as climate change, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, international trade, global pandemics, transnational crime, and the absence of regulation globally for Artificial Intelligence can only be effected through a mature multilateralism grounded in international law.

Contradictorily, the NSS plumps for a pristine Westphalian nation-state in the general but advances an especial dominance for America in the Western Hemisphere particularly, and in the world more generally backed by hegemonic “hard power” (the economy, financial system, military strength) and a globally invasive “soft power” (culture, research, science, tertiary education).

NSS AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

The NSS emerges from an intensified dissatisfaction with the condition of the global political economy over the past decade or more by powerful nation-states resentful of any intrusions by unwelcomed competitors.

The powerful have been making clarion calls for a New World Order. At the forefront have been the USA, the European Union, China, and Russia, each with its own views, derived from its perceived real material interests. Middle-level regional powers have been seeking their own political and economic spaces and accordingly forming alliances with other like-minded nation states, and this or that hegemon or wannabe hegemon, to advance their interests. In our Caribbean hinterland, we have been seeking to do likewise within the multilateral system grounded in international law, and in relevant bilateral cooperative efforts.

In this altered, and altering, global political economy, and the quest by the powerful nation-states for a New World Order, we in the Caribbean are required to pose and answer with a clarity, a patience, and a calm, three relevant queries: What's new? Which world? And Who gives the orders? The answers to these questions ought to be grounded in realism and practicality, but nevertheless criss-crossed by the holding aloft of the enduring fundamental principles lodged in international law and multilateralism. This is particularly important in the crafting of appropriate relations between our Caribbean and the USA in this new period and altered circumstances.

WHAT OUGHT TO BE CARICOM'S APPROACH?

Undoubtably, the USA is the most important bilateral partner for CARICOM member states currently, and in the foreseeable future. The economic, financial, security, trade, cultural, and familial ties, historically, and in the contemporary period are well-known and amply documented. The Caribbean enjoys the benefits and carries the burdens of being geographically close to the most powerful country economically and militarily that the world has ever seen. It is a fact of life that we are, where we are. No Caribbean country can be lifted up and taken to Vladivostok or the mouth of the Amur River.

The raw power distribution between the USA and our Caribbean is asymmetrical, skewed massively in America's favour. But the Caribbean is not without possibilities and strengths, despite its limitations and weaknesses. These possibilities and strengths include: a civilization of nobility, authenticity, and uniqueness; good governance generally; mature leadership of reasonable quality, generally, in all relevant fields of endeavour; a high level of human development in almost all Caribbean countries; a largely productive, committed, and influential diaspora in the USA and elsewhere; a modern, though fragile, economic base, integrated with the global economy; modern systems of communication through telecoms, air, and sea links; a sense historically of the importance of our sovereignty and independence; support from progressive constituencies in the USA; excellent relations with the USA on all our mutual core interests; multiple diplomatic, linkages, global solidarity, and a robust commitment to international law and multilateralism, including the United Nations system; regional integration at various levels through CARICOM, the ACS, and CELAC; a population of resilience which possesses a genius for surviving and thriving through, among other things, "hidden" or "submerged" resources, though insufficiently tapped for individual and collective self-mastery; and the consensus among us of the Caribbean and Latin America has a zone of peace, despite dissonance in some quarters.

Yet, despite our strengths and possibilities, we in CARICOM continue to permit or allow our weaknesses and limitations to induce or engender, a debilitating condition of stasis, hopelessness, and learned helplessness. Or alternatively, and oft-times simultaneously, we underestimate our weaknesses and limitations and overestimate our strengths and possibilities to advance options, which are unrealistic or even reckless. Inevitably. Confusion and inchoateness reign.

So, what ought to be CARICOM's strategic approach with the USA in the extant circumstances? At one end of the continuum, there is the unacceptable strategic path of "rolling over and playing dead". A settled, weary, acceptance by CARICOM of the immediate or prospective consequences of the "Donroe Doctrine", as advised by some regional personalities, however well-intentioned and conscientious, is likely to ensure an unsustainable vassaldom with grave consequences for our people. For one thing, such an acceptance immediately transforms our independent parliaments into local government assemblies. We have been there before, and it was called colonialism under which we suffered mightily. As historic anti-colonials the Americans themselves understand this. Neo-colonialism is likely to be far worse for our lives, living, and production. And the Caribbean in a neo-colonial relationship with the USA is also not within their interests, too; such a relationship, inevitably breeds resentments, instability, benign neglect, and ultimately resistance.

At the other end of the continuum of a possible strategic approach is that of an ill-advised permanent resistance to American dominance on all or most core issues in an uncompromising quest of that which is optimal for us on all possible outcomes, without a sufficient cognizance of America's concerns.

Between these two extremes of spineless surrender and a permanent infantile resistance is a wide swath of negotiable options for our independent sovereign Caribbean nations, in concert with one another, to survive and thrive through creative resistance on this or that matter, compromises, a mature engagement and partnership across various fronts, and an efficacious construction of modalities for peace, security, shared prosperity, and sustainable development.

Pursuance of this "betwixt and between" strategy demands high-quality redefining or transformative leadership in communion with an informed, politically conscious, and united people around a bundle of achievable goals in the people's interests. Weak or purely transactional leaders and a divisive, uninformed, and impatient people in our Caribbean will engender an acceptance of vassaldom gravely at odds with the requisite of the further ennoblement of our unique, yet interconnected Caribbean civilisation of authenticity which possesses and owns its own seascape, landscape, and resources, manifest and hidden.

My experiences in political leadership over a prolonged period and my study of comparable historic circumstances as currently facing our Caribbean teach that more commonly, we possess an authority to reject undesirable demands from enveloping hegemonies than the power to determine outcomes that are inimical to our interests whenever the hegemonies decisively intend. Accordingly, we must be alert to the making of compromises, and even to accepting a condition of settled dissatisfaction on some matters that are not existential to us.

In my book, entitled A Time of Respair: beyond COVID, Volcanic Eruptions, Hurricane Elsa and Global Turmoil – Fresh Hope for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, published in 2023, I addressed precisely this question of "compromises" thus:

“We in our Caribbean, including St. Vincent, and the Grenadines, have been compromised by the fever of our history. Out of our compromises, we are in a quest to form or build ‘a whole daughter and a whole son’. In so doing, we must ask the question in our own voice, and in our own land make our future whole. Understanding how we go about all this we have to turn to our history, to our parents, and for the future, to our children. In the process, we have to come home to ourselves ‘to understand how the whole thing run’.”

To understand how the whole thing run, we must grasp what is the concrete situation which we face. The distinguished European Nobel Laureate for Literature, Elias Canetti, in his remarkable book published in 1987 and entitled The Conscience of Words and Earwitness had this to say on this very subject:

“Among the most sinister phenomena in intellectual history is the avoidance of the concrete. People have had a conscious tendency to go first after the most remote things, ignoring everything that they stumble over close by ... One would have to be very narrowminded to condemn this adventurousness of the mind, even though it sometimes comes from obvious weaknesses, it has led to an expansion of our horizon of which we are proud. But the situation of mankind today, as we all know, is so serious that we have to turn to what is closest and most concrete.”

I accept this as sensible advice today: Our Caribbean is at the crossroads of an historic juncture with possibilities for ascent or descent. President Trump and his “Donroe Doctrine” have redefined our world. But in this very re-definition inclusive of his published National Security Strategy (NSS), there are opportunities for us in our region to pursue collaboratively, even as there are certain policy threats, which together we must collectively resist, and yet other demands or intrusions, not existential to us, to which we may choose to acquiesce in settled dissatisfaction, temporarily or otherwise.

Thirty-two years ago, in 1994, I wrote and caused to be published a book entitled History and the Future: A Caribbean Perspective in which I foresaw two options for our Caribbean, which President Trump and the “Donroe Doctrine” have now brought into sharper focus: (i) subjugation to, or absorption by, the USA alone or jointly with other western countries; or (ii) the pursuance of an independent path for the Caribbean in deeper regional unity, in the people’s interest, in the most challenging circumstances.

This second path is now being grievously threatened or in danger of being subverted in the redefined Trumpian “New World Order” particularly in our hemisphere. But it is the only one worth fighting for despite the perils, collective or personal, which attend its pursuance.

Recently, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Carney of Canada addressed precisely this issue in urging a compact between “middle powers” so as to escape or limit

hegemonic rule by “big powers”. The European Union is beginning to resist, too, in its own interest. In the altered global condition, small states in CARICOM and elsewhere must seek the requisite global space in practical and principled terms. Still, it is not an easy path. It is a difficult and complicated road; metaphorically, it is a walking, between raindrops. But, I reiterate, it is the only way!

THE TRUMP FACTOR: WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

The personality of President Donald Trump is a new factor in the asymmetrical, hugely uneven power relations between the USA and CARICOM member states. But this personality must first be contextualized for us to be able to understand its import, and thus shape our judgments in engaging with Trumpian America.

I am sure that President Trump will grasp the irony of accurately locating his historical role and function with the aid of a philosophical nemesis Karl Marx in his book published in English in 1869 and entitled The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte:

“Men [and women] make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries, and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed costume.”

President Trump inaugurated his self-proclaimed revolution of Making America Great Again (MAGA). MAGA’s foreign policy emphasizes a “predisposition to non-interventionism” but embraces “justified intervention” in pursuance of a goal of extolling “America First”. In the Western Hemisphere, the MAGA revolution has dusted off the Monroe Doctrine, upgraded it as the “Donroe Doctrine”. But this is not a case that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur twice: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce, as Karl Marx suggested. The actions of the American government under President Trump in Venezuela are not farcical; they are real and an emphatic redefinition of hemispheric and global politics.

Although, undeniably, President Trump is a product of “impersonal forces” in his America, he is also through his personality and ideas, shaping events and impacting historical development as we are witnessing in Venezuela and elsewhere.

Often President Trump is mistakenly caricatured by his adversaries, and the vacant many, at home and abroad, as irrational, impetuous and unpredictable, and thus can only be engaged from a posture of subservience so as to avoid facing the full brunt or wrath of his presidential power.

On the contrary, I consider him to be a rational being pursuing his “America first” policy in a complex, and contradictory, national, hemispheric, and global system, which possesses for him, strengths and possibilities, limitations and weaknesses. I am fully satisfied that he has a clear, nuanced understanding of human beings and the world that he occupies. He is skillful at engendering fear and the prospects of punishments, and the promising of rewards to friends and foes alike. In these respects he is Machiavellian, yet constrained by the requisites of American democracy, the global condition, and his mortal being.

Some 50 years ago, as a student, I read a thoughtful book by an American political scientist, William T. Bluhm entitled Theories of the Political System; Classics of Political Thought and Modern Political Analysis in which he discusses, among other things, “Machiavelli’s Object and Method” which I find apt in our current discourse:

“Despite their pious mouthings, the only things that men really want and which determine their behaviour, he (Machiavelli) believes, are ... - power, glory, and material well-being. Their hunger for these things is insatiable, and desire constantly outruns the power of attainment; hence, perpetual dissatisfaction with their lot, resulting in animosities and conflict. Men are ‘ungrateful, fickle and deceitful, eager to avoid dangers and avid for gain.’ It must needs be taken for granted that all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to the malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers.”

The inherent weakness of this Machiavellian perspective is that human beings crave for more than their worldly things. They attach value to things which are seemingly intangible, non-material, and existential. So, matters get complicated and President Trump realises all this, but for him the drive for power, glory, and material things, is still the central determinant for human behaviour.

So, President Trump may demand subservience, but it also puts him on guard, though not necessarily in equal measure. He knows very well that subservience, or any pretence of it, can never be permanent; and it is always laced with hypocrisy, possessed of more than the seed of resistance that comes to full flowering when the circumstances are propitious. Thus, his inclination, inherently, to be transactional, to make deals which, from his “America First” perspective, he hopes that they coalesce as transformational or redefining, in the aggregate.

All this is evident from his Venezuelan enterprise. His “America First” agenda in Venezuela is primarily directed at containing the influence and power of America’s peer competitor, China. He does not want China to control directly or indirectly the vast oil reserves in Venezuela; in the similar manner that he stands firmly against China getting hold of any of the lithium in the so-called “lithium triangle” of the world in Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador. So, in Venezuela he wants American companies to control the oil in order to be assured of China’s expulsion from Venezuela or its markedly reduced influence. President Maduro was not prepared to accommodate President Trump’s diktat in this regard. Thus, the kidnapping of President Maduro on the ground of alleged breaches of American criminal laws.

President Trump is interested in achieving his objectives in Venezuela at the least cost possible. Thus, he is seeking the possibility of working with the Bolivarians in Venezuela under the interim president Delcy Rodriguez. President Trump does not fancy the idea of installing the opposition in Venezuela with the American military on the ground, engaging in pitched battles on the streets of Caracas and elsewhere. He is in it to make a deal in pursuance of America’s interest as set out in the NSS but with as little cost as possible. The lessons are self-evident.

ACTIVIST CARICOM

Given the totality of all the circumstances, inherited and extant, CARICOM, in unity, ought to pursue actively a mature engagement with President Trump for a reset of our region’s mutually-beneficial relations with America. At the same time, we must ramp up our activist diplomacy especially in Latin America, Canada, Britain, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India, Korea, and Japan in search of a requisite, political and economic nexus. Stasis, helplessness, fear, and impotence are to be eschewed.

In this diplomatic outreach, CARICOM ought to realize that neither Venezuela nor Cuba are the real, immediate and ultimate core issues of concern, as distinct from the proximate, in the hemisphere for America. The elephant in the room is China, the only peer competitor, globally, to the USA; it has been effectively challenging American hegemony in our hemisphere. This is the eureka moment; a moment of insight and revelation brought about by the sudden, forced removal of President Maduro and his wife. In this context, in our region, the fall-out from the China-Taiwan conundrum arises for policy clarity.

I personally think that President Trump is both amused and bemused at the prospect of Caribbean leaders lining up to bend the knee and kiss the ring of the proverbial emperor and the assured death by a thousand cuts. But it is likely to make him uneasy if it were to happen. He prefers a mutually satisfying deal rather than abject subservience.

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP – DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

Currently, CARICOM member states have allowed their disunity through individual actions or perilous inactions to undermine cohesive and collective efforts. To be sure, they have reaffirmed their commitment to international law and multilateralism, but they have been less alert to the value of a unified approach in dealing with the Trump administration. Divergent immediate “national” interests, have understandably prompted individual countries to focus on their specific concerns, but erroneously proceeded to act singly rather than collectively. In the process, they have largely been picked off one-by-one by the asymmetrically powerful USA. The result has been an uncontrollable drip, drip, drip anguish, pain, and suffering; a sort of slow death by a thousand cuts.

So, some countries in the Caribbean have considered it opportune to acquiesce to the American demand to curtail or terminate practical cooperative programs with Cuba in order to keep Citizenship By Investment (CBI) programmes and/or the granting of American visas. But this proved to be illusory: fresh American impositions came in a rush, sequentially: Take third countries’ refugees or deportees off America’s hands or else; bonds of up to US\$15,000 are required to apply for visas; adverse travel advisories are issued by the American State Department; and indefinite suspension in the processing of immigrant visa applications to the USA for 11 CARICOM member states.

Criss-crossing, all these “America First” initiatives are the not-so-subtle threats against unnamed Caribbean politicians who have been allegedly “involved” in unspecified ways with drug trafficking operations, or proceeds therefrom on the Caribbean drug trafficking route to America. So, too, have been the continuous undercurrents of the weaponising of the financial system, the use of the American dollar, and correspondent banking arrangements. And so forth. There is no end in sight of the on-rushing deployment of non-military tools in America’s arsenal against vulnerable Caribbean nation-states until an unworthy vassaldom is achieved in respect of countries that have had nothing but warm, friendly relations with their American neighbours. This awesome exercise of American power is so unnecessary and unwarranted; and it is all so inimical to America’s immediate and longer-term interests.

The basis for America’s various adverse actions in relation to CARICOM member states is not easy to fathom. However, there appear to be some discerned threads: America does not want countries to pursue CBI programs because they are inherently a security risk. America is demanding that countries that have diplomatic relations with China should scale them back in every material particular and those that have no such formal ties (Belize, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) must continue to blank China and maintain links with Taiwan. America is especially keen on privileging for its own purposes those CARICOM countries with supplies of oil or natural gas (Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago). America has an unfavourable

disposition to Caribbean countries which do not agree to accept third countries' refugees or deportees. America is wary of those countries that articulate positions contrary to the "sola scriptura" of America First doctrinal certainties. Trumpian America favours those countries that subjugate multilateralism and international law to the unquestioned hegemony or dominance of the USA in the Western Hemisphere or are at least silent, or reticent, in the current hemispheric political condition, on reaffirming support for the fundamentals of international law.

Between now and the midterm congressional elections (Senate and House of Representatives) in November 2026 in the USA, we can reasonably expect that American domestic politics will intrude mightily upon the conduct of America's foreign policy. It is this very factor, too, that provides opportunities for CARICOM's mature, collective engagement with President Trump and his administration.

CARICOM has to fashion a coherent bundle of practical, realistic negotiables. Its engagement cannot be an occasion for articulation of a cacophony of discordant individual messages by all 14 heads of state and government. Trinidad and Tobago may find that in such an engagement, CARICOM can assist with securing the support of America for the joint exploitation of the Dragon Field gas between Venezuela and itself. Similarly, this engagement may get a refashioned Petro Caribe agreement back on the agenda. So, too, America may be able to assist the CBI-countries in CARICOM with facilitating financing of the adjustment required to wean them off this unsustainable programme. And why not put on the agenda a more liberal, and potentially-rewarding for the USA and CARICOM, visa regime for bona fide CARICOM nationals to enter the USA, akin to those that we have with the United Kingdom and the European Union? What about visa free entry to the US for visitors for bona fide CARICOM nationals? In April 2025 I began a formal engagement with the American authorities on this. And so forth. The crux of the engagement has to revolve around peace, security, and shared prosperity.

WATCHING SVG

President Trump's advisors, especially someone like Stephen Miller, and Marco Rubio's Caribbean desk at the State Department, are watching the moves of the recently elected New Democratic Party (NDP) government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on at least two issues: First, the new government's proposed implementation of the security-challenged selling of citizenship and passports to foreigners; and second, its election pledge to break relations with Taiwan and establish relations with China. Grave dangers lurk for St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the pursuance of these unnecessary and reckless policies.