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Capitalism, Global Militarism, and Canada's Investment in the Caribbean

Tamanisha J. John
York University, tjjohn@yorku.ca

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Abstract

At the end of the 1990s, there existed a belief that a growing Canadian military involvement in the Caribbean region was unlikely if it was not associated with Canada's interest in Latin America (Klepak 1996). This view had such a large impact that today there is a dearth of information on Canada's military involvement in the Caribbean region. Lacking systematic investigation, two myths have perpetuated: first that Canada has no stake or interest in Caribbean security, insofar as those interests cannot be tied to Canada's interests in Latin America; and second, that all expressions of Canada's involvement in Caribbean security are simply extensions of US security interests in the region. Looking at Canada as part of the Anglosphere, this paper analyzes Canada's ongoing commitment in the Caribbean to preserving and expanding the political, social, economic, and ecological system that benefits Anglospheric capitalist accumulation and security objectives. Today, Jamaica is the host site for the Canadian Armed Forces Operation Support Hub in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSH-LAC), as Canada aims to position its long-term security partner as a regional sub-policeman of the region. OSH-LACs proximity to states like Haiti, a frequent site of Canadian intervention, should worry those concerned with Canada's increased global militarism and imperialism in the world more broadly.

Keywords

Canada, Canadian foreign policy, militarism, capitalism, Caribbean, political economy

Introduction

According to Chang (2002), within neoliberal orthodoxy the only acceptable boundary for state intervention is on matters of "defense, law and order, and the provision of some large-scale physical infrastructure" in line with the orthodoxy's belief in a minimal welfare state (3). A central component in this is the state's provision of law and order, especially as it relates to "the security of private property – seen as necessary (and often sufficient) for markets to function" (Nozick 1974 & Buchanan 1986 as cited in Chang 2002, 9). The law-and-order component of neoliberal capitalism is proliferated globally by leading European and Anglo-settler states through IFIs and covert and overt uses of force via an ever-expanding apparatus of security technology and infrastructure to maintain their global financial dominance. Stated over a century ago, when European and Anglo-settler capital is threatened capital from these spaces "maintain [their] domination by continually increasing [their] means of exerting violence" (Hilferding quoted by Lenin 2011, 121). Today's 'global' finance is both accompanied and maintained by an increase in 'global' militarization of which the less analyzed Anglo-settler states, like Canada, play a decisive role in the proliferation of security build-up in other states and increased military spending globally.

The Anglosphere and (Western) Europe are overwhelmingly responsible for what some have labeled "global militarization." According to Fichtner (2018), "the US-UK axis is the fulcrum of private global finance and Anglo-America[1] as a whole has a very dominant position in cross-border finance" (27). Not only do Anglo-American states "cooperate extremely closely in defense and intelligence" (Fichtner 2018, 8), but the strongest member within the Anglo-American alliance, the US, has the largest military presence in the world[2]. This large military presence is backed by a large defense budget, with the United States spending more on its military and defense industries than the next eleven largest military spenders combined. In 2021, the United States alone made up over 39% of worldwide military spending; and of the top 15 military spenders, 6 belonged to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Members like the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, and Canada combined "for 90% ($995 billion) of total NATO spending and 50% of global military expenditure" (Silva, Tian, & Marksteiner 2021, 4-5). These states investment in 'global' militarism is exported into regions like Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Central and South America, Eastern Europe and more, with the goal of integrating states into preferred regimes of Western security and financial governance.

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[1] Fichtner (2018) utilizes Vucetic's (2011), van der Pijl (1998 & 2006), and Gamble (2006) to define "Anglo-America." For Vucetic (2011) the Anglosphere represents a "community of English-speaking countries" with a "racialized Anglo-Saxon identity" that "'exists because people believe it exists'" (Fichtner 2018, 5). Van der Pijl (1998 & 2006), operating under the belief that this community exists, identifies the community as a "transnational Lockean heartland spanning across the English-speaking countries" who created the "heartland of the global political economy" whose "primary purpose" was to "foster free (capitalist) enterprise that 'civil society' (primarily the financial and business elites) pursues at home and abroad" (Fichtner 2018, 6). Adding to this, Gamble (2006) notes that as an "'imagined community,'" Anglo-America "has not one distinct centre but consists of different states and nations such as Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the US" (Fichtner 2018, 7). Thus, "Anglo-America is a political space constituted by wider economic, political, ideological and cultural relationships, and is as a consequence many-sided" (Gamble 2006 quoted in Fichtner 2018, 7).

[2] Vine (2021): "As of 2021, the United States controlled around 750 "base sites" outside the 50 United States and Washington, D.C., located in around 80 foreign countries and colonies. The sheer number of bases and the secrecy and lack of transparency of the base network make a complete list impossible."

Big defense expenditures aim to benefit and secure the political and financial interests of the *Anglosphere* and its committed allies. Arm sales and "commodities which promote militarism, including police and prison gear, military technology and training, military advisors and technicians" and national security doctrines and agreements are used to justify oppression and brutality in the Third World (Clarke & Swift 1982, 219). In the present, Anglo-American "declinist" narratives abound, often exaggerating China's global wealth, while ignoring that the structural power of finance is still firmly settled within the Anglosphere (Nye 2012, Panitch & Gindin 2013 quoted in Fichtner 2016). Anglosphere states continue to be dominant in the global political economy by huge margins with the assistance of their war making capacities. In today's current international political and economic order, states are either forced or incentivized to adhere to a hierarchical political, social, economic, and ecological system created by "European global economic and political expansion – [that is] slavery, colonialism, and capitalist development" (Austin 2013, 46). These hierarchies make it so that despite the political, regional, and economic ascendancy of states like China and India, European and Anglo-settler dominance remains firmly in place (Austin 2013, 47). Scholars like Campbell (2024) note that the US dollar is currently maintained by the US military, which in part explains the increased (and expanding) militarization of the Anglosphere to protect their capital interests.

Here it is important to define Anglo-settler states – like Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Israel – as states who "promote a neutered narrative of multiculturalism and inclusion" (Austin 2013, 48), "conceal[ing] the colonial violence that marks the origin of the national subject, even as [they] mythologize and pay obeisance to [their] national essence" (Thobani 2007, 10). "Although variations in circumstances and cultures produced different policies [in the Anglosphere], there [is] a similar blindness to the colonial relationship these [settler] heirs of imperial Britain build into their own societies […] This new kind of colonialism largely blocked out of the historical consciousness of these settler peoples" (Russell 2005, p.99 cited in Green 2006). This is done through national formations which purport "the vanishing of indigenous peoples," and their 'unbelonging,' or the mythological acceptance of colonization by indigenous peoples which act "as a justification for their dispossession or in disavowal of what they had inflicted," and paints settler classes as being 'natural' and 'entitled' to the settled land (Johnson 2020, 113). Anglo-settler states and their subjects extend "solidarity" towards other settler nations sharing their same qualities (Thobani 2007), thus creating, or cementing their belonging to a broader (theoretical) Anglospheric community. The ongoing ethnic cleansing and genocide in Palestine, which grabbed worldwide attention in late 2023, is illustrative of this point. Here, the Anglosphere lends military and financial support to uphold and maintain the settler colonial project of Israel – defending settler naturalization narratives.

In their quest to make a world economy favorable to Anglosphere capitalist and imperialist expansion, intelligence collaborations are normalized between Anglosphere states. In addition to their own security collaborations, the Anglosphere proliferates military deals and partnerships in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, with the aims of expanding their global military footprint and security surveillance systems. The Anglosphere has a history of – and present predilection towards – collaborating on suppressing protests, funneling arms, subverting communist and socialist initiatives, and of surveilling and policing marginalized groups and

identities both domestically within their states and internationally in other states.[3] Looking at Canada as part of the Anglosphere, this paper analyzes Canada's commitment in the Caribbean to preserving and expanding the political, social, economic, and ecological system that benefits Anglospheric capitalist accumulation and security objectives. Canada is understood as an imperial actor aiding western imperialism in the Caribbean, which helps Canada secure its own financial interests in the region. While this paper focuses on Canada's role in the Caribbean, and especially in Haiti which stands out given the sheer number of Canadian security interventions in that country, it overall highlights Canada's role in a global imperial-security-Anglospheric nexus aimed at securing markets through militarization and violence, to maintain the current global status quo that is dominated by the Anglosphere and (western) Europe.

Canada is decidedly a part of this alliance given its history, and present predilection towards, keeping the Anglosphere and (western) European political and economic interests intact. Prior to the 21st century, Canadian foreign policy focused on supporting the British empire to uplift Britain's "world-spanning imperial community" (Webster 2016, 155). As Britain lost power, Canada's foreign policy pivoted first towards the maintenance of North Atlantic unity (US, Britain, France), and second, towards the preservation of a British commonwealth. Canadian historians admit that "amidst World War II, Ottawa avoided comment on decolonization debates between the United States and Britain but was "deeply interested in the effect on Anglo-American relations of problems of Colonial policy" – in other words, "prioritizing harmony within the North Atlantic triangle" (Webster 2016, 165). This stance of Anglospheric and European unity helped to inform Canada's commitment to seeing through the formation of NATO, which it viewed as the vehicle that "would tie the United States to the defence of Western Europe" (Webster 2016, 170). Suppressing communism and other revolutionary movements (e.g., lending support to France, Portugal, and Belgium to suppress revolutionary and independence movements in Africa, lending support to Britain and the United States to suppress revolutionary and independence movements in Asia), as well as acting as a mediator for disputes amongst members of the Anglosphere and (western) European alliance (e.g., Palestine Partition, Suez Canal Crisis,) – became hallmarks of Canadian foreign policy entering in the 21st century (Engler 2010; Shipley 2020; Schalk 2022). Today, Canada and Canadian foreign policy leaders view themselves as part of a "Western alliance of developed democracies based within the North Atlantic world" (Webster 2016, 156), an explicit declaration that Canada is committed to the Anglosphere and (western) European alliance, foremost amongst them being shared economic and political objectives of which security is viewed as the vehicle to accomplishing their preferred goals.

The Importance of Delineating Canada's Role in the Caribbean

Despite Canada's long history of military involvement in the Caribbean region, many people remain unaware of Canada's role there, which have allowed two myths to perpetuate themselves

[3] In talking about Black politics in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s and how Canadian state security surveilled black groups and individuals, Austin (2013) details that Canadian state apparatuses not only spied on "any individual or group deemed "different" and thus automatically deemed a threat to national security, but also that Canadian state forces collaborated and shared information with both the FBI and CIA (in Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal, p. 163)

about Canada's security involvement in the Caribbean. The first myth is that Canada has no stake or interest in Caribbean security – insofar as those interests are not tied to Latin America; And the second myth is that all expressions of Canada's involvement in Caribbean security are extensions of United States security interests in the region. These myths have repeated themselves even as Canada continues to be a dominant security player in the Caribbean, linking its foreign and domestic policy success with maintaining "regional political stability and thus [Canada's] economic self-interest" (Maloney 1998, 177) in the region.

With economic interests in the Caribbean dating back to the 18th century, Canada has had a stake in Caribbean affairs long before Latin America entered the economic and foreign policy concerns and initiatives of Canada. As part of the Anglosphere, Canada has often aided United States and British foreign military objectives in the Caribbean, and it has also pursued its own objectives and policies there. For instance, in the 1970s Canada's defense plan included a "Third Option" to act as a "counterweight" to American political economic and cultural dominance… [in which] the Caribbean [region] had…been singled out as an important test area" (Maloney 1998, 154). Whether seen as a success or as a failure, the "Third Option" indicated Canada's want for an independent foreign policy in the Caribbean region. Further, Canada waited almost three decades before becoming a member of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1990, because it did not want to be perceived by Caribbean states as an "American pawn" who "voted to support American regional activity" (Maloney 1998, 148).

Canada's outsized investments in the Caribbean region – particularly in mining, banking, insurance, tourism, and other resource extraction – would see Canada's security involvement there increase after the Cold War. This increase was not only enabled by Canada's economic interests, but also by: (1) the heightened security rhetoric surrounding the "wars on terrorism/ drugs" which justified ballooning military budgets in the Western Hemisphere, (2) the continued trend of Anglosphere and European 'anti-communisms'—which labels protests, movements for labor rights, and the democratic elections of left leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean as a "threat," (3) a growing narrative on hostile "great/ rising power politics" that relegates former colonized and poor states as being outposts/ in the backyard of/ in the sphere of influence of, wealthier ones, and (4) interventionist policies by the United Nations (UN) in states like Haiti.

As early as 2004, Canada helped plan the coup d'etat in Haiti against democratically elected left leader, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.[4] Canada's support included sending Canadian troops to occupy Haiti and facilitating the entrance of United States troops (Gauthier-Caron 2017; Gordon & Weber 2016, 21-22). Part of the reason that Canada was so involved in this coup, was because the planning for it occurred within Canada in 2003 via the Ottawa Initiative. The coup in Haiti against a democratically elected leader –elected on a platform of increasing the minimum wage and disbanding military and police apparatuses with track records of mass human rights abuses – signaled that poverty alleviation itself posed a threat to Canada and wider Anglospheric interests in maintaining the global capitalist system and its attendant neoliberal policy prescriptions. Today, "Canada is a key donor in the security sector in Haiti" contributing to "policing, prisons, and borders" (Monaghan 2017, 148-149). Canada also has large mining interest in Haiti (Durran et. al 2024). Thus, when we look at the Caribbean region, Haiti is the state most subjected to interventions by Canada's military and policing forces, wherein between 1951-2009, 54% of all

[4] See Barry-Shaw and Oja Jay

Canadian military operations in the Caribbean occurred in Haiti. Further still, in October 2022 it was Canada that first made the call to other states and to the UN for military intervention in Haiti. Canada is recognized today as one of the state's which frequently undermine Haitian sovereignty and democracy.

While it is true that there is an overall commitment by the Anglosphere and Europe to maintaining systems of domination that they benefit from, given the advantages bestowed to them from the colonial and imperial legacies of the international system, this commitment is not always achieved in cohesive ways. For instance, although both Canada and the United States feared communism in the Americas, the foreign policy of the United States was notably much more reactionary than Canada's towards moderately liberal and left states in the Caribbean. Canada's position was to *appear* to be more accommodating to liberal and left governments, so long as its financial interests remained significantly intact (John 2021, 23). Canada did this by increasing its surveillance of left states in the Caribbean during the Cold War years, which was notably distinct from the direct and indirect involvements of the United States military and the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The 'Cuban threat' that worried policymakers and businesses in the United States, also worried the same entities in Canada, which created the first Canadian espionage operations in the Caribbean region[5], to keep watch on the Nicaraguan and Grenadian 'threats.' Anti-communism made Canada one of the biggest givers of foreign aid to the Caribbean region from the 1960s to the 1980s, tremendously helping Canadian businesses make waves in the region, while giving Canada political and military sway there as well.

It would be misleading to state that Canada simply follows United States mandates in the Caribbean region, as both states have pursued different foreign policy in the Caribbean with clear differences. For example, Canada maintained outwardly cordial relations with revolutionary governments in Cuba and Grenada (Castro and Bishop), and with liberal governments in Jamaica and Trinidad (Manley and Williams) — even as internally Canada worked to limit the number of Cuba's and Grenada's in its sphere of influence. To do this, aid given to the Caribbean region in the 1970s was the largest of all Canada's investments in the Third World, totaling $500 million (Berry 1977, 54), or $2.44 billion today (which includes Canadian aid given even to Latin America).[6] Canada's history of anti-communism aid in the Caribbean helped to inform, and cement, its early security collaborations with states like Jamaica, who today hosts Canada's Operation Support Hub for the region (OSH-LAC). Aid, as opposed to United States crude interventions, has made Canada a more friendly face in the Caribbean vis-a-vis its neighbor.

Canadian "friendliness" however, does not imply or indicate an uncritical understanding of Canada in the Caribbean. In fact, Canada's understood imperial role – as opposed to the United States or "Yankee imperialism" – was fiercely discussed regarding finance, security, and foreign enterprise in states in the Caribbean; and fiercely opposed by regional struggles against imperialism and foreign domination. In Guyana's National Assembly fierce debates around alliances took place regarding competing U.S. and Canadian imperialisms – and while sides were chosen, there was no denying that Canada itself was regarded as an imperial entity in the region:

[5] Maloney 1998; Austin 2013

[6] While most estimates typically lump 'Latin America and the Caribbean' together, a 2007 disaggregation of Canadian investments abroad found that a greater bulk of that investment goes to the Caribbean region (Klassen 2009, 178).

> *…it is politically very bad for this country to come under the full domination of U.S. imperialism. It is better to play with the small boys now, like France, like Canada, like Italy. You will be able to get more because fellows are going down and they are more likely to come to your aid in this period of struggle between competing imperialism…we think it is foolish for this Government to go against Canada. The Canadian Government can argue, "Why single us [o]ut? Why discriminate against us?" And this would be a legitimate argument. I am not upholding Canadian imperialism. But if we are good tacticians and intelligent politicians, we must play one imperialism against the other, and work with those who are also feeling the squeeze from Yankee imperialism.*
>
> (Guyana National Assembly 1971, p. 160)

And, in response to protests in Trinidad and Tobago during the 1970 February Revolution where Canadian banks were targeted, and some fire-bombed, a Canadian External Affairs Official was made to acknowledge that Canada and Canadians were "not colonialists by intent, but by circumstances [, having] taken on a neocolonial aura" in the Caribbean (Engler 2009). What has not changed from the 1970s is the acknowledgement of Canada's racist and imperialist role in the Caribbean. Today, Canada is no longer seen as a weaker imperial competitor to the U.S. in the region, but a major imperial agitator alongside it. In Haiti, protests against foreign interference and imperialism frequently identify Canada as a major source of them both.[7]

Canada's History of Caribbean Intervention Informs its Expanding Military Presence

In 2021, Canada's growing military base network in Europe[8], Southwest Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Africa raised some eyebrows due to an exposé by Breach Media detailing Canada's growing network of Operation Support Hubs (OSH) throughout the world.[9] While the exposé shocked observers, for decades Canada has been instrumental in securitizing states in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, in defense of European and Anglospheric interests. However, there has been little systematic investigations on Canada's security networks abroad. Canada's OSH in Jamaica began over a decade ago through a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU)[10], and even before then, Canada has been involved in Jamaica's security affairs. Canadian OSH's are military bases strategically located abroad to project Canadian power in using rapid deployments— even though Canada's Department of National Defense

[7] In 2021 outside of the Canadian embassy in Port-Au-Prince, protestors chanted "Canada go home." (Engler, Yves. 2022)

[8] Canada's Operation Support Hub (OSH) in Europe is located in Germany and is primarily used for Middle East operations.

[9] Martin Lukacs for Breach Media, June 29, 2021

[10] For over a year, I have tried to gain access to the MoU signed between Canada and Jamaica through the Freedom of Information Act to no avail. Various government agencies in Jamaica have not shared any information regarding the document, including whether access to it would be possible. This further underscores the lack of transparency between many such security deals Canada has with its "partners" in the Caribbean. My principal reason for attempting to gain access was to discern the kinds of language it uses regarding military base and how the OSH-LAC would be used to engage Jamaica's neighbors.

refuses to refer to OSHs as military bases.[11] Canada's OSH in Jamaica, established via formalized agreement in 2012[12] and first operationally active in 2016, gives Canadian defense forces access to Jamaican facilities at the Kingston Harbor Port, the Norman Manley International Airport, and the Jamaican Defense Force's (JDF) Kingston military base, with the OSH "serv[ing] as a staging ground [for] the Canadian Forces to mount an operation in the region" (Campbell, 2012).

Jamaica was chosen as the location of Canada's OSH in the Latin America and Caribbean region (OSH-LAC) given the historical military connections established between Canada and Jamaica.[13] In the 1970s "Canada conducted espionage operations from Kingston, Jamaica, against Cuba, Venezuela, and other countries in the region" (Maloney 1998, 161); And throughout the 1970s, Canada conducted a number of military exercises within, and with, Jamaica to "test worldwide deployment capabilities… deploy[ing] light forces to any point globally to support Canadian policy aims" (Maloney 1998, 162). Thus, OSH-LAC is a formalized arrangement of this history of collaborative militarism between the two against Jamaica's regional neighbors. Part of the rationalization for today's OSH-LAC in Kingston also includes Jamaica's proximity to states like Haiti, a frequent site of Canadian intervention, which Canada views as a major concern into the foreseeable future.[14] Historically, security collaboration between Canada and Jamaica served to protect Canadian interests in the Caribbean and to provide support to the ruling classes and political leaders of Jamaica. This is most clearly illustrated when in 1979 Canada planned a unilateral military intervention in Jamaica, given the unrest surrounding the elections that year. In 1979, Canada was concerned that the Manley government in Jamaica could be replaced by more radical groups and movements, allied with Cuba, which Canada viewed as antithetical to Canadian business and corporate interests in the region.

To get rid of this threat, Canada planned to deploy a ship with the capacity to hold four landing crafts and "a battalion group from the Royal Canadian Regiment" that would "utilize [the] Defense of Canada Force (DCF)" just in case socialist and/or communist forces in Jamaica gained power (Maloney 1998, 163). The objectives of the planned intervention "revolved around securing and protecting the Alcan facilities from mob unrest and outright seizure of sabotage" (Maloney 1998, 163). There was a clear understanding amongst the major governmental bodies in Canada that Canadian business interests in the Caribbean – although served by proclaimed socially democratic governments — would not be served by groups critiquing the international economic order which relegated the Caribbean region as a dependent outpost of the major industrialized countries. This planned Canadian military intervention ended up not happening, as

[11] Government of Canada's: "Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) operations abroad are enabled by operational support hubs (OSH) that exist through a series of pre-negotiated arrangements with partner nations to facilitate the movement of personnel, materiel, equipment and supplies in strategic locations around the world. OSHs: are not military bases, allow the CAF to move people, materiel, equipment and supplies around the world, allow the CAF to respond to crises like natural disasters in a timely way, offer fast, flexible and cost-efficient ways to launch and sustain global operations, can be activated or de-activated as needed."

[12] Prior to 2012, Canada was already formally involved in Caribbean region security around narcotics – especially in partnerships with Jamaica –given its participation and involvement in Operation CARIBBE since 2006.

[13] There was initially some speculation that Panama would be chosen as the site of OSH-LAC, but ultimately due to costs and stability there – it seems that this was an unlikely speculation (Ghanmi 643 & 649, 2011)

[14] LCol D.B. Wintrup; it should be noted that during Operation HESTIA in Haiti (2010), the lack of a formal OSH base to rapidly deploy aid to Haiti was seen as a major setback by Canadian policy makers and defense agencies.

Manley's defeat to the conservative and business-oriented Edward Seaga was welcomed by Canada and its ruling-class interests. Nonetheless, the planned intervention made clear Canada's interest in the region and the security lengths it would go to in order to defend those interests.

When in 1980 Seaga won the elections, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) increased "aid to Jamaica from (US) $9 million to (US) $34 million," and committed to providing "training in Canada for army, police and coastguard officers from Caribbean countries" to ensure that Seaga and other conservative governments in the region were able to hold onto power, especially given the worries "following the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua" (Clarke & Swift 1982, 58). The tremendous amount of financial and military support to Jamaica's conservative government shows Canada's commitment in the Caribbean, and the Third World, to preserving the political, social, economic, and ecological system that benefits Anglosphere capitalist accumulation. Canada maintains a staunchly anti-socialist and anti-communist foreign policy in the Caribbean and in South and Central America — given that political, social, economic, and ecological orientations which uplift landless peoples and poor communities in the region, are at odds with Canada's own objectives of profit maximization and resource extraction.

Despite broader issues around transparency of the Canadian Defense Forces (CDF) in the Caribbean, Canada acknowledges 51 direct military operations in the Caribbean between 1951 and 2009 which comprises 13–14% of all acknowledged (368) direct military operations by Canada over that same period (Government of Canada, Past Operations). This acknowledgement only includes those interventions which happened and does not include those planned interventions which did not occur, or other Canadian military exercises in the Caribbean region (*see appendix Table 1*). Since being operational in 2016, OSH-LAC has been used to perform three operations in the Caribbean and one maintenance operation (*see appendix Table 1*). OSH-LAC has also helped to facilitate further institutions of "regional" security in the Caribbean as funded and promoted by Canada and headquartered in Jamaica. For instance, in 2018 the Caribbean Special Tactics Center (CSTC) opened in St. Ann's Jamaica funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAF), branded as a collaboration between the JDF and the CAF which created the "only Centre of Excellence in the region providing specialized training in military tactics and techniques" (Jamaica Observer, 2018).

While quantitatively Canada's security investments expand the number of Canadian weaponry and military personnel in the Caribbean, qualitatively it proliferates Canadian security goals in the region as Caribbean ones. Canada's security interests in the region and the funding that follows it, creates incentives for Caribbean states to further expand military objectives and security parameters for institutional funding and creating of new centers and sectors of security. For example, Canada uses training facilities established in Jamaica to train Caribbean defense forces, like the Guyana Defense Force (GDF), in security for oil-rig platforms.[15] Notably, Guyana does not own oil-rig platforms for which the GDF is being trained by Canada to protect. One can hypothesize that these learned military tactics and techniques to protect foreign owned and operated oilrigs will be used against Caribbean nationals and regional residents who may be opposed to foreign oil platforms (foremost amongst them, indigenous groups).

[15] Kaieteur News, 2013

Canadian Aid as a Tool of Military Intervention in the Caribbean: OSH-LAC, Debunking Myths of Canadian Altruism

As already mentioned, a large portion (almost 52%) of the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) budget is "financed by external donors" with CARICOM's security initiatives mainly financed by the US, Canada, and European states (Hoffman 2020, 193). This is important, as it means that "CARICOM security institutions mainly work as implementing agencies managing externally funded projects," which includes security (Hoffman 2020, 196). As a large external funder, the Anglosphere and its allies in Europe end up guiding Caribbean security policies and developing the security institutions and organizations in the region. Thus, a large portion of Caribbean security is dependent on the political whims, preferences, and objectives of external donors (Hoffman 2020, 198). In this section I will analyze Canada's contribution to Caribbean security, and how Canadian aid in the Caribbean has had the sole purpose integrating states further into the Canadian capitalist accumulation process. Historically, Canada viewed its own granting of aid, and the one-sided market opportunities provided by it, as a means of halting communist expansion in former British colonies in Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa (Clarke & Swift 1982, 153-154).

CIDA's 1982-1983 report "singled out Cuban revolutionary activity as the main threat to political and thus economic stability in the [Caribbean] region and implied that developmental aid staved off Cuban interference" (Maloney 1998, 155). At the same time, the foreign policy establishment in Canada viewed the success of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) in Grenada "with suspicion" given fear around what it signaled about "Cuban 'internationalism'" (Dosman 1987, 828). When the PRG reached its demise in 1983, Canada's commitment to aid, thus intervention, in the Caribbean region increased. Today, Canada's granting of aid remains an important factor in its militarization in the Caribbean, with even its OSH network acknowledging that the hubs are used to "assist the Canadian International Development Agency in moving and distributing material as well as providing voice and data communications in the region" (Bacot 2009, 14). Aid was, and is still, utilized as a tool in Canada's foreign policy box in the Caribbean that allows it to distinguish itself vis-à-vis the United States, even when similar goals exist.

Through tied aid, Canada has been able to create a good facing public image in the Caribbean. CIDA aid to the Caribbean in the 1980s required that "80% of all aid be spent on the purchase of goods and services in Canada" (Ambursley 1985, 244). Today, Canadian aid stipulations come with similar requirements. This of course produces budgetary burdens on states in the Caribbean, who find themselves needing to foot larger, more expensive, import bills. In the 1980s, over 50% of CIDA funds spent in the Caribbean "were actually spent in Canada for goods and services which in turn created Canadian jobs" (Maloney 1998, 155). While people typically associate aid with development – and not with financial swindling of capitalist accumulation – Canadian aid is highest in states with larger concentrations of Canadian corporations and investments, contradicting the popular belief that Canadian aid is given to states based on need. Canada's aid practices in the Caribbean debunks myths of aid altruism and has been well documented (*see* Chodos 1977; Clarke & Swift 1982; Ambursley 1985; Lakhan, Lakhan, & Singh 1990; Basedeo 1992; Haar & Bryan 1999; Chaitoo 2013; Klassen & Albo 2013; Hébert 2015).

There are other ways that security is disguised as simple altruism in the Caribbean by states like Canada. For example, much of the external aid to the Caribbean by external funders like Canada aims to reinforce institutions of social control – such as surveillance, policing, and border control (Monaghan 2017). Canadian aid granted to the Caribbean uplifting institutions of social control often go under the radar, even as aid in these areas increase Canada's militarization in the region by facilitating the deployment of Canadian boots (experts, military, and police) on the ground that provide training, assistance, technical and/or legal advice to states. However, institutions of social control are seen as normal state functions, that naturally occur without external aid (e.g., even if Canada did not provide aid for social control, it could be argued that states would invest in these institutions anyway). Thus, in 2011 when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provided Regional Security System Training to 10 Eastern Caribbean countries with the aim of professionalizing law enforcement training and enforcing certain standards – few people questioned what relevancy Canadian policing standards would have in the Caribbean, or the impacts of such training by Canadian security forces on Caribbean citizens.

This type of aid is typically seen as civic aid that helps receiving states, without factoring in the tangible implications for security and the sort of neoliberal reforms required for such security aid incentives. For instance, Canada not only played an instrumental role in building Haiti's current security apparatus, but in the aftermath of the 2004 coup against Aristide, "Canada's role in Haiti [became] an ideal case study to demonstrate the norm-supporting function of security infrastructure aid, since [Canada's] funding [was] central to developing the governance capacities of an illegitimate [post-coup] government" (Monaghan 2017, 126-127). This to say, given how security aid altruism is popularly interpreted, any estimation of Canada's security impact and its militarization in the Caribbean, will always be a conservative one.

Nonetheless, what is known is that Canada stands out as a large contributor in providing "policing, training, counterinsurgency [and other] special operations" in the Caribbean (Klassen 2021). Canada's aggressive security doctrine in states like Haiti, provides support to Europe and the Anglosphere's financial and military apparatuses writ large, in the many instances where their interests converge. Increases in Canada's military expenditure and the growth in Canadian military build-up has domestically allowed Canada to continue to conduct its "military and paramilitary assaults on [indigenous people's] land reclamations," while internationally has allowed Canada to counteract and repress "resistance and instabilities facing neoliberal globalization in the South" (Gordon 2010, 12-13). Canada's role in creating military components and parts provides jobs to Canadians in Canada and helps broader United States objectives in technological military developments for deployments and arms sales to other countries; and in the Caribbean, Canadian foreign policy is geared towards safeguarding its financial interests.

CIDA President Michel Dupuy (1977-1980) noted that: "by establishing Canadian technology and enterprise in the developing countries on whatever terms we grant them, we are laying the groundwork for repeat business and for an expansion of Canadian trade in the future" (Clarke & Swift 1982, 167). Canadian aid (and aid history) is how Canada justifies its militarism in the Caribbean cloaked in a language of humanitarianism, while protecting Canadian investments and keeping Caribbean states markets open to Canada. Canadian corporations have long relied on Canadian arms and police training in the Third World to protect their businesses and investments (Momsen 1992; Gordon 2010; Gordon & Webber 2016; Seed 2020). Thus, today Canadian

security deals and partnerships are "systematically located in countries that share the Canadian government's political and economic outlook, and/or countries in which Canadian capital has significant interests and faces meaningful opposition" (Gordon & Webber 2016, 22).

Although Canada's Department of Defense (2021) maintains that OSHs are "not military bases" – even as they house soldiers to rapidly be deployed to regions that Canada considers 'hostile,' or where "future conflicts are deemed most likely to occur" – the location sites themselves are designed to house "military planes, ships and equipment" (Woods, 2012).[16] The CAF have consistently made the case that the "unstable" regions are located in "South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia" (Girard et. al 2008, 5-9). Although Canada has been very vocal in branding OSHs as aiding states in crisis through peacekeeping, disaster relief, and humanitarian intervention – since the 1990s Canada has reduced "dramatically its contribution to [peacekeeping] operations" and has had "an almost exclusive focus on US- led or NATO-led" interventions/invasions (Robinson 2009, 6-7). Thus, within the past two decades, the Canadian military has been involved in Afghanistan (2001-2014)[17], Haiti (2003-2017)[18], Iraq (2003-present)[19], Libya (2011)[20], Mali (2013-2022)[21], and Syria (2014-present)[22]; and most of this spending has not gone towards peacekeeping, but rather towards "fighter jets, armored personnel, carriers, naval destroyers, [and] unmanned aerial drones" (Gordon & Webber 2016, 22).

When we look at the record of OSH-LAC thus far, all its Caribbean operations – outside of routine maintenance on the Jamaican facilities – have sought to capitalize off crisis and climate disasters by proliferating Canadian military equipment, know-how, policy preferences, and technology into other states (*see* Table 2). In October - November 2016, Belize hosted exercise "TROPICAL DAGGER" wherein Canada was able to play a prominent role in training states like Guyana, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados in the different "tactics used by special operations forces to combat crime and terrorism in jungle, maritime and urban domains" (Government of Canada 2022). Canada's explicit goal during the exercise was to help "Jamaica to grow as a special operations forces leader in the Caribbean basin" (Government of Canada 2022), most likely because OSH-LAC was made operational just a few months prior with a focus on transregional threats that require regional collaborations as led by Canada. Operation Forward Tiger conducted in 2023 had similar goals of strengthening transnational (regional) military exercises and collaborations while showcasing Canada and United States military technologies to be utilized in the region.

In 2017 when category 5 storm Hurricane's Irma and Maria wrecked Dominica, Canada deployed JDF soldiers and equipment from its OSH-LAC facility to Dominica and anchored Canadian warships off Dominica's coast to monitor the situation. The ship commander noted that

[16] This information was obtained by the Toronto Star under the Access to Information Act in Canada.
[17] Canada and the War in Afghanistan, Canadian War Museum
[18] New documents detail how Canada helped plan the coup d'état that took place in Haiti in 2004 (Barry-Shaw 2021)
[19] Debunking the myth of Canada's non-involvement in the Iraq War, Schalk 2022; Operation IMPACT, Government of Canada
[20] Canada's attack on Libya helped spread terrorism internationally, Ismi 2022
[21] Support to French Operations in Mali, Government of Canada; Macron French troop withdrawal from Mali, France24 2022
[22] Operation IMPACT, Government of Canada; Canada's strategy for Syria, Government of Canada

it was “unclear how long the warship will be assisting Dominica [given that] there is much work that remains on the ground” (The Canadian Press 2017). Although the warship left after one month, one would expect these actions to warrant a broader humanitarian response by Canada given the hurricane devastation, however Canada’s restrictive migration policies towards those fleeing, indicated otherwise (Thanh Ha 2017). During the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian in 2019, this similar exercise and restrictive migration policy was repeated for a second time in, and towards, the Bahamas. Canada transported 120 JDF, 11 Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) members and equipment using OSH-LAC to the Bahamas to assist in logistical recovery efforts for 30 days – but when asked which kinds of further assistance was to be given by those negatively impacted by disasters, it was unclear (Editorial Team 2019).

Conclusion

Canada’s military defense budget for 2020 was $22.75 billion dollars and increased by almost 14% in 2021 to $26.45 billion. This increase should raise alarms for those concerned with increased global militarism, as the increase indicates that the predicated budget for 2026-2027 of $32.7 billion (Canada National Defense, 2017) will massively be exceeded. Although the Russian invasion of Ukraine is retroactively used to justify Canada’s large and growing military budget, Canada’s military involvement in the Middle East, its membership in NATO, and Canada being a supplier of a arms and components to states like the US, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, have long positioned Canada’s military spending to be on an increasing trajectory. Canada’s allegiance to the Anglosphere and it being empowered by international institutions like the United Nations (UN) since the 1990s have allowed Canada to gain security prominence in the Caribbean region, especially in Haiti, and elsewhere for a long while. Canada’s 21st century interventions in the Caribbean have designated Canada as both a leader in Caribbean interventions and more broadly in transnational military policing and policy.

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Appendix

Table 1: Canada's Caribbean Exercises and Interventions

(Includes planned but not executed exercises and interventions, as well as planned and executed ones. List not exhaustive.)

YEAR	STATE	DATE	NAME & PURPOSE OF OPERATION
1951	Jamaica	August 24 - 26, 1951	Operation Jamaica
1957	St. Lucia	March 31 - April 8, 1957	---
1960	Dutch West Indies	December 5 - 14, 1960	["Netherlands mutual aid"]
1961	Cuba	---	[Bay of Pigs, didn't happen]
	Belize	November	Operation Belize
1962	Cuba	---	[Cuban Missile Crisis, didn't happen]
1963	Haiti	May 15 - 24, 1963	Operation Haiti [Duvalier election]
	Belize	September	Operation Belize
1965	Dominican Republic	June 1965 - October 22, 1966	DOMREP
1966	St. Lucia	---	[Military Port Visit]
	Barbados	---	[Military Port Visit - "stop communism"]
	Antigua	July 4 - 7, 1966	[SCHOOL SUPPLIES]
1967	Puerto Rico	---	UN Standby [PRAETORIUM PACIS]
1969	Jamaica	---	UN Standby [NIMROD CAPER & NIMROD LEAP]
1970	Cuba	December 3 - 4, 1970	RAGOÛT
	Trinidad & Tobago	---	[Canadian Surveillance: Black Power Movements]
1971	Jamaica	---	NIMROD CAPER
1972	[Caribbean]	June 1 -30, 1972	Operation Caribbean
	Guyana	June	Operation Guyana
	Jamaica	---	NIMROD CAPER
1973	Haiti	March 1 - 31, 1973	---
	Jamaica	---	NIMROD CAPER
1974	Grenada	January 30 - February 8, 1974	Operation Grenada [Gairy Invite]
	Barbados	[part of Gairy tour, to not arouse suspicions that NJM/left forces in Grenada being surveilled]	Operation Grenada
	St. Vincent		Operation Grenada
	Trinidad & Tobago		Operation Grenada
	Haiti	February 26 - March 22, 1974	[Req. CIDA, NATO cosign]
	Grand Turk Islands	June 27 - 28, 1974	---
1977	Guyana	July	Operation Guyana
1979	St. Vincent	April 14 - 29, 1979	Operation ABALONE
	Jamaica	---	[Planned Intervention for ALCAN, didn't happen]

1983	Grenada	October 25 - 30, 1983	[Evacuate Canadians, NJM crisis]
1985	Haiti		[Evacuate Canadians, Haiti crisis]
1987/8	Haiti	January 5 - February 9, 1988	Operation BANDIT
1988	Puerto Rico	---	Operation BANDIT
	Jamaica	September 4 - October 15, 1988	Military Exercises [SOUTHERN RENEWAL?]
1989	Haiti	January 1 - October 30, 1989	Operation Haiti
	Jamaica	January 1 - October 30, 1989	Operation Jamaica
	Dominican Republic	April 1 - July 30, 1989	Operation Dominican Republic
	Dominica	July 1 - 30, 1989	Operation Dominica
	St. Lucia	July 1 - October 31, 1989	---
	Montserrat & Nevis	September 22 - October 15, 1989	Operation HUGO
1990/1	Haiti	November 1, 1990 - February 7, 1991	Operation HERITAGE [UNOGVEH]
1991	Haiti	November 1, 1991 - March 30, 1992	Operation ESCORT
1993	Haiti	October 1, 1993 - June 1, 1996	Operation CAULDRON [UNMIH]
	Haiti	October 16, 1993 – September 29, 1994	Operation FORWARD ACTION
1994	Dominican Republic	September 1 - 30, 1994	Operation CADENCE
	Haiti	September 1 - October 12, 1994	Operation DIALOGUE
1995	Haiti	March 1, 1995 - June 1, 1996	Operation PIVOT
	Trinidad & Tobago	September 1 - 2, 1995	---
	Antigua & Barbuda	September 8 - October 4, 1995	Operation FLUTE
1996	Haiti	April 15 - June 30, 1996	Operation STANDARD [UNMIH]
	Haiti	June 28, 1996 – July 31, 1997	Operation STABLE
	Haiti	June 30 – September 30, 1996	Operation STANDARD [UNSMIH]
1997	Haiti	July 30 – November 30,1997	Operation CONSTABLE [UNTMIH]
	Haiti	November 28, 1997 – March 16, 2000	Operation COMPLIMENT [MIPONUH]
1999	Haiti	January 12, 1999	Operation Haiti
	St. Lucia	January 12, 1999	---
	[Caribbean]	September 22 - October 14, 1999	Operation CHARITABLE [deployment planned, cancelled]
2001	Haiti	May 24 – 31, 2001	Operation HUMBLE
2004	Haiti	February 28 – March 3, 2004	Operation PRINCIPAL
	Haiti	February 29 – July 31, 2004	Operation HALO I [MINUSTAH]
	Haiti	June 1, 2004 - Present	Operation HALO II
	Haiti	June 1, 2004 - Present	Operation HAMLET
	Haiti	September 22 – 28, 2004	---
	Haiti	October 15 – 16, 2004	---

	Haiti	October 28 – 29, 2004	---
	Haiti	December 20 – 21, 2004	---
2006	Caribbean Basin	November 2006	Operation CARIBBE
2007	Jamaica	August 23 – 24, 2007	Operation Jamaica
2008	Haiti	September 12 – 26, 2008	Operation HORATIO
2009	Trinidad & Tobago	April 14 – May 21, 2009	Operation TATOU
2010	Haiti	---	Operation HESTIA [Dart Deployment]
	Caribbean Basin	--- [October MOU: allows USCG to operate from Canadian warships]	Operation CARIBBE
2011	Jamaica	---	Operation JAGUAR
	Antigua & Barbuda	March 2 – March 24, 2011	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2012	Barbados	June 15 – June 24, 2012	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
	Caribbean Basin	November 2012	Operation CARIBBE
2013	Caribbean Basin	June 2013	Operation CARIBBE
2014	Antigua & Barbuda Dominican Republic	June 2 – June 10, 2014 June 16 – June 25, 2014	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2015	St. Kitts & Nevis Belize	May 31 – June 9, 2015 June 15 – June 24, 2015	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2016	Jamaica	Operational [MOU planning: 2010-2012]	Operational Support Hub [OSH-LAC]
	Grenada Jamaica Miami	June 4 – June 14, 2016 June 20 – June 28, 2016 July 20 – July 22, 2016	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2017	Barbados Trinidad & Tobago	June 6 – June 11, 2017 June 12 – June 19, 2017	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2018	St. Kitts & Nevis Bahamas	June 4 – June 13, 2018 June 14 – June 21, 2018	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2019	Dominican Republic St. Vincent & the Grenadines	May 30 – June 8, 2019 June 14 – June 21, 2019	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
2021	Guyana	June 13 – June 25, 2021	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
	Caribbean Basin	--- – December 2021	Operation CARIBBE
2022	Belize Mexico (co-host)	May 7 – May 20, 2022	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
	Caribbean Basin	February 22 – May 20, 2022	Operation CARIBBE
	Caribbean Basin	April 4 – May 29, 2022	Operation CARIBBE
2023	Caribbean Basin	February 13 – April 28, 2023	Operation CARIBBE
	Guyana	July 13 – July 27, 2023	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada participated]
	Caribbean Basin	October 24 – December 8, 2023	Operation CARIBBE
2024*	Barbados	May 4 – May 16, 2024	Operation / Exercise Tradewinds [Canada expected to participate]

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Table 2: OSH-LAC Operations to date

(Disclaimer: more operations could have been carried out using OSH-LAC, table only includes publicly available information)

YEAR	STATE	DATE	NAME & PURPOSE OF OPERATION
2016	Belize, Jamaica, Canada, United States	October – November 22	Operation TROPICAL DAGGER • A 4-week Canadian initiative to help help Jamaica grow as a special operations forces leader in the Caribbean basin.
2017	Dominica	September 9 – October 15	Operation RENAISSANCE Irma Maria • Airlifted the Jamaican Defense Force (JDF) Disaster Assistance Response Team and equipment to Dominica.
2019	The Bahamas		Operation RENAISSANCE Dorian • The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) provided “emergency military support” via air transport (CC-130J Hercules) to airlift and deploy the Jamaican Disaster Assistance Relief Team to The Bahamas to provide humanitarian aid.
2021	Jamaica	January 29 – March 9	--- • Canadian military deploy to Jamaica to conduct maintenance and upgrades at OSH-LAC facility and build JDF partnership.
2023	Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, United States	February 25, 2023 – March 4, 2023	Operation Forward Tiger • CAF, US Air Force, Puerto Rico’s National Guard, Dominican Republic Air Force, and the JDF conduct Disaster Relief Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) at OSH-LAC. This is a “Lead Wing exercise” designed to enhance military readiness in region.

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