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NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF EMIGRATION: THE CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE

CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL*

Since the beginning of the Caribbean region's modern history, long-distance migration has been a major and recurring cause of social change in the area. Colonialism, the plantation economy, and many diverse cultures were brought to the Caribbean by European migrants beginning in the fifteenth century. In addition, the forcible importation of African slaves after 1600 produced significant demographic, cultural, and political changes in virtually every Caribbean society. Complexity has also marked the Caribbean's migration history. Important elite migrations included the exit of many Spanish colonial leaders to the mainland soon after the European discovery, the flight of Spanish Loyalists from the continent to Cuba after 1825, and the dispersal of former slave owners from Haiti following that nation's black-led revolution in the 1790s. Labor migrations within the Caribbean have also taken place, sending thousands of laborers from Barbados to Panama for canal construction, Anglo-Caribbeans to Cuba for the sugar harvest, and Haitians to the Dominican Republic to serve the same industry. Since 1945, Caribbean population movement has been apparent to U.S. observers because of the series of migrations that have brought millions of Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Haitians, Dominicans, and Anglo-Caribbeans to the U.S. East Coast.¹ (See Table 1.)

Table 1
Legal Migrants from Four Caribbean Societies to
the Continental United States, Selected years, 1940-1981

Year	Sending Society			
	Cuba	Dominican Republic	Haiti	Puerto Rico
1940				400
1941				600
1942				1,700

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1. For general historical background to Caribbean social development, influenced heavily by intercontinental migration, see F. KNIGHT, *THE CARIBBEAN—THE GENESIS OF A FRAGMENTED NATIONALISM* (1978). For a thorough essay on contemporary trends, see Kritz, *International Migration Patterns in the Caribbean Basin: An Overview*, in *GLOBAL TRENDS IN MIGRATION: THEORY AND RESEARCH IN INTERNATIONAL POPULATION MOVEMENTS* (M. Kritz, C. Kelly & S. Tomasi, eds., 1981).

Table 1 (continued)
 Legal Migrants from Four Caribbean Societies to
 the Continental United States, Selected years, 1940-1981

Year	Sending Society			
	Cuba	Dominican Republic	Haiti	Puerto Rico
1943				3,200
1944				11,200
1945				13,600
1946				39,900
1947				24,600
1948				32,800
1949				25,700
1950				34,700
1951				52,900
1952				59,100
1953				69,100
1954				21,500
1955				45,500
1956				52,300
1957				37,700
1958		1,168	766	27,700
1959		873	543	30,000
1960	62,379	756	931	16,300
1961	67,468	3,045	1,025	7,800
1962	66,264	4,603	1,322	10,800
1963	12,201	10,683	1,851	
1964	12,791	7,537	2,082	
1965	18,003	9,504	3,609	
1966	53,409	16,503	3,801	
1967	51,972	11,514	3,567	
1968	56,755	9,390	6,806	
1969	49,776	10,670	6,542	
1970	56,404	10,807	6,932	
1971	49,631	12,624	7,444	
1972	16,856	10,760	5,809	
1973	7,073	13,921	4,786	
1974	3,893	15,680	3,946	
1975		14,066	5,145	
1976*		15,088	6,691	
1977		11,655	5,441	
1978		19,458	6,470	

Table 1 (continued)
 Legal Migrants from Four Caribbean Societies to
 the Continental United States, Selected years, 1940-1981

Year	Cuba	Sending Society		Puerto Rico
		Dominican Republic	Haiti	
1979		17,519	6,433	
1980		17,245	6,540	
1981		18,220	6,683	
Total:	584,875	263,279	105,165	619,100**Grand total: 1,572,419

Sources: For Cuban migration, J. DOMINGUEZ, *CUBA: ORDER AND REVOLUTION* 140 (1978). These figures are based on Cuban statistics and include some (small) number of emigrants to countries other than the U.S. For Haitian and Dominican migration, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERV., ANNUAL REPORTS, 1967, 1977, and STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 1981. For Puerto Rico, S. FRIEDLANDER, *LABOR MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: A CASE STUDY OF PUERTO RICO* app. A (1965).

* 1976 figures, in the cases of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, include the "transition quarter," which covered the move to a new federal reporting system. In the case of those two nations, years referred to are U.S. fiscal years.

** This "grand total," sizable though it is, probably understates the flow of migration from these four societies to the continental U.S. by about 1.2 million. In the case of Cuba, a more complete set of figures would include nearly 400,000 more migrants since 1975, including 125,000 arriving in the 1980 Mariel boatlift. In the case of Puerto Rico, a statistical series going past 1962 would capture about 400,000 more migrants. In the cases of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, many observers believe that there are likely to be twice as many migrants now in the U.S. as these records of *legal* migration count. These are generally persons who come to the U.S. on nonimmigrant visas and then remain, often adjusting their status to some form of legal residency later.

This most recent migratory movement is probably the most significant concentrated demographic change in the Caribbean region since the advent of slavery, and the United States is the major world power with concerns in the area. It is reasonable indeed to ask how U.S. national security may be affected by the changes in Caribbean societies that are wrought by, or associated with, out-migration to the United States. How is migration affecting the United States' ability to defend those interests it deems fundamental in the Caribbean area?

It is important at the outset to examine the experiences with migration and its consequences for particular Caribbean nations. A central point of this paper is that little useful evidence will emerge if a broad national security goal is related to an image of a unified Caribbean migratory process. National security

is, in practice, sought by maximizing intermediate policy goals, and each national migratory stream has particular causes and distinct local consequences.

The military aspects of safeguarding U.S. national security interests in the Caribbean are not stressed in this analysis because aspects are partly subject to the policy decisions of the United States. Moreover, military security depends to a considerable degree upon two intermediate policy goals: political stability and economic development in Caribbean societies. If U.S. security calls for the exclusion of serious Soviet-backed mobile military forces from the Caribbean, that goal will be greatly advanced if local societies are free of debilitating strife. Stable Caribbean nations might offer few openings to revolutionary forces and would be more likely to provide bases and support for U.S. ships and troops. Caribbean security, from the U.S. standpoint, is also more likely to be advanced if regional nations offer a promising economic future to their people, thus enhancing domestic political stability.

In the sections that follow, we will assess the impact of northward migration upon political stability and economic development in four major Caribbean societies: Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.² In addition, the policy implications of the overall pattern will be considered. Some of these policy implications are then applied to the issues raised for the United States government by Central American revolution and migration.

Political Stability and Caribbean Migration

In our analysis, political stability will be defined in terms of the longevity of political regimes. Have basic distributions of political power and governmental ideologies remained steady during periods of large-scale migration to the United States? The fundamental answer is yes, with noteworthy and revealing qualifications. Two clear patterns are present in the relationship between migration and political stability in the Caribbean during the past forty years. One is typified by Cuba and Haiti, and the other represented by Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Both patterns indicate that the social makeup of a national migratory stream—at a particular historical juncture—is an influential factor in the relationship between migration and political stability.

In both Cuba and Haiti, major northward migrations were triggered at the start of the 1960s by significant internal political changes. Fidel Castro's Cuban revolutionary regime took control in January 1959. Within eighteen months, the first large waves of what became a million-person population movement migrated to the United States. The coming to power of President Francois

2. Some readers may be surprised that Puerto Rico, a "Free Associated State" or "Commonwealth" within the U.S. Union, is included in this list along with independent sovereign states. In many respects, Puerto Rican migration is at least comparable, if not analogous, with the population movements from the three Caribbean nations discussed, including many of the migrants' motives and the island's general patterns of social and economic development. The case for including Puerto Rico in an analysis such as ours is especially strong, too, when one considers that two major U.S. bases are located in Puerto Rico, and the Puerto Rican migration may well have been the largest from the island Caribbean (more than one million persons).

("Papa Doc") Duvalier in Haiti in 1957 prompted the flight of many opponents of his regime, who were followed by more than 200,000 of their countrymen. In both cases, migrants tended to come from a clearly identifiable sequence of social classes. Initially, migrants tended to come from the upper and middle classes, followed by a period of migration by urban small entrepreneurs and workers, followed finally by provincial town-dwellers and peasants.³

Both the Cuban revolutionary government and the Duvalier regime have endured for nearly three decades, with very different ideologies and with different levels of complexity and institutionalization. The Duvalier administration was even able to survive the death of its founder. The family-based regime created with Jean Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier as its nominal leader held power longer than his father did. It is impossible to prove that the onset of international migration assisted the stabilization of these regimes. However, the evidence supporting that premise is strong, for reasons that are closely linked to the sequence of social classes from which emigrants were drawn.

The departure of members of a politically discontented middle class is very likely to help stabilize almost any government. "The true revolutionary class in most modernizing societies," Samuel P. Huntington has observed, "is . . . the middle class. Here is the principal source of urban opposition to government. It is this group whose political attitudes and values dominate the politics of the cities."⁴ This political rule of thumb is likely to hold true, at least in the short run, regardless of the regime's ideology. For example, Fidel Castro's government was opposed by many members of the middle class because of its radicalism, while Papa Doc's government was anathema to many middle-class Haitians because of its capricious violence and demagogic populism. The departure of significant numbers from the middle class in both countries significantly changed the potential political alignments among social classes, removing a key focus of opposition to both regimes. Though the 1960s

3. On the Cuban migration: J. DOMINGUEZ, CUBA: ORDER AND REVOLUTION 139-41 (1978); Prieto, "Cuban Migration of the '60s in Perspective," N.Y. Univ. Ctr. for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Occasional Paper # 46, Apr. 1984. On Haiti: Loescher & Scanlan, "U.S. Foreign Policy and Its Impact on Refugee Flow from Haiti," N.Y. Univ. Ctr. for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Occasional Paper # 42, Apr. 1984; R. ROTBERG, HAITI: THE POLITICS OF SQUALOR 243, 248-49. Rotberg notes that in 1968 "there were nearly ten times more Haitian psychiatrists in Montreal than in Port-au-Prince, more Haitian physicians overseas than in Haiti, and more local economists working for the United Nations or the Organization of American States than for the government of Haiti." *Id.* at 249.

Writings on Dominican migration to the U.S. indicate—though with as yet little scholarly consensus—that a multiclass migration is under way. Antonio Ugalde and several fellow researchers concluded that "international migration from the Dominican Republic is primarily a middle class urban phenomenon," while the research of Sherri Grasmuck indicates that rural and small-town households were as likely as urban ones to be the source of migration to the United States. See Ugalde, Bean, & Cardenas, *International Migration from the Dominican Republic: Findings from a National Survey*, 13 INT'L MIGRATION REV. 235-54 (Summer 1979); Grasmuck, "The Impact of Emigration on National Development: Three Sending Communities in the Dominican Republic," N.Y. Univ. Ctr. for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Occasional Paper #32, May 1982.

4. S. HUNTINGTON, POLITICAL ORDER IN CHANGING SOCIETIES 289 (1968).

saw active guerrilla struggles within Cuba against Castro's government,⁵ the middle-class exodus helped isolate that struggle from potential support of the masses. In addition, the Cuban revolutionary regime's international image profited greatly because mass migration could substitute for mass purges. The middle-class migration out of Haiti left the Duvalier regime virtually unopposed in dealing with the nation's impoverished peasant majority.⁶

Unlike the pattern evidenced in Cuba and Haiti, the streams of migration out of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic were not dominated by a single social class and thus did not so deeply affect the array of possible political alignments. These migrations tended to draw from many regions and social classes at once; their positive effect on regime stability was more diffuse and difficult to distinguish from the results of other forces at work. Both the Puerto Rican migration, which began in the late 1940s, and the Dominican movement, starting nearly twenty years later, were grounded more on economic motives than on political strife.⁷ Workers and peasants from both societies joined members of the local middle classes in migrating northward to gain improved jobs and income. The limited respite from demographic pressures and the incidental gains, such as remittances from absent workers, probably aided both regimes, which entered periods of marked political stability just as large-scale migration began.

In Puerto Rico this has meant the adoption and continuance of the "commonwealth" status within the U.S. for more than thirty years. Since 1966 the Dominican Republic has suffered no military coups and relatively little political violence, holding four presidential elections and witnessing one major constitutional transfer of power between contending political parties. Other major political trends also contributed to regime stability, however. Both countries experienced economic booms that were not directly caused by a tight local labor market, and in both cases the peasant masses had just been mobilized into politics, providing a counterweight to urban forces inclined to oppose the governments in power. In Puerto Rico this change was signaled by the election of 1940, in the Dominican Republic by that of 1966.

Economic Development and Caribbean Migration

Arguably, healthy national economies in the Caribbean could contribute to the security of U.S. interests in the region. Economic expansion might enable

5. Dominguez, "The Success of Cuban Foreign Policy," N.Y. Univ. Ctr. for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Occasional Paper -27, Jan. 1980, at 3.

6. An interesting question that is beyond the scope of this paper concerns the effect of large-scale rural-based migration upon the stability of the Cuban and Haitian regimes. There seems ground for believing that such migration—exemplified in both cases by the migrations of 1980—is viewed as alarming and politically damaging by the two governments involved. This sense of vulnerability might stem from the two regimes' diverse populist roots. Peasant migration might undercut their prestige far more seriously than the departure of middle-class opponents.

7. A limited exception to this statement should be noted, in the case of the Dominican Republic. Some of the first wave of migrants in 1965 and 1966 were leaving the country for

regional states to deflect potential currents of domestic dissent, and economic stability might limit the opportunities of states from outside the hemisphere to intervene within it. For present purposes we will measure economic development through statistics on the economic growth of Caribbean nations, though we must also consider the broader international system in which that growth is pursued.

It is much less possible to show any causal relationship between international migration and economic growth in Caribbean nations than to point out such a link between migration and political stability. Once again, the four cases previously discussed provide two patterns, with the same societies making up each pair. In the case of Haiti, significant migration was both preceded and followed by periods of economic stagnation. Northward migration probably contributed to a sharp Cuban recession in 1960-62, but has shown little direct economic influence since then. In Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, northward migration coincided with periods of notable economic growth. That growth, however, was largely attributable to factors other than migration.

The economy of Haiti is one of the poorest and weakest in the world. It has the lowest per-capita income of any nation in the Western Hemisphere (\$270 in 1980), and since 1950, it has shown virtually no economic growth, as illustrated by Table 2.

Table 2
Growth Rates in Haiti's Gross Domestic Product
Per Capita, by Periods, 1950-1982

1950/ 1955	1955/ 1960	1960/ 1965	1965/ 1970	1970/ 1975	1975/ 1980	1980/ 1982
-0.2	0.3	-2.7	-0.3	1.9	1.9	-0.3

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1983, p. 121.

The anti-Duvalier migratory stream did not set off a spurt in Haitian economic development, though the nation's historically high population pressures were modestly eased. Moreover, one is inclined to doubt that Haiti would have fared better economically if the middle-class' entrepreneurial talents had been present during the 1960s. As speculation, this view cannot be wholly dismissed, but the Haitian economy had been stagnant for a decade before

political reasons. One primary reason was because they had backed the "Constitutionalist" (rebel) side in the 1965 Dominican civil war. The 1966 election brought a notably conservative administration to power, headed by former President Joaquin Balaguer.

large-scale migration began, a decade during which the Haitian middle class still lived in Haiti.

It is more plausible that the departure of a developmental elite might have closed off an avenue to economic growth in Cuba. The Cuban economy experienced only modest growth, averaging 3.5 percent annually, between 1938 and 1957. The "managerial migration" of the early 1960s, however, coincided with a sharp economic recession from which the Cuban economy did not begin to emerge until the early 1970s.⁸ A period of privately directed national economic growth arguably would have occurred in Cuba if the departed entrepreneurs had still been present. Such an assumption would, however, require the alteration of other key historical circumstances in Cuba, an effort that might maximize analytic neatness at the expense of accuracy.

Large-scale migration from Puerto Rico to the continental U.S. took place between 1944 and 1960. (See Table 1.) These two decades also witnessed significant growth in the Puerto Rican gross commonwealth product, averaging 6.3 percent annually between 1940 and 1962. The fact that Puerto Rico's total, not simply per capita, wealth expanded indicates that migration probably contributed only indirectly to the island's economic development. Puerto Rico's two most vigorous periods of economic growth came during World War II, under the impetus of federal spending for military installations, and between 1954 and 1964, when special tax concessions and other legal devices made Puerto Rico a haven for light, labor-intensive industries.⁹ Labor migration no doubt boosted Puerto Rico's ability to pass on new wealth to the average islander, making the commonwealth more socially stable and perhaps more economically productive. The mobility of workers, however, was not so much a factor in itself as one aspect of a more encompassing "factor mobility," in which greater exports to the continental U.S. and more investment funds from that source played more significant roles.

Finally, the Dominican economy experienced an important economic boom, with major structural changes, during the late 1960s and the first half of the following decade.

As in the case of Puerto Rico, the Dominican development plateau coincided with the most active phase of international migration. From Table 3, the effect of a slower rate of population growth, based partly on migration, is evident. At the same time, one should note how vulnerable this link between migration and development is to the larger structures and events of the Western Hemisphere's economy. Dominican development slowed sharply once the local market's import substitution possibilities were exhausted and once the world sugar price dropped, after a historic high in 1974. Migration

8. On economic growth before the Cuban revolution, see DOMINGUEZ, *supra* note 2, at 72-76. On Cuban growth between 1962 and 1975, see Mesa-Lago, "The Economy and International Economic Relations," in CUBA IN THE WORLD 169-72 (C. Blasier & Mesa-Lago, eds., 1979).

9. S. FRIEDLANDER, LABOR MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: A CASE STUDY OF PUERTO RICO 130 ff. (1965).

Table 3

Growth Rates in the Dominican Republic's Gross Domestic Product Per Capita, by Periods, 1950-1982

1950/ 1955	1955/ 1960	1960/ 1965	1965/ 1970	1970/ 1975	1975/ 1980	1980/ 1982
3.2	2.2	-0.3	4.6	6.0	2.5	1.5

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1983, p. 121.

continued from the Dominican Republic—and even increased after 1974—but the economy's growth languished.

Caribbean Migration and U.S. Policy Choices

One observation suggested by the diverse data just reviewed is that the processes of migration from specific Caribbean societies are complex, interconnected, and deeply rooted in local circumstances and world economic changes. The movement of persons is frequently more consequence than cause of other broadly influential social changes. This pattern has important implications for U.S. foreign policy in relation to Caribbean migration. Efforts to influence Caribbean social and political change by altering the flow of migrants from the region seem likely to produce uncertain consequences at relatively high administrative and political cost.

During the past thirty-five years, the U.S. has had an open policy toward labor migration from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, has accepted most of the Haitian economic elite, and has welcomed more than a million Cubans from all social classes. In some cases, such as with Haiti, migration has affected economic growth but little, and in others such as with Cuba, probably temporarily. In the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, migration coincided with development spurts and perhaps weakly aided them. There is no clear guide for future U.S. policy in this experience: though Caribbean economic growth may contribute to U.S. security, accepting more workers from the region would probably not contribute much to the islands' prosperity. Caribbean economic conditions are tied much more directly to key aspects of their internationally dependent status: commodity prices, investment rates, and world technological change.

The U.S. government is neither legally nor politically free to regulate Caribbean migration according to its perceived goals of national security. Now that paths of migration have been established from almost all Caribbean nations, with sizable communities of Caribbean origin resident in the U.S., there are many entrants each year arriving under family status and visiting provisions.

One apparently clear policy lesson closely related to national security does emerge from this examination of the recent Caribbean experience. That lesson is concerned with the political stability of nations in the region and the departure of a major part of the local middle class. In the cases of Cuba and Haiti, the emigration of middle-class leaders during periods of critical political change tended to stabilize the regime in power. A derived policy guideline in logic, if not in wisdom, might then be: Washington should willingly accept middle-class emigrants from a conservative regional government, while discouraging or barring the opponents of left-wing governments. Radical regimes might thus be undermined, while conservative regimes, friendly to the U.S., would be stabilized.

This is, however, a rationalistic approach that ignores political considerations. It is probably not currently feasible for the U.S. to shun refugees from leftist regimes while accepting middle-class opponents of conservative ones. The former's call for protection against Communist tyranny touches a deep chord in U.S. political consciousness, while conservative governments are often deeply offended if their critics receive asylum in the United States. These factors are magnified by the publicity and air of crisis that often surrounds the foreign policy of migration.

It is difficult to see these factors at work today in the Caribbean, where migration by many social classes has a long historical record. The political forces influencing U.S. action are clearly apparent, however, in Washington's dealings with Central American migration. In light of the Caribbean experience, it might be in the United States' best interest to deter migration by conservative and moderate critics of the Nicaraguan regime, and to encourage the exodus of middle-class and other refugees from El Salvador. This, however, is the opposite policy from that which is currently being followed. Nicaraguan refugees have been given considerable immigration benefits, while the Justice Department has begun to prosecute U.S. church workers accused of providing religious sanctuary to some of the thousands of those fearful or discontented enough to migrate overland to the U.S. from El Salvador.