CHAPTER TWO

HEMISPHERIC SETTINGS FOR EUROPEAN BLOC IMPERIALISM

Introduction

The Caribbean encountered European bloc imperialism around the time when the US neoconservatives declared the twenty-first century as “the new American century.” In order to realize their goal, the US neoconservatives set out to subjugate the ACP countries and the EU to their brand of neoliberal economic and political measures. Perched at the forefront of US-led globalization the neoconservatives promoted US-styled liberal democracy as a necessary condition for the economic development of the ACP countries. However, the primary objective of democracy promotion by the US is the maintenance of the American way of life. If all countries have similar US-styled democratic systems, the US will have greater leverage to control them for the prime purpose of stripping them of their economic resources so that the US citizens could maintain their luxurious lifestyles of high mass consumption. Democracy promotion nonetheless, undermines genuine democracy in the developing states and has resulted in a variety of new authoritarianisms at the global and domestic levels. The recent record of US democracy promotion in the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa provides the evidence in support of the proposition concerning the rise of authoritarian regimes disguised as liberal democracies (Canterbury 2005; Ottaway 2003).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with an overview of the neoconservative settings in the Caribbean and Latin American region, in which the Caribbean was subsumed as it entered into EPA negotiations with the EU. An important deduction from the exploration of these settings is that the Caribbean is caught in the middle of two competing imperialisms that pull and push it in different directions. The Caribbean could transform this dilemma into an advantage by looking elsewhere, namely towards the emerging economies amongst the developing nations, and to regional unions such as the ALBA and Petrocaribe, for alternative visions of
development to those proffered by European bloc imperialism and US-led globalization.

To achieve its purpose, the chapter is divided into four parts beginning with a discussion on the transition from European colonialism to the "new American century doctrine." The focus here is on the dynamics of the transition from colonies to independent states in the Caribbean, the passage of hegemonic power from the UK to the US, cold war politics, the Caribbean under the US sphere of influence, and an outline of the new American century doctrine. This is done to provide a brief background to the arrival of the Caribbean in the twenty-first century.

Second, it examines some key dimensions of the political dynamics and militarization in the region focusing on the defeatist view about the powerlessness of poor states, the rebellious tradition of Caribbean peoples, the transition of the Caribbean from the US' back yard to its front door, and US democracy machinations and military threat to the region. Third, there is an analysis of the manner in which the US neoconservatives used authoritarian tactics to terrorize and subjugate the Caribbean and Latin American countries, in the furtherance of the US' imperialist objectives. The discussion here centers on politics in the Caribbean, the neoconservative idea about the "survival of liberty" in the US, the process by which democracy was subverted in Haiti, and the bullying of the Caricom countries by the US to change their position on the overthrow of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The final section presents a critical analysis of the US neoconservative terrorist threat to democracy in Latin America focusing on the overthrow and reinstatement of President Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and further challenges to democracy in the Caribbean and Latin America, as posed by these same forces.

**Transition from Colonialism to New American Century Doctrine**

*The Transition from Colonies to Independent States*

The Caribbean countries began the twentieth century as European colonies and ended it as politically independent states under US domination.¹ Their transition from colonies to independent states in the

¹ This refers to the English-speaking Caribbean. These states gained their political independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Currently, however, there are only a few