



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE BRIGADIER  
JOHN SANDY

At

**THE NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY WORKSHOP**

**January 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> 2012**

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**Time:** 9:00 am

**Venue:** Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain

**Date:** Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2012

**SALUTATIONS:** National Security Policy Workshop

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Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Head of the National Security Council, the Honorable Kamla Persad-Bissessar;

Cabinet Ministers of Government;

Other Minister of Government;

Members of the National Security Council;

Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries;

Heads of Divisions, Ministry of National Security;

Dr. Richard Downie, Director of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies,

All other visiting officials and event facilitators from the Center for Hemispheric Studies,

Officials from the Ministry of National Security;

Officials from the Office of the Prime Minister;

Officers and others Rank of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and the other Protective Services;

Other Specially Invited Guests;

Member of the Media

A very pleasant morning to all...and in accordance with my task on the Programme, may I officially welcome all of you to this two day National Security Policy Workshop.

Let me first thank our Prime Minister and Head of the National Security Council, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar for her kind acceptance of our invitation to be here with us this morning.

Our Honourable Prime Minister has indicated on several occasions that Public Security Challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are now so diverse and complex, that solutions could only be found by taking a more integrated and whole Government approach to the challenge, in addition to working hand in hand with our regional and international colleagues, who have a vested interest in making Trinidad and Tobago and by extension the Caribbean Basin a safer and more secure place to live, work, do business and grow old.

On that note, let me extend an extra special welcome to our esteemed visiting guests; Dr. Richard Downie, Director of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies and his team including: Professor Michael Gold-Biss, Professor Salvador Raza and Ms. Linda Denning.

You have all come to Trinidad and Tobago, ***to put it quite mildly***, from a place with a climate that is "not so warm" at this time of the year, but certainly from a place of great warmth and generosity, for which we are appreciative.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is said that **"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."** This is the realization and sentiment which has inspired today's meeting of the minds.

There is no refuting, that our beloved twin island state has been experiencing a range of societal changes, some to the advantage of citizens and others that detract from the vision of national peace and prosperity.

On the negative side, for nearly a decade now, transnational organized crime and its accompanying evils has been threatening to undermine every positive initiative, to ensure Trinidad and Tobago remain one of the most advanced countries in the region.

The negative effects of globalization and more particularly urbanization makes crime a major challenge in every society, therefore to express the optimism that there exists some quick fix for solving our security challenges, is to fail to appreciate the all-encompassing impact of this scourge. The almost doctrinal and subliminal approach to crime, requires a systematic and sustained plan of action.

Upon assuming office the Government of the People's Partnership has committed to doing all in our power to implement measures that are needed to combat this challenge.

This Government AND by extension the Ministry of National Security, is forever-devoted to implementing the measures necessary to deal effectively with this growing challenge to law and order.

In fact, in our official policy framework for National and Personal Security, and Human Security for Peace and Prosperity, the Honourable Prime Minister clearly stated:

***".... We recognize that lawlessness and disorder contribute to the atmosphere in which criminal activity thrives and we will address this challenge head on ... the key part of our programme will be mobilization and engagement of communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago so that everyone can make a contribution to our nation's success."***

We at the Ministry are determined to create an environment which ensures public safety and security through the maintenance of law and order. As such, the Ministry has adopted a four-pronged anti-crime strategy, consisting of the elements of **Suppression, Prevention, Intervention and Rehabilitation** to treating with the issues of crime.

Over the last 19 months that we have been in office, we have implemented a number of short term solutions to the table and employed them in the quickest possible time, all the while committing to and applying a more holistic long term approach to solving the crime situation.

But, in the modern world, it is not enough to deal with the problems right in front of us and take each day as it comes. We must create a long-term Strategy that would provide for a safer and more secure society. When **Action** comes after a clear **Thought Out Vision**, it causes many organizations to be more proactive by planning positively to mitigate the underlying elements that drive and fuel potential crime and criminal activity.

Consequently, our 2012-2017 Strategic Plan has been developed taking a multi-dimensional approach to **Public Safety and Security**. The Plan recognizes that in this Post Cold War - Post 9/11 World, nations must continue to pursue solutions to both long-standing traditional threats, as well as emerging, non-traditional threats to national security.

In our twin-island Republic, these threats include trafficking in illegal drugs, arms and ammunition, as well as human trafficking; gang violence; cyber-attacks; extremism; HIV/AIDS and other pandemics; natural and man-made hazards and in particular, climate change and the potential impact this can have on our land space, food and water supplies.

**As you would appreciate, these threats are multi-dimensional and cross-border in nature and cannot be the responsibility of any one Government Agency or even Government.**

**In fact, it is only through a unified vision of the strategic security environment, that a Government wide approach, that encourages integration, the creation and synergy and resource prioritization, can we be positioned to deal with our challenges on a sustainable basis.**

**For this reason, when General Fraser offered to assist Trinidad and Tobago draft a National Security Policy our Prime Minister embraced the opportunity.**

I must commend these new efforts to **DRAFT a wider National Security Policy**, that will communicate both internally and externally the FUTURE initiatives of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to protect our sovereignty, curb criminality and foster a more resilient state.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is our earnest hope over this weekend, we would begin the process of creating a National Security Policy Document that will provide strategic guidance for organizational leadership and improve the coordination and cooperation among the various elements of Government, lead by the Ministry of National Security. As well, as fostering the ethos of cooperation and coordination between this country and our Regional and International partners in the fight against traditional and non-traditional threats.

I would at this time like to express my sincerest thanks to the coordinators of this meeting: Ambassador, Her Excellency Beatrice Welters and the other officials of the United States Embassy in Port of Spain. General Douglas Fraser, Commanding Officer of US SOUTHCOM, the team from the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, my Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Boucaud-Blake and the other officials of the Ministry of National Security and Colonel Rodney Smart and his team of excellent support persons at the Ministry of National Security, for all the work they have done in making all this possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen and distinguished visitors, with these few words, I thank all of you in advance, for all the insightful deliberations and hard work that will no doubt take place in this room over the next two days.



Distinguished visitors, on behalf of the Ministry of National Security, I wish you a safe journey to whatever your destination is after these meetings.

May Almighty God bless all our endeavours.