



## **BUDGET ADDRESS**

**By**

**MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

**MAJOR GENERAL (Ret'd)  
THE HONOURABLE EDMUND DILLON**

**Date: Tuesday, 13th October 2015**

**Venue: TT Parliament Chamber/ HOR**

**Time: 3:00 p.m.**

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Introduction and Greetings:**

Thank you very much to the Members of this House for allowing me the opportunity to contribute in this debate on the 2016 budget, as the Minister of National Security. It is in fact a signal honour for me. I consider it another opportunity to serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Madam Speaker**, I wish to offer my sincerest congratulations to you on your appointment as the Speaker of this most important House. Over the last couple of days the decorum, the professionalism and the discipline that you have shown, I believe ushers this House into a new era.

I wish to also extend my thanks and appreciation to my constituency of Point Fortin, the people of Point Fortin who have overwhelmingly elected me as the Member of Parliament for the Point Fortin constituency, with a 60.47 per cent, almost 10,818 votes, a difference of 3,743, from my closest rival.

I want to take this opportunity also to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley, for the quiet confidence that he has placed in me in appointing me as the Minister of National Security. I wish to also compliment the Minister of Finance for the budget that he has skillfully delivered, with good content, and more importantly, for the allocation that he has given to the Ministry of National Security. I wish also to compliment and praise my wife and my family for their unstinting support that they have given to me throughout this entire period.

**Madam Speaker**, I wish to pledge my unflinching commitment and dedication to execute my responsibility as the Minister of National Security and the MP for Point Fortin in a very professional manner. I say I would certainly do my best and let God do the rest.

My approach would be holistic. It would be all-embracing, to treat with all the many issues and challenges in the national security environment.

### **On National Security and Public Safety:**

**Madam Speaker**, national security is a very highly contested term. It means a lot to different people in different areas of the world. It is different in Asia; it means something different in Africa; it means something different in China; different in India; different in North America; different in Central America and South America, and for the Member of Oropouche West, it means something different in Japan.

It is a very elastic term, **Madam Speaker**. It can stretch to mean a number of different things, depending on the situation and depending on the occasion. But, basically, national security is about survival; survival of the State and survival of the individual. It is about creating the environment for sustainable development. It is about creating the development for people to live in peace and harmony.

It is about securing people, the environment—the environment in terms of the territory itself. It is about securing the assets in terms of, in our case, our economic assets; our infrastructure. It is also about reputation, our democratic values. And you will recall in 1990, I and even the Member for D’Abadie/O’Meara were part and parcel of securing our democratic value in Trinidad and Tobago.

National security is, in fact, the sum total of the policies, the strategies, the institutions, the finance that is established to treat with the threats to our State, our twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

There is no area of public policy that is as important in terms of manpower, money and resources, nor evokes as much controversy as national security.

So as such, it is important to point out that with this Government, there is no greater role, no more important obligation than the security, protection and safety of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It is a foundation of prosperity and the best assurance that future generations would have a place to live, a place of hope in a very troubled world. Securing the nation State is not just an option of policy choices. It is, in fact, the *sine qua non* to the very existence of the rule of law and democratic entitlement.

**Madam Speaker**, it is now public fact that the Ministry of National Security has been allocated \$10.8 billion in this year's fiscal package. I wish to assure this House and other Members and the public at large, that this allocation will be prudently allocated, monitored with astute financial management for the benefit of the people, the safety and security of this country. It is also important to note that under this new Government there has been alignment of agencies for the Ministry of National Security, with good organizational practices.

The Member for Siparia, in her contribution, raised the issues that the budget was a budget of deception because the Ministry of National Security's allocation was based on the return of agencies such as the Prison Forensic Science and NOC, et cetera. I believe that the Member missed a very important point. This is an issue of organizational managements and not budgetary allocation.

It was quite clear that the previous administration's attempt to create additional ministries, caused confusion and chaos. So this Government, in keeping with good organizational practice, has realigned those agencies in a fit-for-purpose structure.

You see, **Madam Speaker**, budget does not shape security; the security imperatives shape the budget. I treat now with the characteristic of the security environment as exists today.

The national security environment is shaped by murder. Murder is the number one. It is in fact the barometer that is used to measure crime in most jurisdictions. It is also shaped by gang warfare, illegal drugs, illegal firearms, terrorism, human trafficking and money laundering. We also experience transnational organized crime, cybercrimes. When we talk about terrorism, we do have instances where people in Trinidad and Tobago have been identified as part of the ISIS phenomenon.

But more importantly, the transnational organized crime is becoming very sophisticated, technologically capable and resilient.

**Madam Speaker**, English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes once said that in the state of nature life is short, nasty and brutish. It is the war of all against all, where everybody tends to defend himself. With the coming of civilization man decided to surrender that alienable right to defend himself to the State. Hobbes called it the Leviathan. Therefore, there was a social contract between the citizens and the State.

That social contract exists today, even in our jurisdiction in Trinidad and Tobago. The citizens have surrendered some part of their ability to defend themselves to the protection of the State.

When I look at the last five years, I believe—and I truly believe—that the social contract of the last administration and the people of Trinidad and Tobago were extremely broken. The State failed to secure the lives of the people of Trinidad and Tobago, and this was done by the dismantling of several security institutions, with no plans whatsoever to minimally replace those institutions.

One can look across the security institutions right now and look at the leadership. There is a lot of stress and strain in the leadership at this point in time. I speak of the fire services, for instance. The Chief Fire Officer is an acting position. The officers just underneath him, they are all acting.

The same exists in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. You have an Acting Commissioner of Police. He is the only substantive Deputy Commissioner of Police. All the others are acting. The Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force—the Chief of Defence Staff has been given a year extension. The last time that this was done was in 1970, Madam Speaker, when the last Brig. Jeff Serrette was returned to deal with the then mutiny in 1970.

So you understand that across our very institutions, our leadership positions are very untenable. There are no substantive positions across our institutions as far as leaderships are concerned—in key institutions. The prisons are similar, immigration similar, all acting positions. But when your institutions are based on acting leadership, it transfers down to the very organizations themselves in a state of very unstable situations. And this, this Government intends to fix as soon as possible.

**Madam Speaker**, there is a crisis facing us in security, not only in terms of leadership, but there is a combination of leadership and some antecedent factors. But in order to fully appreciate that, I ask you to bear with me as I look briefly in the rear view mirror. If I go to list all the instances it will take us all day, but I will list just a couple of some antecedent factors that helped put us in a position where we are at this point in time.

**Madam Speaker**, the previous administration, entrusted with power, but short of any meaningful strategy and policy, relished in the glory of power, position and public adulation. However one of the first ministries to suffer adversely was, in fact, the Ministry of National Security.

There have been appointments of five different ministers and three junior ministers in the Ministry of National Security over the five years.

In any organization for leadership to be effective it must be stable. If you have to change Ministers almost one per year, it suggests to me and it means that very institution, the very Ministry becomes very unstable. And I would say on entering into the Ministry of National Security I found a number of very confused and demoralized staff, Madam Speaker, because the five Ministers that changed brought a different kind philosophy, a different kind of management. So therefore, the staff had to keep on adjusting and adjusting, and I assure you, Madam Speaker, that this Minister of Government, Minister of National Security will ensure that there is some stability return to the Ministry of National Security.

**Madam Speaker**, I talk again about another issue, and this is the Reshmi Ramnarine. This has been beaten quite some time, but I raise it not to talk about old talk but to show the fact that this had an effect on our intelligence agencies. The effect of the Reshmi Ramnarine's scandal to date has had a tremendous effect on our intelligence agency. This decision truly destroyed to a great extent our intelligence apparatus, and certainly affects our concomitant effect or effort towards crime and criminality in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Madam Speaker**, I go into another area that had some debilitating effort on the situation in Trinidad and Tobago and, that is, the offshore patrol vessels. The Member for Oropouche West spoke about using technology instead of offshore patrol vessels. I think she had a very colloquial view and do not understand the nature of security.

You see in the area of Maritime security, one has to understand that the concept is based on a three-tier system. Tier 1 is based on providing assets from your shoreline to three miles; tier 2 is based from three miles to 12 miles; and tier 3 is based on 12 to your territorial waters. We are at an archipelagic state, which means that our territorial lines go way and extend from the last of our islands. So therefore, we have a great deal of water to patrol. And so, if we are acquiring assets to treat with our Maritime domain, we must consider offshore patrol vessels.

I will use a simply analogy. If you have a house on an acre of land and you decide that you want to fence that house, would you put that house close to your house on the perimeters of the acre of land? I answer, Madam Speaker, you will definitely put it on your acre of land.

And so if you are protecting Trinidad and Tobago, it should suggest to you that you put it at your out to most extreme which is your territorial waters. What are the assets that can patrol those water? And I submit it is the offshore patrol vessels. But I want to also add that I was the Chief of Defence Staff at the time when we procured our offshore patrol vessels and it was based not on a political decision. It was based on a strategic analysis of the then security environment within Trinidad and Tobago and our regional partners.

At that point in time, the Caribbean waters were patrolled by what you call the ship rider, the US Genital. It was a ship that patrolled from Bahamas in the north to Guyana in the South. During the time of our strategic analysis, the US had pulled that vessel out of the region because of commitment in the Far East. There was also what you call West Indian Guard Ship that the British had patrolling on our territorial waters, external waters.

They had pulled that out also from the region, and therefore, based on negotiations with the United States and so on; it was felt that Trinidad and Tobago was the only country within the Caribbean, with the English speaking Caribbean that can fill that void.

So we had a regional commitment to protect our Caricom neighbours as far north as Antigua to all the way south in Guyana. But additionally, our other offshore patrol vessels were required to patrol our own economic assets in the east coast, our platforms in the east and the north coast of Trinidad and Tobago.

I say this for people to understand that the offshore patrol vessels that were procured under the People's National Movement was designed to give us the kind of blanket security that would have protected us in this country over the last five years.

In the absence of those vessels what we have seen is definitely an increase in the penetration of our borders of arms, ammunition, human trafficking and the like. When one look, for instance, at the amount of arms that were seized over the last five years, according to the police statistics 2,750 weapons were seized over the last five years. Those were only seized, Madam Speaker, I am not even counting what have not been discovered. So you understand the volume of arms and ammunition. In terms of ammunition, 40,484 rounds of ammunition came into Trinidad and Tobago that were seized over the last five years. These are a result of the absence of Maritime security during that last five years.

**Madam Speaker**, I change my attention now to look at some of the institutions in national security.

I focus now on the National Operations Centre. The projected expenditure for NOC, as it is called, was \$789,364,432 in 2015; \$190-plus million estimated for current transfers and subsidies and \$599-plus million for the development programme;

Salaries over that period was over \$24 million, was estimated for fiscal year 2015. The estimated salaries for this year, for 2016, was about \$83 million in its projection; Goods and services, the estimate of 2014/2015 was \$158.5 million and the projection for this fiscal year is \$218.4 million;

Minor equipment was another \$2.8 million, and in 2016 we are looking at an additional \$7.3 million. So therefore, when we look at the National Operation Centre, we are talking about over a billion dollars.

The NOC, for example, signed an agreement with the National Helicopter Services. That was an open ended contract. The NSL built and the NOC paid. The helicopter wing of the NOC fell with frenzy, it seems. We are now being requested to purchase new helicopters, as four new helicopters were to be acquired at a cost of additional \$534.6 million.

In addition, a further \$32 million were to be spent for the lease of two additional helicopters beyond the four to be purchased. Add to all this, is another \$42 million for salaries of the pilots and supporting staff. Madam Speaker, to date there is no evidence to suggest that even as far as these expenditures are concerned, that we have been receiving value for money from that entity. And so, I want to say that a full audit on the way and the manner in this NOC will certainly assist in determining the way forward for this institution.

The acquisition of Armoured Personnel Carriers commonly refers to as APCs. I fully support the acquisition of APCs because it is something that had been there from since 2003—2005 in terms of the regiment's analysis. What I do not support is the manner in which the procurement of these APCs had taken place. Without the knowledge of the Permanent Secretary, a former Minister of Government ordered six APCs from a foreign firm to the tune of \$12 million.

There was no procurement. He simply wanted six and he ordered six. This has now become my problem as there are issues beyond the procurement of these vehicles. This, Madam Speaker, will also be reviewed by my Ministry.

In fiscal year 2014/2015, I moved to the naval assets. Some \$748 million were expected to be spent on acquisition of six vessels and six interceptors. In addition, a further \$158 million was expected to be spent on acquisition of a vessel from China. In the case of the acquisition of both these assets, the reports said that the procurement was less than standard.

In the case of all these vessels, instructions to build or adapt were given long before the funds had been properly identified or secured. This presented a nightmare for our civil servants who are now left to account for these deviations from proper procurement practice.

It is amazing, **Madam Speaker**, that we did not accept the offshore patrol vessels, and it was articulated that it was based on one gun, one weapon system, on one vessel, that malfunctioned a bit, but it could have been addressed. It could not swing automatically to its target. But here we are purchasing, not an OPV, a large ship, yes about 79 meter vessel from China, but because of security reason I dare not say what armament that vessel has in it because I really respect my comrades in the Defence Force and the sailors who are on board that ship at this point in time. But, suffice to say, Madam Speaker, you will be shocked.

I move now to the Strategic Service Agency, commonly refer to as the SSA. I am now faced with the uphill battle of determining the way forward for SSA, which has not only lost its way, but in fact has lost its very conceptual clarification.

The dissolution of the Special Anti-Crime Unit was to have been followed, from my information, by utilizing the assets of SAUTT and also a combination of the Special Services Agency (SSA) and the Security Intelligence Agency, the SIA. What has happened is that without conceptual clarification these entities have not been morphed into what is required at the point in time.

You see, **Madam Speaker**, in all creations there are two aspects. There is first a mental creation followed by a physical creation. In other words, if you do not get it clear in your mind what you want to do then you cannot get it right physically want you want to you do, and I believe when we destroy agencies like SAUTT and we try to merge the SSA and the SIA, there was not conceptual clarification on the part of the previous administration.

And so what has happened, is that we have institutions right now with no real defined structure. No structure that is defined or fit for purpose to treat with the security challenges that confront us. There were no conceptual clarifications to begin with. There was just a hush, a rush to just dissolve the entity that was called SAUTT, and so merge everything together. And so we have sort of a hodge-podge of institutions that that really and truly bring no value to the security environment at this point in time.

**Madam Speaker**, that is just to give you a brief indication as to the security environment as it exist at this point in time. When I assumed this portfolio, I had to expeditiously review the national security architecture, meet with various heads of institutions to determine their strategic objectives and effectiveness modus operandi in the fight against crime and criminality.

This Government believes in doing first things first, beginning with the end in mind so the clear picture of the ending is known by all. So we understand where we are going. In other words, we take a policy strategy perspective. We understand where we are going. Otherwise, like Alice in Wonderland Land, any road will take us there.

Today quire clearly the unacceptable levels of crime-related gun violence and anti-social behaviour continues to pose a fundamental threat to the economic and social wellbeing of our people, and therefore, it is one of the highest priority of this Government. This Government policy is grounded on the philosophy of a whole of Government approach. This approach will ensure that the policy, strategy and objectives are nested in the national interest across all Ministries.

This will set out a strategic framework and action plan designed to ensure that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago can prepare for and respond to a range of security threats including illegal trafficking, murder, trafficking of arms and ammunition, terrorist attacks, outbreaks of infectious diseases, natural disaster, cyber-attacks and critical infrastructure and domestic extremism.

**Madam Speaker**, this whole of Government approach policy ensures that every single Ministry in this Government has a role to play in the fight against crime. For example, Ministry of Sport has a role to play, Ministry of Public Utilities has a role to play and the Ministry of Finance has a role to play.

It is whole of Government approach so that every single Ministry must have a contribution in the fight against crime.

But this whole of Government policy focuses on five core areas, namely: further into the domestic and international interest of Trinidad and Tobago; protecting Trinidad and Tobago and safety and security of nationals at home and abroad; promoting and facilitating disability, good order, transparent and accountable governance; ensuring Trinidad and Tobago is not a base for threats to analyze the economic and strategic interest; and to promote international justice and security by denying access to our national twin-island Republic territory to persons including who are security risk or serious criminals.

We also believe that this will contribute meaningfully to our international security.

**Madam Speaker**, we painfully recognize that our country is being seriously threatened and undermined by aggressive criminals bent on acquiring and accumulating ill-gotten gains, and in the process, instilling intimidation and public fear. We are also cognizant that we have to effectively address crime in all its forms, be it blue collar, white collar, yellow collar or even red collar. Organized criminality, in whatever form, creates a parallel economy and undermines the stability, integrity and the rule of law in any democratic state.

**Madam Speaker**, as we pursue the long-term goals of policy formulation, this Government is cognizant of the fact that the reality on the ground is the high level of crime and criminality, especially the murder rate at this juncture. The

Government will, therefore, adopt a two-pronged approach or two-pronging attack: one at the level strategic level and the other at the tactical level.

So we are dealing at a strategic level but recognizing that the reality is that murder is going up; the reality that crime is being performed, so we are going to tackle both at the same time. So while we shape policies, the operational elements of the Ministry of National Security will be on the ground dealing with the day-to-day situation.

And you will see, even from today's papers, I heard the Member for Moruga/Tableland mentioned how grateful he was to see the soldiers and the police in joint operations in Moruga yesterday. Sometime ago, they were in the Point Fortin peninsular, and you will see and hear them on the ground because that is the fight on the tactical battle. So that two-pronged approach is to deal with the policy and the strategy but understanding the reality on the ground.

So, at the strategic level, a national security policy will be developed which will inform a national security strategy from which will emanate all the divisions of national security. In other words, something that has never been done before, because in the past, what has happened is that the national security Ministry has reacted to situations in a sort of quick-fix attitude. What is important and what is coming from this Government is a change in the way we do business. We start at the policy level so that there will be a national security policy for Trinidad and Tobago coming out from that national security policy, and that will inform the strategies of the various departments.

In other words, you will see shaping police strategies to deal with the crime and situation; an immigration strategy; a defence force strategy; a forensic strategy, and then they will come to the deliverables. In other words, it is a combined integrated approach to security in Trinidad and Tobago that will be seen in a way that it can be measured from a policy level going all the way down to the tactical level- something that has never been done in Trinidad and Tobago—well, thus far.

Therefore, **Madam Speaker**, while this Government plans to introduce those measures, such as the review of the legislation to ensure that the Commissioner of Police and his deputies are rightfully appointed, while we look at the police service inspectorate, while we look at the police service management authority; while we look at improvement works in the police stations and so on, we also want to look at institutional strengthening with expanding our police service in terms of the municipal police corporations. This, again, is another measure.

It is a measure in terms of increasing not only the amount of police men on the ground, but it goes in alignment with our Government's thrust to empower our local government. So that the police and the municipal police and the corporation would be an extended arm of the regular police service. And what we will have is not only policing but a greater surveillance capacity, because we have what we call ears and eyes on the ground to ensure that operations are based on intelligence-driven and evidence-led.

**Madam Speaker**, we have also introduced a joint border protection agency because we understand, in the security environment, what has happened in our maritime domain, what has happened around our borders. There is, in fact, 560 kilometers of coastline around Trinidad and there is 180 kilometers around Tobago.

A survey that was done some years ago indicated that there were 91 possible ports of entry in Trinidad and Tobago. So you understand what is happening there. And therefore, this joint border protection agency would utilize the assets, would utilize the personnel, would utilize the agencies, in terms of customs, immigration, the

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, the airport and the seaports to gather information that comes through our bonafide ports.

But, in addition to that, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force or the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard is, in fact, looking at putting floating-type of jets around some key areas around Trinidad and Tobago which would afford them the ability to respond within 30 minutes to almost any jurisdiction to any area that will be picked up within the maritime divine.

So that what we are looking at, in terms of this joint border protection agency, is an area in which the information, the intelligence, would be transmitted into and therefore, that will inform operation. In other words, there is a combination or a synchronization of all these elements. Right now, they are separate but when we put them together, there will be strength and unity and therefore, ensure that the information and intelligence is gathered in a way that they can lead proper operations to ensure, once again, the safety and security of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Madam Speaker**, to that end, when we look at, as I mentioned a while ago, in terms of the lack of conceptual clarity, in terms of the SIA and the SSA, we understand and we know that at the national level, there is a requirement for a national intelligence agency.

An agency that, at the highest level, can take the information, the intelligence, not only within the jurisdiction of Trinidad and Tobago, but information that would be passed on from our international partners, whether it is the United States, Canada, UK, that we have agreement with, and that information would allow us, both the external and the internal information that would be sent into this national international agency, would then allow us at the operational level to do what we call intelligence-led operations.

And it is to that end, this Government has already taken an approach based on a relationship with our international partner to assign one of our officers to an agency or international agency—which I will not name—that will give us the ears and eyes that we never had before in the jurisdiction of the Caribbean sea and our territorial waters. So therefore, in developing that national intelligence agency, our feeder from our international agencies has already been put in place. So therefore, we are looking at what I said, intelligence-led operations to be able to treat with the many issues and challenges that confront us especially in the maritime domain.

**Madam Speaker,** I look now at our forensic science capability. We are looking at institutional strengthening in forensic science and so that, within the next fiscal year, there will be an implementation of the laboratory information management system, LIMS, in the fiscal year 2016. And that will facilitate the electronic recording and real-time tracking of all case management activities related to evidential submissions at the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre.

In fiscal year 2016 also, the Forensic Science Centre will design and implement a secured IT infrastructure to facilitate the transmission of DNA profiles to the forensic DNA databank, which is established under the Administration of Justice Act, 2012. This would ensure again, that prosecutions and the like would be more precise based on scientific information and scientific process.

It is also proposed that a review will be done of the Special Anti-Crime Unit that was in place during the PNM administration because the Special Anti-Crime Unit, as a concept, is a very, very sound concept. This review will look at what are the issues pertaining to the old structure of SAUTT and therefore, treat with it in a manner where, in going forward, we take what is relevant. But a review will be done on the concept of SAUTT and see how best it can be relevant to today's security environment.

**Madam Speaker,** I look also at prison management. A new policy for prison management is being framed and it is aimed towards reducing re-offending, improving rehabilitation and prison conditions, prison security and physical facilities, and prison legislation.

In this fiscal year, we look at the establishing of the electronic monitoring mechanism; establishment of an offender management programme and construction of a probation facility.

Within the fire service, we continue to upgrade the fire service facilities. Fire services will be the main effort in the safety of our citizens. Additionally, you would realize that we now have the lifeguards assigned to the Ministry of National Security, and the fire service would act as mentors for the lifeguards in terms of ensuring that the safety of our citizens are pervasively well-dealt with along our shores.

I look at immigration and to say that within this fiscal year, adequately provided for in our budget, is an upgrade of automated fingerprint identification; an upgrade in machine readable passport towards the provision of e-passport.

With respect to the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management, developed a disaster risk management policy focusing on reducing the risk associated with those who are—basically more those who are in the poverty level and lack resources—we want to emphasize that—to treat with those who are really in need and offer them some degree of assistance.

One of the other areas of importance is with respect to the youth in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry commits to tackling youth criminality head-on through the implementation of preventative actions. The strategy will address causes rather than symptoms, and so, there would be expanded youth programmes.

The police youth club, for example, would be expanded. And we want to take the benefit or the successes from the police youth club and encourage them with respect to the fire service. So we want to have a fire service youth club, a Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force youth club, because those youth clubs play a very important part in programming or in influencing the young people of Trinidad and Tobago which has been the success so far of the police youth club. So we want to multiply that to the other agencies.

We want to continue the Citizens Security Programme. We also want to revamp scouts and girl guides at the primary level because we believe by doing so, if we start very early to influence and condition the young people, get them into that sort of disciplinary mood from as early as the primary schools with the scouts and the guides, they can then move up to the cadet force in the secondary school.

And after that, they can choose what profession they need, whether it is the defence force, the police or the prisons. But we have discipline all the way from the primary school all the way. We also want to enhance the mentorship programme and of course, the MiLAT, MYPART and Civilian Conservation Corps.

They would be supported by this Government because we understand the need to create that environment for our young people to take them off a mindset of crime and criminality.

So I talked, **Madam Speaker**, a while ago, of a number of strategic things and as I mentioned a while ago, while we deal with the policy and the strategy, while we deal with those policy-type things, we have to understand the reality on the ground is that today, tomorrow, we are faced with murder and criminality in our jurisdiction.

So, again, as I mentioned, there is a two-pronged approach. While we deal with the policy, we also want to deal at the tactical level.

And so, at the tactical level, the needed action of this Ministry is to treat with illegal guns and murders in Trinidad and Tobago as a primary focus.

The concept of operation would be based on an integrated and joint approach which is intelligence-driven to treat with this present issue on guns. Because when we look at the murder today, the weapon of choice is the gun and by all imagination, it is an illegal gun. So what would be immediately done is the creation of a specialized joint unit designed specifically with all the necessary qualified personnel, the appropriate equipment and the legal framework, most important, to treat with the possession of guns and activities of gangs in Trinidad and Tobago.

You see, what we are sending there, **Madam Speaker**, is a message to those who choose to bear arms illegally in Trinidad, this specialized unit would be knocking at your door. This specialized unit would make your life in such a way that you have to give up that gun, Madam Speaker. It would be based on intelligence used, and I repeat, within a legal framework and so those who choose to bear guns illegally in Trinidad and Tobago, this specialized, which would be based throughout the length of Trinidad and Tobago would focus specifically on retrieving, or dealing with those individuals who choose to bear guns in Trinidad and Tobago.

So, while this unit will focus, as I said, internally we also have to focus on the weapons that are coming into the country.

Again, it is a multi-dimensional approach and so the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, through the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, with the acquisition that they have had quite recently, would be able to patrol our borders, patrol our maritime space and so deal with the issues on the maritime side, while we deal with the issues on land.

It is a dual approach. We deal with the issues on land, we deal with the issues of the weapons and arms coming into Trinidad and Tobago, Madam Speaker. It is almost a simultaneous approach; dealing with not only air, not only land and sea but also the air component of the defence force would be part of that. When you put that together with our 360 degree radar we feel, Madam Speaker, that we are going to help secure Trinidad and Tobago from the input of guns and ammunition and so reduce, if not completely eliminate, but I use the word reduce, the issues of illegal guns coming into Trinidad and Tobago.

So to do that, in order to properly utilize the human resources of both what I call our two actionable institutions, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, we will authorize, we will ensure that we conduct a personal audit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and an administrative inspection in the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force.

**Madam Speaker**, that is designed to see, to assess the human resources in these two institutions to see the best fit, where they are best suited, where they are being utilized at this point in time. Therefore, if one looks, for instance, we are talking about almost a combined total of roughly 11,000 people, if we take just 2 per cent of that and we say that 2 per cent is dedicated to the fight against guns and drugs in Trinidad and Tobago, you would understand what we are dealing with.

So those two audits, they are really two personal audits. One is called administrative inspection in the defence force, but in terms of the police there would be a personal attitude to see where is the human resource at this point in time and where they can be best located, because at the end of the day, what we do, in terms of the Ministry of National Security, is geared towards creating a secure environment for the people of this country.

And, therefore, the human resource in all these institutions must be geared towards that and this is what this audit would produce for us.

**Madam Speaker**, Trinidad and Tobago is building an integrated security system to ensure that all necessary Government resources are brought to bear at the right time and place. The military parlance is called concentrating on force in the right time and place, the economy of force so that the best fit, the best use of our resources.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. **Madam Speaker**, our approach is based on utilizing modern concepts, in terms of intelligence-gathering. Our approach is based on intelligence-led operation but at the end of the day, I am saying that our main focus is to treat with the reality of guns in our country. That is the weapon of choice and, therefore, most of our activities would be geared towards that, at the tactical level and in policy formulation level.

And you would see, there would be intensified operations based on the joint nature between the defence force and the police on the grounds, in the areas, based on intelligence throughout Trinidad and Tobago, as evidenced by today's activities.

**On Point Fortin:**

**Madam Speaker**, let me take some time at this juncture, to talk to my constituency of Point Fortin. My constituency is very important to me, because they are the ones who have elected me overwhelmingly, 10,813 votes, 60.47 per cent.

Point Fortin and its constituency were referred by Professor Brereton as a town that oil built. It is one of the greatest contributors to the GDP of Trinidad and Tobago but Point Fortin, is an area in need.

Over the last five years, nothing much was done in Point Fortin, in terms of development. Now, I can say that in the last two months before election we saw the turning of the sod for the Point Fortin hospital. And I thank the Members on the other side for that, but I can tell you that the Point Fortin hospital would be completed by People's National Movement.

**Madam Speaker**, Point Fortin Fire station, and I thank the Minister of Finance. The Point Fortin Fire Station—I grew up in Point Fortin and that fire station is older than I am. It is still made of wood. It is a wooden building, and I thank the Minister of Finance for ensuring that the Point Fortin Fire Station is on the list of projects for this year.

Along we have provision of affordable housing for residents and I know that the Minister of Housing is working on that; creation of an eTeck park; Point Fortin police improvement, again through the expansion of the municipal police; establishment of tertiary education and tertiary institution, with linkages to UWI and COSTAATT; proper infrastructural development, in terms of roads and water, and I know that the Minister of Sport has already visited Point Fortin, in terms of a recreational ground, and so on.

Now we can say safely that the Point Fortin Mahaica Oval, which is the mecca of sports in the Point Fortin constituency, would be addressed in this fiscal year, Madam Speaker.

I continue, establishment of community college; establishment of tourism industry in the places like Icacos and Cedros, where once flourished, in terms of coconut and cocoa. This, I have had some discussions with the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to look and see whether we can rehabilitate the coconut estate in Cedros, rehabilitate the cocoa production in places like Granville and Coromandel.

Our proximity to Venezuela, suggests to us that we have to look at how we can benefit from tourism from that sector because there is an official port of entry in Cedros and so we intend to establish Spanish language training, not only for the residents of Icacos and Cedros but in fact for the wider Point Fortin constituency.

**Madam Speaker**, it is indeed a pleasure for me to represent the people of Point Fortin. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here as their Member of Parliament, to represent them at the highest level and I want to assure them that I will do my best to ensure that the Point Fortin constituency gets what it deserves from our People's National Movement, from this Government that is in power.

**Madam Speaker**, it is indeed a distinct pleasure for as the Minister of National Security and MP for the constituency of Point Fortin to present this speech. I want to once again thank the Minister of Finance for his allocation. I want to thank the Prime Minister for appointing me as the Minister of National Security. **Madam Speaker**, I want to thank the Point Fortin constituents for the support they have given me, for electing me as the Member of Parliament.

### **Conclusion and Wrap Up:**

My expressed desire, Madam Speaker, in the area of crime and security, in the area of National Security. It is not about politicizing that. It is about working together. We live in world of interdependence. We live in a world in which no one entity can treat with the many challenges and issues that confront us. We can only do so.

We can only with the issues in a cooperative and collaborative manner. If we do that then we stand a greater deal of success than going alone. And I would say to the general public, I would say to the wider public, I would say to my people on the other side, the Members on the other side, with respect to crime and security, let us come together and treat with the many issues and challenges.

Let us contribute in a cooperative and collaborative manner to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago becomes the peaceful loving country that we know it to be; one that our future generations can live, can work, can recreate and enjoy life. Let us leave that as a legacy for our children. And so I ask, let us together ensure that Trinidad and Tobago becomes a place of peace and security. Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute.

**End**