



REMARKS

By

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

MAJOR GENERAL (Ret'd)

THE HONOURABLE EDMUND DILLON

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE ARRIVAL OF THE TTS NELSON II

At STAUBLES BAY

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO COAST GUARD

Date: Tuesday, 27th October 2015

Venue: Staubles Bay, Chaguaramas

Time: 14:00 p.m.

- **His Excellency Huang Xingyuan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China;**
- **Mr. Carl Francis, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security;**
- **Major General Kenrick Maharaj, Chief of Defence Staff, Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force;**
- **Col. Rodney Smart, Commanding Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment;**
- **Captain Hayden Pritchard, Commanding Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard;**
- **Squadron Leader Kemba Protain-Hannis, Ag. Commanding Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard;**
- **Major Andy Barazzer, Ag. Commanding Officer of the Defence Force Reserves;**
- **Other Heads of Divisions of the Ministry of National Security;**
- **Former CDSs and Officers of Flag Rank;**
- **Officers and other Ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force;**
- **Other Distinguished Guests;**
- **Representatives of the Media;**

A very pleasant good afternoon to all

This is a Historic Day, a defining moment in the life of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. Today we are here to witness the arrival of the TTS Nelson II, as an operational ship of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, assigned to the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard.

Speaking Points:

- Reminisce on years as a Coast Guardsman
- 1974 to present
- TTCG has come a long way. Traveled leaps and bounds

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the critical role that security plays in the continued development of our nation. We have also clearly expressed our commitment to ensuring the safety and security of the people of this country.

While we begin to rebuild our national security apparatus and fill in the gaps in our current security architecture, know that we will not simply abandon the capacity that has been put in place in the past. We will not act hastily in our review of our country's national security assets and capacity.

This will not be our modus operandi! We are a responsible Government.

Our Government's intent is to upgrade and re-build efficient and effective Defence and Law Enforcement Agencies.

That is why securing our maritime boundaries as part of our overall border security strategy, is of such great importance to us as a people. Our porous borders are a major source of the proliferation of illegal guns and drugs, which are primary drivers of crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

To neutralize this challenge, Government will move to:

- Establish a Joint Border Protection Agency that will manage the security and integrity of Trinidad and Tobago's borders;
- Ensure that appropriate military assets are acquired, deployed and maintained;
- Utilize information, integration, and rapid response of all agencies to meet all external threats.

Ladies and Gentlemen, over the past 53 years, the Commanding Officers and members of the Coast Guard have protected Trinidad and Tobago with unswerving dedication and commitment. I would like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation of this Government and the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, for your valiant efforts. **(Wait for APPLAUSE)**

I have no doubt that we will continue to make demands on you to protect our sovereign state from intruders and traffickers and we expect that your efforts will match the challenges that we face.

In this regard, the Coast Guard must therefore continue to develop into a modern and forward looking organization, which will be able to defend Trinidad and Tobago's maritime interests, as well as meet our regional commitments, obligations and responsibilities.

This most significant role is crucial to successfully *“defending the sovereign good of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and to provide, on a continuous basis, quality service for security and safety within its maritime boundaries and in any other area of responsibility agreed to by the state to fulfil its international obligation.”*

At the ground level, this role if successfully executed will lead to less porous national borders, fewer guns on our nation's streets, thereby leading to a reduction in firearm-related homicides, resulting in a better quality of life for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

We know that danger is clear and present, but we are also aware that you the members of the Coast Guard remain ready and able to assist in securing our nation.

I am informed that a Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard crew was able to take command of the TTS Nelson II and bring her safely home from half way around the world.

Speaking Points:

- 12,476 nautical miles
- 3 Oceans
- 3 Seas,
- 3 Continents
- 5 Countries

To her Captain, Commander Jason Kelshall, and crew I say Bravo Zulu for a job well done.

To the families who provided support along the way, I say well done. **(Wait for Applause)**

Ladies and Gentlemen, today's event also acts as a reminder of the friendship this nation shares with the People's Republic of China. This is a partnership which has been in existence for some time and which continues to grow stronger.

Speaking Points:

- Trinidad and Tobago- China Relations
- Bragging Rights for the Crew of the TTS Nelson II

I wish to acknowledge therefore, the efforts of His Excellency the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, for his Embassy's support over the years which has aided in the growth and development of our national security capabilities.

As I close, let me offer my congratulations to you the Officers, men and women of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard for your continued dedication to duty.

Rest assured of the continued support of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, as you take to the sea to assist in the security of our national borders, as you operate in a new integrated security environment.

May God continue to bless our country and us all.

I thank you.