



ADDRESS

By

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

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

At

**THE LAUNCH AND OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
REGIONAL COUNTER DRUG INTELLIGENCE TRAINING
SCHOOL**

Restoring the Balance

Date: Monday, 30th November 2015

Venue: Gymnasium, Police Service Training Academy

Time: 8:00 am.

- His Excellency Mr. Gérard Latulippe, High Commissioner of Canada;
- Mr. Riyad Insanally, OAS Country Representative;
- Mr. Richard Blewitt, UNDP, Country Representative
- Mr. Simeon Yearwood, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security;
- Mr. Stephen Williams, Commissioner of Police, TTPS;
- Other Heads of Divisions, Ministry of National Security;
- Mr. Roger Gaspard, Director of Public Prosecutions;
- Brigadier (Ret'd) John Sandy
- Ms. Esther Best, Manager, National Drug Council;
- Members of the National Drug Council;
- Officers and other ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force;
- Officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;
- Speakers and Moderators,
- Workshop Participants;
- Members of the Media
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Speaking Points:

- **Thank you to the Government of Canada/Canadian High Commissioner**
- **Thank you to the OAS/CICAD**
- **‘Thank you to the TTPS/CoP**

I must commend the involvement of my predecessors, and from what I have seen of the work undertaken and the cross section of participants for both Workshops, the spirit of collaboration among the critical agencies is high both regionally and nationally.

Speaking Points on the Work:

- **Former Minister Martin Joseph and Brigadier John Sandy;**
- **Building our Institutions;**
- **Building our Regional Capacity;**
- **The Counter Drug School is part of our Regional Strength.**

Due to the unique perspective you bring to the table, as professionals from a range of backgrounds to discuss issues relating to National Security, this school is now poised to assist strategic planners and those who work in the area of operations, in a number of ways.

Ladies and gentlemen, issues in National Security remain the central focus, for every member of our national and regional communities. This reality makes it imperative that the entire regional community mobilize itself to meet the challenges we all face in the National Security and Public Safety arenas.

The highest priority of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago therefore, is the immediate reduction of not only the present level of criminal violence, but also to put a stop to acts of trafficking in Drugs, the trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the trafficking in Persons and all the associated evils that come with these acts of crime.

The Ministry of National Security fully recognizes its responsibility to the public and we are totally committed to implementing the measures necessary to deal effectively with the growing challenge to law and order.

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 almost immediately to:

- Establish a Joint Border Protection Agency that will manage the security and integrity of Trinidad and Tobago's borders;
- Ensure that appropriate military and law enforcement assets are acquired, deployed and maintained;
- Utilize information, integration, and rapid response of all agencies to meet all external threats;
- To work more closely with our Regional and International partners in the area of intelligence gathering and sharing;

In this regard and as it pertains to the drug trafficking, we must stop illicit drugs from getting to our respective shores. However, it is not a task we can undertake alone, so we are working closely with our partners both internationally and regionally, to find more effective ways of disrupting and dismantling drug trafficking operations. It is therefore prudent that the planners of the school chose to focus both on strategic and operational intelligence for the first regional and national workshops.

An essential element of this is putting effective agreements in place to share information, intelligence and resources.

This increases the opportunities we have to target criminals across jurisdictions in a range of ways, and gives law enforcement agencies a much greater chance to stymie the effectiveness of criminals so that they are no longer capable of engaging in criminal activity.

In today's world our operations must be based on hard intelligence. The school must therefore shape our intelligence picture to lead at the Operational level.

International Approach:

Ladies and gentlemen, as the world prepares for the United Nations Special General Assembly on Drugs (UNGASS) in 2016, we are reminded of our common and shared responsibility on the issue of drugs, and our need to put in place policies, Strategies and Programmes that are robust and realistic in the attainment of the various components of the plan, and that they are also in alignment with the goals as articulated in the United Nation's seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals.

Trinidad and Tobago has been represented at a number of the dialogues that are contributing to the United Nation's Special General Assembly on Drugs (UNGASS) and our positions are aligned to a number of areas on which there is general agreement. However we have also taken the opportunity to articulate our needs and those that are specific to the security issues of small island developing states.

Regional Policy

At the regional level, I recently had the opportunity to address Ministers with responsibility for Security and Law Enforcement at the CONSLE meeting which was held in Port of Spain, earlier this month.

Speaking Points:

- **Collaborative and Coordinated Manner on Intelligence Sharing.**

These however, are not the only threats to our collective societies.

As we take note of our alarming crime rates and the levels of violence that have become too common place, we are also mindful of the threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTF's).

As a region we must always be mindful of our geographic location on the traditional transshipment route for cocaine, but we need to also acknowledge that we have intra-regional trafficking of marijuana, and a significant body of substance users. Therefore we can no longer label ourselves as transshipment states but must acknowledge the cross cutting activities in which our citizens are engaged.

Collectively, these issues make the operation of this school extremely critical. I am confident that the courses offered through this school will also assist us to track the area of arms trafficking and the dehumanizing practice of human trafficking.

Another critical area we hope to see addressed is Money Laundering and the proceeds of crime. I do not need to remind this audience that the proceeds of money laundering provide a false illusion of the economy and put each and every one of us at financial risk.

Speaking Points:

- **Cyber Security a critical issue/ A borderless world**

As the Attorney General noted a few days ago, yesterday, the general public is not sufficiently aware of the implications of this issue and I urge the framers of courses in this school to seek to have those persons in this connected area, provide outreach and information to the public on this issue. Of even more importance is the fact that these funds are often diverted to terrorist organizations and we now have a devastating international example of how that can be manifested.

Trinidad and Tobago is committed to addressing this money laundering and its associated offences as aggressively as possible.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to demonstrate its unequivocal commitment to this issue as we now chair this organization, and continue to host the Secretariat. More importantly though, is the fact that we are working assiduously to ensure that the recommendations received in our mutual evaluation, are addressed by enhancing our laws, policies, procedures and systems. The School can assist us in this regard, to seek to build the capacity of all the organizations connected to this issue.

I trust that the school will take cognizance of the need for scientific data which can be used to inform policy and decision making. We can no longer operate from a position of what we observe or think we know. All of our activities need to be informed by reliable data, with robust and relevant monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure impact.

If we can achieve this, then we will be in an excellent position to justify our areas of expenditure and ensure sustainability of programmes which are having the desired impact on the areas identified.

I am very pleased with what has been accomplished to date and the promise which this school holds for our region. We are a small area of many territories; and must remember that we are only as strong as our weakest link. We must therefore continue to build each other's capacities and capabilities to mitigate the emerging threats to our region. It is only through innovation, determination and cooperation that we have any chance of succeeding, so I wish everyone here success in their endeavours this week.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for the courtesy of your attention.

May God continue to bless us all and our nation.

I thank you.