

**Feature Address By The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P. Minister Of Home Affairs At The Annual Conference Of Heads Of Special Branch Of The Caribbean At The Guyana International Conference Centre Turkeyen**

I take this opportunity to welcome our visitors to the shores of Guyana. I hope that your journey to Guyana was a pleasant one. I appreciate that you are here for a very serious engagement and that you are fully prepared to deal with the issues slated for discussions at this conference, but that should not prevent you from enjoying yourselves while in our country.

I welcome this opportunity provided to me to deliver the Feature Address at this conference. This meeting has been arranged on the “heels” of two important Security related events. I am referring to the 8th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) held just a few weeks ago, in Paramaribo, Republic of Suriname and the 24th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police that took place in Guyana recently.

I have noted that the theme for this conference is “Securing Regional Security through Improved Techniques for Monitoring Economic and Social Stability”. I think that the theme is appropriate at this time. You, as Heads of Security Agencies in your countries are operating in an environment far removed from that which obtained years ago. You are faced with a multiplicity of challenges, some of which were never encountered by many of your predecessors. While this is a Regional Conference of Heads of Special Branch, you need to look at the global environment if you are to better understand the challenges that you face as Regional Organizations.

## 1) The Global Environment

In the global arena, there is a number of issues that have an impact on the security of the Region. They include:-

a) The current global economic Crisis

b) Terrorism

c) Drug Trafficking

d) Organized Crime

a) The Global Economic Crisis

Since 2008, a number of events in the world financial markets have shaken the foundations of the economies of many countries.

- i) Companies have collapsed
- ii) Millions of jobs have been lost
- iii) Many international banks have become unstable
- iv) Economies have shrunken

The results of these events have had serious consequences for the Region.

i) It has affected tourism, which is a significant source of income for many countries of the region

ii) There is likely to be an increase in unemployment in the Region

iii) Crime may increase

iv) The social fabric of society could be negatively affected

v) The security of citizens could come under threat

b) Terrorism

Since the events of 9:11 and other similar events, the Region has come under increasing focus. This is more evident because of our relative proximity to the United States of America. This development has placed more demands on the security agencies of the Region.

c) Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking has been increasingly causing great concern to Governments and Law Enforcement Agencies of the region. Because of our geographical position, situated as we are between the major cocaine producers and consumers, our countries are used as transshipment points between those two locations.

You have to take note of the effect the drug trade and trade in small arms has had on our countries.

i) Some of the drugs that pass through the region remain in the area and is consumed. In addition, we also have to deal with the local production of marijuana.

ii) The offence of money laundering which usually accompanies the drug trade is affecting countries of the region

iii) Young men have become involved in the "proxy" wars of drug dealers.

d) Organized Crime

Organized crime manifests itself in many forms in countries of the world and this region. It has its tentacles in many of our territories. Many of our young citizens are victims and perpetrators of organized crime. Evidence of this could be seen on a daily basis.eg.

i) Gang related violence

ii) Robberies

iii) Kidnappings for ransom

iv) Human trafficking and alien Smuggling Another type of organized crime has surfaced in our region is cybercrime. This is relatively new in our part of the world but understanding it and curbing it needs urgent attention.

#### Response to the Threat

All the Global Threats aforementioned have consequences for countries of our Region. In fact, globalization has made the world into a "Global Village". Criminals have no borders, they roam the world freely and they neither observe nor respect the Laws of any country. You, as Heads of Security Agencies have to quickly develop an understanding of the relatively new environment under which you are forced to operate in. This new environment requires you to revisit your original mandates and respond to the new and varying challenges facing your Police Forces and your countries. As a matter of necessity, your vision has to expand and your modus operandi has to be "fine tuned".You no longer have the luxury of only reporting on traditional security threats to your countries. You must now become the eyes and ears of your respective Police Forces. Quality intelligence gathering and the timely documentation of such data is required on a real time basis if effective action is to be taken in certain situations. As you pursue your individual and collective endeavours at the national and regional level, I would like to encourage you to take into consideration the extant geo-political formations that have emerged within recent times and how they can impact on your thinking, planning and strategizing as agents of change and new thinking to assist policy makers in charting a course for the future. Also, it is vital in this very context that the highly critical and sensitive matter of sovereignty be always at the forefront of your efforts when processing of information and sharing intelligence with your counterparts in the developed and developing world. It is important to always remember that information and intelligence is sovereign and part and parcel of our national interests. I would also like to emphasize that given the new forms and

manifestations of crime, the old forms of information gathering and the institutions associated therewith must of necessity creatively adapt to these changes while at the same time preserving their historical mandate and their evolving relationship with those Police Departments whose sole responsibility is criminal investigation. Nowadays, it makes no sense to formulate plans and to conduct operations in the old way. While the enemy is old, the tools being used are new, scientifically and technological based. It would therefore be foolhardy were we to uphold, much less construct Chinese walls around our Law enforcement bodies given the paucity of human and financial resources at our disposal. Some of the areas I think, that our Special Branches should pay more attention to, include:-

1) The Production of Better Criminal Intelligence

Crime is the major concern of governments of the region. The intelligence agencies have to be able to assist the operational agencies with proper analytical data to aid them in their efforts to prevent crime and arrest suspects.

2) More intelligence gathering on the Drug trade, Drug Dealers and Money Launderers

3) Information that would assist in the prevention of Terrorism

4) Better data on gangs, including the nature of their operations

5) Proper analysis of alien smuggling and human trafficking

In my opinion, the above are some of the most important areas that significant focus should be placed on by the Intelligence Agencies of our Region. Many of the Law Enforcement Agencies of the Region are currently going through a process of Reform to meet the new challenges. The Intelligence Agencies have to be part of this process. You have to adjust your traditional concepts and adopt a more enlightened approach to your operations. In this regard pro-activeness and sound analysis must be your watchwords. The operational arms of the Police Forces depend on you for good Intelligence to conduct their operations. This is critical for the achievement of their goals. In order for you to carry out these many tasks, you have to ensure that you possess adequate tools and the requisite training to guarantee success. However, this would not be possible if there is an absence of commitment and a passion on your part and your staff to get the job done. You, as Heads of Special Branches have a difficult task to perform but with the necessary focus you could achieve your goals. Finally, I know that you have three days of hard work ahead of you. I hope however that you will find some time to know more about Guyana during your stay. I expect that your deliberations over the next three days

will go a far way in cementing Regional and International Cooperation in tackling the many national security challenges facing us today. I hereby declare this conference open.