

**STATEMENT BY REAR ADMIRAL HARDLEY LEWIN  
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE  
SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON SECURITY  
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO  
OCTOBER 27-28, 2003**

His Excellency, Dr. Luis Ernesto Derbez, Secretary of Foreign Relations of Mexico

Mr. Cesar Gaviria, Secretary General of the OAS,  
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me, Mr Chairman, to congratulate you on behalf of the Jamaican delegation on your election to preside over this important special conference. We are confident that under your able leadership and guidance this conference will have a successful outcome.

We wish to thank the Government and people of Mexico for the hospitality and the excellent arrangements that have been put in place.

Mr. Chairman I bring an apology from the Hon. Peter Phillips, Minister of National Security, who regrettably was unable to be present. He actually embarked on the journey to Mexico and got as far as Miami, but urgent domestic matters required his immediate return. He has asked me to convey his very best wishes for a successful conference.

Mr. Chairman, hemispheric security in its various dimensions has become a priority on the inter-American agenda and there is general acknowledgment today that the hemisphere cannot be viewed from a common-threat perspective.

The broad scope of the security agenda extends beyond traditional defense issues. It embraces new threats to security and includes new actors, among them non-state actors. Indeed, the Bridgetown Declaration which was unanimously adopted at the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of the OAS reaffirmed that "the threats, concerns and other challenges to the hemisphere are diverse in nature and multidimensional in scope and that the traditional concept and approach must be expanded to encompass new and non-traditional threats which include political, economic, social and environmental aspects". The Declaration on Security in the Americas which this conference will adopt by consensus, I am sure, addresses the broad range of elements which are reflective of this approach.

Jamaica endorses this broadened concept of security that goes well beyond the narrow confines of military and constabulary concerns. Like other countries in the Caribbean, our experience has shown that it is the non-traditional threats that pose the greatest risk to our political, economic and social security. The high-Level meeting on the Special Security Concerns of Small Island States that was held in Kingstown, St. Vincent, reaffirmed this vulnerability when it stated that "the special security concerns of small island states is a priority issue for the hemisphere that requires renewed and ongoing attention, and appropriate instruments and strategies for addressing these concerns in the inter-American system".

This vulnerability embraces such phenomena as drug trafficking, arms smuggling and other transnational criminal activities, environmental threats such as natural disasters and the AIDS pandemic. In addition to these threats we are also faced with other challenges and concerns to human security. As has been manifested in many of our countries, poverty, social inequity and marginalization often result in social upheaval and instability. Democratic institutions are weakened and ultimately governability, and even the very viability of the state, is threatened.

Mr. Chairman, my other CARICOM colleagues have already addressed some of these new threats, challenges and concerns which confront us individually and as a region. I wish to highlight a particular security concern for Jamaica, and that is the critical situation created by crime and violence which is inextricably linked to the illegal trafficking in drugs and small arms. Jamaica is a prime example of the reality that drug trafficking and transnational organized crime operate in a borderless world. In recent years, the internal security of the country has been besieged by criminal elements involved in the drug trade with strong links to external drug trafficking enterprises. Our open porous borders and proximity to major demand and supply sources have made Jamaica an attractive and convenient transshipment point. This gives rise to the alarming attendant problems, principal among them, drug abuse and the trafficking in illegal firearms. We are ill-equipped to deal with this phenomenon which has had a deleterious effect on the economy. It has forced us to divert our already scarce resources away from critical social and economic development programmes.

Mr. Chairman, Jamaica recognizes that the war against this scourge in our society is primarily a national responsibility. Nevertheless, we recognize that cooperation at the hemispheric and international level is essential if we are to have any measure of success in controlling and ultimately eradicating this blight. A number of initiatives have been taken to tackle the drug and arms trade. These include the Drug Offences and Forfeiture of Proceeds Act, the Mutual Legal Assistance Criminal Matters Act, the Precursor Chemicals Act, the sharing of Forfeited Property Act and the Suppression of Maritime Drug Trafficking Act. Other legislation includes the Corruption Prevention Act which has resulted in the establishment of a Corruption Commission.

We have signed and or ratified international instruments such as the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols and the UN Conventions on Illegal Drugs. At the hemispheric level, we have signed and or ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, the Inter-American

Convention against Terrorism, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and the Agreement Concerning Cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Air Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the Caribbean Area.

The importance of cooperation in the range of hemispheric security matters is aptly underscored in Section 3 of the draft Declaration. This section provides the blueprint for fostering and strengthening collaboration in the shared responsibility to guarantee the security and well-being of the peoples of our countries and hemisphere as a whole. We anticipate timely and effective follow-up of the various commitments, including institutional strengthening at the national and hemispheric levels.. Of course, such cooperation must be undertaken with full respect for the sovereignty and integrity of our states.

Mr. Chairman, peace, security and economic development are mutually reinforcing. Our democratic institutions and processes stand to be significantly enhanced and strengthened when they are underpinned by economic, social and political security. It is only in a stable and secure environment that sustained growth and development can be achieved.

Thank you.

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