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Post-Christmas and Awards Dinner, Motorised Division  
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February 12, 2005*

## **Reforming the Security Forces**

### INTRODUCTION

- First let me say thank you to the Motorised Patrol Division for inviting me to be your key-note speaker this evening. As a Scotiabanker, I am always delighted to be associated with excellence, because that is our goal in everything that we do. But I'm also very pleased to be here, because I know that all of you, members of the Force, are working under trying conditions, and ***with all due respect to Minister Phillips***, the rewards are not commensurate with your efforts and sacrifices. Therefore to achieve distinction in these circumstances is no mean feat. My heartiest congratulations to all the awardees.
- The Mission statement of the JCF states: *We serve, we protect, we reassure with courtesy, integrity and proper respect for the rights of all.*
- This is a noble mission, that speaks to the fundamental obligation of every government, that of keeping its citizens safe. Yet public opinion, the conditions under which the police work and the state of crime and violence belie the claims of this noble mission.
- It is not easy to be a member of the Force today. The police are feared, beleaguered, under-funded, hated by some and the favourite beating stick of some talk show hosts. In some quarters, they are seen as inefficient, uncouth and more of a danger to society than a benefit. The men and women of integrity and quality often seem to be lost under the cloud of negative impressions.



- On the other hand, private security firms have so flourished in recent years, that according to the Private Security Regulation Authority, as at May 2004, there were 238 registered private security companies employing 14,000 active registered security guards. As at January 31 2005, the JCF was 8,072 strong, out of an establishment of 8,500. It is clear then that private security guards greatly outnumber the police. And it is not too far-fetched to guess that they are also probably better equipped.
- Apart from the extensive use of private security by businesses island wide, one just has to drive through the streets of Corporate Area suburbs to see how dependent Jamaicans have become on private companies to fill their security needs. Some neighbourhoods have not one, but three signs declaring that the street is under the protection of particular firms.
- It is clear that the police have lost the confidence of the average citizen.
- How do you regain this confidence, without which it will be impossible to seriously tackle the crime behemoth? Since I'm not sure that the JCF will ever invite me back to speak after what I have to say this evening, I will take this opportunity to speak not only to you, members of the Motorised Patrol Division, but to the entire force.

## EFFORTS AT IMPROVEMENT

- While preparing to give this address, I have learnt that a significant amount of effort has gone into training for the Force. The Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica states that in 2003, the reform and modernization programme supported by the British Government through its Department for International Development (DFID) programme continued in a number of areas:
  - Members received training in Crime Scene preservation, as emergency medical technicians and Crime Pattern analysts.
  - 6,969 persons underwent training in customer service.

- 2,707 members of the force participated in classes in community based policing, bringing the total numbers to 4,707.
- 77 courses were held, involving 2,717 persons, aimed at improving the general competence of personnel at all levels. And an additional 40 members attended 24 courses in Europe, North America and the Caribbean in topics such as Law Enforcement, International Relations, Fugitive and Financial Investigations and Money Laundering.

These are just a few of the measures that were taken in 2003 to upgrade the efficiency of the force.

- Anyone hearing these statistics, must ask the question, what then is wrong? Why is there a prevailing feeling among the Jamaican public that in the face of increasing brazenness on the part of wrongdoers, the police appear to be more and more inept, corrupt and irrelevant?

## **CORPORATE STRATEGY**

- If it is not because of a lack of training, it is similarly not because of a lack of planning. The five-year corporate strategy presented in 1998 by then commissioner Francis Forbes outlined some impressive plans for improving the JCF in every way.
- I'm sure you are very familiar with that strategy. It had three main themes. i.e. **Tackling the Real Priorities; With a Professional workforce; and Acting With Integrity, Courtesy, Fairness and Respect.** I don't want to bore you now with all the details of the strategy, but I'm sure as conscientious members of the force, you are aware of where you still fall short.

- For example, the three key operational areas were: **Crime Management, Community Policing and Traffic Management**. To quote from the five-year strategy, in terms of “crime management”: “*The murder rate and that of other recorded crime will be a central indicator of our success.*” I need not elaborate much on how the Force is doing in this area. I am sure that you are as appalled as most Jamaicans, and probably even more frustrated, by the spiraling murder rate and the rank temerity and depravity demonstrated by the perpetrators.
- I know that the solution to the crime problem is a complex one that involves more than policing. But since we all want to go home tonight and given the context of this speech, I won't touch on issues such as financing and the breakdown in the social fabric. I do, however, want to suggest three measures in the area of policing.

## ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION

- The first is that all of us --private citizens, civil society, government and you, the members of the Constabulary Force must take an uncompromising stance against corruption once and for all. For far too long, there has been an unwritten assumption that corruption is inevitable and that we might as well turn a blind eye to it. We often hear it said that Jamaicans can't help being corrupt; that it is so much a part of who we are, that we should accept it as a societal norm.
- In fact, I suspect that although we don't tell Anansi stories as much as we used to in the days before cable, the spirit of Anansi lives on. But these days it is not the mischievous 8-legged creature that had fun taking advantage of the greed and shortsightedness of his hapless victims. That playful spirit has developed into a sinister monster permeating every tier of the society. And the police force has not escaped its tentacles.

- How many times have members of your own Division offered to “do something” for a motorist that you caught flagrantly breaking the traffic regulations?
  - How many times has evidence mysteriously disappeared from police custody?
  - How many policemen are involved in the drug trade?
  - Why are civilians afraid to speak out against cops who have committed blatant atrocities?
  - What are the instances of police who have allowed themselves to be used by criminals and special interest groups for their unlawful activities?
- I think we all agree that we cannot go on this way. It is time we take the same stand on corruption as the delegates to the 11th International Anti-Corruption Conference, in Seoul, Korea, in May 2003. Considering the theme "***Different Cultures, Common Values***", that group resolved:
    - ***We state our strong conviction that there is absolutely no substance in the myth that corruption is a matter of culture. Rather, it offends the beliefs and traditions of us all.***
  - A big part of our problem with corruption is that as a nation we have not taken the position that corruption offends all of us; that it is diametrically opposed to our mores and to the very essence of our ethos.
  - This is why successive administrations have failed miserably at stamping out corruption in the Force. Until there is a critical mass of men and women who make up their minds that corruption is an alien concept that has no place in this organisation, the nation will continue to suffer its effects.

- Sad to say, the public sees much of the effects of this lack of integrity among some of you right here in this room. I've been told that many people aspire to be in the motorized force, not because of the contribution they expect to make to the citizens of this country. Rather it is because of the contributions that they expect the citizens to pay to **them** through bribes.
- Former US vice- president Al Gore, in his closing remarks at the Global Forum on Anti-corruption in 1999, told this story of a police chief in Columbia:
- ***The head of the force inherited a corrupt department. He began with survey work and background checks -- and then fired a large number of corrupt officers.***

***Then he vetted a special group of candidates for their ethical values, and enrolled those who passed the test into an elite force to deal with drug traffickers. The elite force is reasonably well paid, but no government salary can compete or compare with the bribes of a drug trafficker. It is the officers' values that keep them loyal. They regularly report back to the chief on the value of the bribe offers they reject.***

- ***Of course, the chief is wise enough to know that he cannot build an enduring new culture on the leadership of one person. So he has created an outside review board -- made up of the most prominent members of society -- to monitor the honesty and effectiveness of the force. He has admitted the force has a long way to go -- but it is perhaps not as long a way as they have already come.***

- We need that kind of courage in Jamaica, the leadership to weed out corrupt members at every level of the JCF, and to put mechanisms in place to keep corruption out. I refuse to believe that the dishonest policemen outnumber the honest ones. Surely, most of you don't **lightly** enter a profession where you are underpaid, work very often in unappealing physical surroundings (to put it mildly), and put your lives on the line on a regular basis.
- Why should the dishonest minority ruin your reputation and discredit you so thoroughly? It is time to take a stand against corruption, both from a systemic point of view and a personal one.

### **Leadership and Followership**

- If we take this position, it follows that the leaders throughout the ranks must be people of impeccable integrity. Senior officers who commit unlawful actions should be exposed and removed summarily, to send the unequivocal message that there is to be no compromise with dishonesty.
- In this environment, junior members who receive orders that are unlawful would feel free to refuse politely and have the right to defend their position through the chain of command. And if we truly have men and women of principle in the Force such persons should resign, rather than carry out an illegal act.

## CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT FOR THE JCF

- In that story I quoted from Al Gore, he mentioned that the Columbian Police Chief appointed an outside review board to monitor the force. And that brings me to my next point.
- I propose that the government strengthens the capacity of the civilian Police Public Complaints Authority by giving it the resources it needs to function efficiently.
- Don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting that civilian oversight can ever replace capable police management in achieving an excellent Force. But international research has shown that an independent body is extremely valuable in the fight against corruption in the police.
- In his book, "*Police Accountability, the Role of Civilian Oversight*" based on ten years of research into the subject, Samuel Walker said that citizen oversight, as one element of a mixed system of accountability "*is in principle a legitimate and necessary aspect of police accountability*".
- A 2001 report from the US Department of Justice entitled "*Citizen Review of Police. Approaches and Implementation*" says that police managers have recognised that civilian oversight has a number of benefits, including improving the quality of a police agency's internal investigations, promoting community policing and discouraging misconduct amongst police officers. In that same report, elected officials recognise that this type of body can assist in reducing civil claims against a police agency.
- Members of the public reported that it helped reassure them that police misconduct was being punished appropriately and satisfied them that the police can be held accountable.

- But these benefits are only derived if such a body is properly set up and its role clearly defined. Many times these oversight bodies spend more time discussing what they are supposed to be doing than actually doing anything. Samuel Walker suggests that there must be mutual respect and cooperation between the police and the civilian body and that its most effective role is that of monitoring.
- And this monitoring role should not just be reactive, waiting for the telephone to ring. Experience has shown that the most effective civilian oversight bodies are proactive, with investigators who examine the **causes** of corruption as well as its manifestations.

#### DISSOLVE THE ARMY

- Ladies and gentlemen, I have been speaking of measures to improve the JCF as it is presently constituted. And there should be no dissenting voices in Jamaica when I assert that it is an imperative for our country to extricate itself from the current shackles of crime and violence. We are not likely as a country to achieve the economic growth and prosperity to which we aspire if the current level of barbarism, murder and morale decline continues.
- Therefore I would like to suggest that as a nation, we take some radical steps to revamp the Security Forces. We have an important crime fighting resource that we are overlooking to our peril. And this is the accumulated skill and training of the men and women of the first and second Jamaica Regiment of the Jamaica Defence Force.

- In the JDF's own words:
  - ***The Infantrymen of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of the Jamaica Regiment are deployed operationally with various weapons and equipment. However, their most effective and important weapons are the tactical abilities and applied intelligence of their junior leaders. The training, motivation, and operational capabilities of these Infantrymen have been proven to be major assets of Jamaica and is continually relied upon to assist the Jamaica Constabulary Force restore and maintain law and order in the country.***
  
- We are all aware that personnel from the JDF have assisted the police from time to time in curfews, searches and cordons and other activities.
  
- But I suggest that this is not enough. I am told that the exact numbers in these regiments is classified information, so although my sources managed to ascertain a fairly accurate estimate of these numbers, I will respect that confidentiality. Suffice it to say that there are sufficient numbers of JDF soldiers, who, if utilised more fully in day-to-day police work, would make a significant impact on law enforcement in this country.
  
- Right now, to our shame, we have to look to Scotland Yard and other overseas forces to effectively manage the constabulary. And yet most, if not all, of the officer corps in the JDF have undergone highly specialized training at some of the finest military colleges in Britain and Canada. With a minimal amount of additional training in crime management techniques, these men and women could add tremendous value to the national security of Jamaica.

- The first role of the JDF is to “*defend Jamaica against external aggression*” and the second is to *aid the civil power in the maintenance of law and order*”.
- But we are not facing any external aggression right now, nor is there any imminent threat of this sort. In any event do you think our military would be capable of seriously defending Jamaica against external threats? What we **are** experiencing is a very real **internal** threat of a total unraveling of civil society as we know it and a descent into chaos and mayhem. These are serious times, **no, these are exigent times** and they demand bold solutions.

**I therefore wish to challenge the Government, the Opposition and the entire Legislature to undertake the following:**

- Convene a special 60 day sitting of Parliament, and dedicate 5 days each week for a minimum of 8 hours each day, to a rigorous and productive bipartisan debate with the single objective of a mutual agreement on what organizational structure is required to meet the national security needs of our country;
- Invite the citizens of Jamaica to the Bar of Parliament to get their views on what organizational structure they consider appropriate;
- Repeal the Defence Force Act and abolish the Jamaica Defence Force. This is an elitist military that is no longer relevant in the context of the realities in Jamaica today and is therefore unaffordable and not the best use of the most highly trained security personnel we have available;
- Repeal the Jamaica Constabulary Force Act which is an anachronism in light of what is required to serve the needs of the people of Jamaica at this time;

- Table new legislation to establish a new multi-disciplinary force of no less than 30,000 members, which is relevant to the current and future needs of Jamaica.
- This new force should recruit its members from, but not limited to the former Jamaica Defence Force and Jamaica Constabulary Force, with emphasis on competencies, character and impeccable integrity;
- This new Force should be accountable to Parliament without Ministerial jurisdiction and a Council of Ombudspersons should be appointed to protect the rights and civil liberties of the citizens of Jamaica. The Force should decentralize its operations into regional commands to ensure effectiveness on the ground. The regional commands should be staffed with multi-disciplinary officers who should have the competencies to cope with all facets of law enforcement and community relations.
- The Parliament should legislate that this new force is appropriately funded as a priority call on the annual budget to meet all its needs, such as: Physical facilities: *no more broken down buildings that have to be condemned*
  - Mobility and logistics: *how can it be that the police have no vehicle to respond to calls?*
  - Compensation and benefits: *value the jobs of the force and pay them accordingly*
  - Modern equipment and technology for forensic analysis, surveillance, coastline protection, community relations and training.
- With the establishment of this new multi-disciplinary force central and regional command should have absolute authority to discipline and where necessary terminate the services of its members who are guilty of corruption or committal of unlawful acts. Where members are guilty of

transgressing the laws they should be prosecuted without fear of reprisal or intimidation.

- I have no doubt this challenge will be highly criticized by those who have a vested interest to maintain the status quo, however I wish to warn that to do nothing is no longer an option, because it will only be a matter of time that we will descend into full scale anarchy and the society will then be ungovernable.

## CONCLUSION: BECOME A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

- Ladies and gentlemen of the Motorised Patrol Division, I have been speaking to general issues in the Force, which I know are also relevant to you. But I would like to leave you with a direct challenge to become a centre of excellence within the JCF.
- You, the members of the motorized division are the front-line of the Force.
- For most Jamaicans you are the police they meet on a daily basis, and for many, the only ones they will ever interact with. You are the face and voice of a Force that is at a crossroads, with the advent of a new leader and at a time when Jamaica is at its most violent ever.
- You are in a prime position to prove to the citizens of this country that the indiscipline and brutishness that seem set on consuming this country can be beaten.
- I challenge you to be fearless and disciplined in your approach to traffic management. To be more than collectors of revenue. Don't look the other way when minivans and taxis endanger citizen's lives by overloading their vehicles and overtaking entire lines of traffic in the opposite direction.

- I know the magnitude of the present traffic fines is a source of temptation, especially in light of your inadequate salaries. It might seem so much easier and more profitable to take a “smalls” than to write the ticket. But consider this: every time you take a bribe, you weaken the integrity of the Force, reduce the confidence of the citizen in the police and strengthen the hand of the criminal element. And we all know that policemen have not been immune to the murderous ravages of criminals.
- The JCF needs to send an unequivocal message to wrongdoers that you are not only equipped and motivated, but also absolutely determined to put an end to crime in this country.
- And you are uniquely placed to deliver this message. Imagine the radical change in public perception when Jamaicans begin to feel that through the interactions with the Motorised Division that your mission is truly to: ***Serve, protect, and reassure with courtesy, integrity and proper respect for the rights of all.***

Community policing would happen naturally and the scale would begin to tilt against the forces of criminality in this island, because you would begin to garner allies for yourselves among law-abiding citizens.

- Most, if not all of you, have already gone through enough training to ensure that you have the skills to deliver on this Mission. According to Edward J. Tully, who has 35 years experience in law enforcement in the US, there are several things to bear in mind to help you maintain your integrity:
  - Remember that you have been placed in a position of power. Do not abuse this power. If you are tempted to do so continually, you should probably talk it over with the psychiatrist that the Force has recently employed to help you resolve difficult issues.
  - Practice good actions: they eventually become good habits.

- Avoid dishonest colleagues, especially if you are new to the Force: they will lead you down the wrong path. Take pride in your honesty and guard it jealously.
- Get involved in organisations outside of the Force, so that you can keep in touch with what Jamaicans are thinking and feeling.
- You may be saying to yourself: “this is too big for us, we are just one Division of the JCF”. But be encouraged by the words of Nelson Mandela in his inaugural address:
  - ***Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light not our darkness that frightens us. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.***
- **And never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.**
- *Thank you*