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FREE TRADE OF THE AMERICAS PROPOSED

CARICOM calls for Regional Integration Fund to Assist Smaller Economies

By Dr. Odeen Ishmael

“The National Coalition on Caribbean Affairs ENDORSES the intent and objectives of the CARICOM Proposal of Regional Integration Fund to Assist Smaller Economies in the Free Trade of the Americas, and UNDERTAKES TO ASSIST in moving this proposal forward.”

Approved unanimously by NCOCA’s Board of Directors on January 25, 2003.

During April 1998, at the second Summit of the Americas in Santiago de Chile, 34 of the nations of the Americas formally announced that they would begin negotiations to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) which is expected to be formalized by 2005. The FTAA will bring together the largest and smallest economies in the Americas. It will be driven by private business people seeking to maximize shareholders’ profits in the global environment. Trade and investment will gravitate to and polarize in the centers and countries of greatest profitability.

The impending negotiations and the eventual setting up of this hemispheric free trade body in the early years of the new century will impact immensely on the smaller economies, particularly those of the Caribbean region. Indeed, the majority of economies

in the Western Hemisphere can be classified as “smaller economies.” (see definition and discussion below).

It is clear that the benefits of regional free trade cannot realistically come without certain costs. It has been proven that smaller economies have a disadvantage in an atmosphere of completely free trade. The significant disparities in the size and strength of hemispheric economies make this a problem that must be considered by the smaller economies before undertaking the decisive move into the hemispheric free trade area.

While free trade can bring with it significant benefits, it could be disastrous for the smaller economies if integration issues are not properly addressed. One of the primary

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proposed mechanisms to facilitate integration is that of an independent Regional Integration Fund (RIF), first proposed at the Miami Summit in 1994 by the late Dr. Cheddi Jagan, President of Guyana. This article will discuss the benefits of an independent RIF and how it can help in the transition to the FTAA.

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Crime and Security in the Caribbean Regional Task Force to Tackle Problem

The Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at its Twenty-Second Meeting in Nassau, Bahamas in July 2001, expressed concern over the new forms of crime and violence that continue to pose

serious threats to the region’s security. These new forms of crime have implications for individual safety and the social and economic well being of the region as a whole. The “Heads” agreed to establish a Regional Task Force on Crime and Security to examine the major

causes of crime, and to recommend approaches to deal with the inter-related problems of crime, illicit drugs and firearms, as well as terrorism. The Task Force, chaired by Lancelot Selman of Trinidad and Tobago, comprised representatives from each of the

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NCOCA 2002

CARICOM CHAIRMAN EXTOLS NCOCA Addresses NCOCA's Fifth Annual Awards Banquet

Mr. Chairman, Members of NCOCA, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I extend greetings to the National Coalition on Caribbean Affairs (NCOCA) as it meets to discuss pressing issues that affect our region during its fifth annual Activities Weekend.

The Caribbean Community is an exceptional region. Its contributions to our world far exceed its geographic confines. Our sons and daughters are involved in every human endeavor with distinction. We have given the world the musical Pan, Reggae and Calypso, sportsmen and women; literary masters, scientists and inventors. Our people are critical to the health systems of developed nations; our teachers nurture the children of many countries. We have Nobel Laureates. Our citizens occupy prominent positions in government and industry in every continent of our world. The reach of our influence and the measure of our successes belie our size but confirm our dynamism. I believe there is hardly a place on this planet where a Caribbean citizen is not present. We must not forget this. It must inspire us when we are confronted by challenges – and there are many in the Region today.

The international environment is often unsympathetic to our cause and condition as small

and aid flows. Our economies are beset by low or negative growth and we are experiencing financial difficulties because of the large debt burden and shocks to our revenue owing to the changing international environment. We suffer high unemployment and attendant poverty. And there has been an increase in unsocial behavior: crime, drugs, and senseless violence.

Some countries justly urge us to fight crime and to battle illicit drugs. However, they either do not see or do not care about the connection between these problems and the uncontrolled export of small arms to our Region and the thousands of criminal deportees who they continue to send back to our countries while they aggressively recruit our trained nurses and teachers.

Some exhort us to open our markets, remove subsidies but they openly subsidize their farmers and hinder access to their markets.

We are rightfully urged to reform our tax regime to attract investment capital and then unreasonably penalized for successfully doing so. The OCED harmful tax initiative is a case in point. The OECD seeks to solve the problem of tax evasion in its member countries through unreasonable impositions upon our countries.

Developing countries are urged to practice more environmentally sound policies yet some developed countries, who are the world's worst polluters, are currently withdrawing from many international commitments to safeguard environment.

These are the realities of the world in which we live. And I ask, what should be our

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"It appears to me that our interests will be best served if we can remain together, forge a common diplomacy, and speak with one voice, to represent our collective constituency."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Introduction

Our most significant accomplishment during the past year was gaining accreditation to participate in activities of the Organization of American States (OAS) as "representatives of civil society." This has increased our understanding of many issues by placing them in a broader hemispheric context. We will work towards strengthening these relationships during the coming year.

The OAS

The OAS was founded in 1948 by 21 countries of the hemisphere, now 35 with the inclusion of the Caribbean nations. Headquarters are in Washington D.C.

In 1999, the OAS established a process for formally recognizing representatives of Civil Society. To date, 52 organizations have been accredited. **NCOCA was accepted in January 2002.**

"The OAS adopted the accreditation process to ensure the enhancement of its relations among organizations such as NCOCA, and is based on the significant contributions these organizations can make to the work of the OAS, since they can contribute knowledge and additional information to decision-making processes, raise new issues and concerns that will subsequently be addressed by the OAS, lend expert advice in their areas of their expertise, and contribute to consensus-building in many spheres."

Dr. Ransford Palmer (Chairman), Mr. E. Leopold Edwards (Board Secretary), Ambassador Dr. Joseph Edmunds and myself have represented NCOCA at OAS meetings. As a past Ambassador to the OAS, Dr. Edmunds has been able to provide invaluable assistance in helping us understand the operations of the OAS. I am pleased to report that in a brief span, we have

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PAHO HEAD RETIRES

NCOCA was one of a number of Caribbean organizations in the Washington area that came together to pay tribute to Professor Sir George Alleyne, M.D., F.R.C.P., K.C.M.G., retiring after seven distinguished years as Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Sir George was honored this March with a church service and reception at Church of the Holy Comforter in Washington, D.C.



Sir George Alleyne

Elizabeth II.”

“Throughout his illustrious career Sir George has displayed self-confidence without arrogance; high standards of performance within well-accepted ethical and moral norms; dedication to serving humanity at-large without neglecting the concerns and priorities of his region of birth.”

“In summary, Sir George has been an exemplary son of the Caribbean, possessed both of outstanding intellect and high integrity.”

“But he is not perfect. Realizing that he had no control over his specific place of birth within a warm and hospitable region, he sought to overcome his singular handicap by basking in the glory of the Mona Campus of UWI, and climaxed his redemption by marrying a most charming and intelligent lady possessed of an international cultural outlook and ethnic heritage. Thus did he approximate perfection.”

“On behalf of the NCOCA, and at the request of the President of the Caribbean American Intercultural Organization (CAIO) and the Hon. Shirley Nathan Pulliam, I applaud you on the occasion of your retirement from PAHO.”

“We are confident that, for you, the future will be as bright as the past.”

“We honor you. We are proud of you, and we bestow our blessings upon you.”

“In the Caribbean intellectual firmament, there are many bright stars; but none brighter than Sir George Alleyne.”

Leopold Edwards, Secretary,
Boards of Directors, NCOCA

Leopold Edwards, NCOCA's Secretary, Board of Directors, presented the following tribute:

“In the Caribbean intellectual firmament there are many bright stars; none brighter than George A.O. Alleyne, MD., F.R.C.P., K.C.M.G.”

“Having completed his medical studies, as a gold medallist, at the Uni-

versity of the West Indies, he pursued his postgraduate training in internal medicine in Great Britain and the United States of America.”

“He returned to serve the Caribbean Region from his position within the Department of Medicine at the University of the West Indies, within which department he rose to become Professor and Chairman.”

“Expanding into the international arena, he was the recipient of much acclaim for his work with the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization.”

“Partly in recognition of his outstanding contributions and achievements he was elected as Director of the Pan American Health Organization on February 1, 1995; was elected to a second term in 1999; and in 1990 was made a Knight

CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT CALL FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN HAITI

Deeply concerned about the continuing instability in Haiti and the prospect of a breakdown in the social order, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) emphasize that only strict adherence to the democratic process will constitute a proper solution to the political problems in Haiti.

In this regard the Heads of Government reaffirm that elections are *the only means to legitimate government in any democratic society* and reiterate their clear and ambiguous support for the forthcoming electoral process in Haiti as a means of resolving the continuing political stalemate. To this end they fully expect all parties to the electoral process to act in good faith.

Heads of Government call for the immediate establishment of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) in accordance with the Organization of American States (OAS) Resolution 822 so that free, fair and transparent elections can be organized during the first half of 2003.

Heads of Government are aware that the Government of Haiti has the particular responsibility to continue to meet the commitments undertaken in accordance with OAS Resolution 822. In this connection, they welcome the commitment of the President of Haiti to fulfill immediately the requirements of the government

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FREE TRADE OF THE AMERICAS *(from Pg. 1)*

Smaller Economies and Their Difficulties

Economic Size and Dependence

The definition of a smaller economy has been explored in the diagnostic studies and other various documents and articles on the subject of integration into the FTAA. Land areas, population, GNP/GDP and GNP/GDP per capita have all been noted as possible indicators. In reality, the best definition seems to be a combination of all these factors, and most smaller economies fall in the lower range of all of them.

Conversely, a small group of countries dominates the hemisphere in these indicators. The five nations of Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina can be found to have substantial economic advantages as compared to smaller states. They are the five largest nations in America by land area (these five combined comprise 82.4% of the land area of the Americas) and are five of the six largest population, with a combined 76.78% of the population of the Americas (81.42% including Colombia, the fourth largest). Even more overwhelming is that these five economies comprise 95.99% of the GDP of the Americas.

With the issue of "smallness" comes the issue of economic dependence. Smaller economies tend to be export-based with only one or two primary products. Again, the five economies mentioned above are more diversified, and thus not as reliant on trade. They are the five nations with the lowest reliance on trade taxes in the Americas. In fact, in none of these does more than six percent of revenue come from trade taxes. One study (in which Argentina was not included) found Canada, Brazil, the United States and Mexico as four of the five countries with the lowest transport and freight costs for exports.

On the other hand, it has been found that smaller economies suffer from substantial export dependence at high costs to the economy. All of this has led to the calculation of a vulnerability index for the countries of the Western Hemisphere. The countries of the Caribbean and Central America dominate the top two-thirds (meaning the most vul-

nerable), whereas the large nations of North and South America comprise the bottom third. The "big five" are all in the bottom six. There is an almost perfect correlation between economic vulnerability and the size indicators mentioned above.

Policy Options and the Regional Integration Fund

The Regional Integration Fund is suggested to handle the difficulties of the transition of the smaller economies into the area of hemispheric free trade. The transition itself involves extremely significant disparities. For larger economies, the costs for such a fund will be minimal but the benefits will be substantial. For the United States in particular, free trade means more jobs, more wealth, and overall, a more robust American economy. As Europe integrates, and reaps the benefits of the European Union, it becomes apparent that, in order to remain competitive, the United States must continue to strengthen its economy through free trade.

The benefits of the FTAA and free trade with all of the nations of the Americas are evident, but the participation of the smaller economies is

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STATEMENT BY CARICOM HEADS ON HAITI *(from pg. 3)*

with regard to establishment of the provisional electoral council. Heads of Government urge the political opposition to cooperate with the Government in the implementation of this resolution as all parties must work together towards restoring normalcy in Haiti.

The Heads of Government of CARICOM reiterate their call to the international financial institutions to re-launch effectively their financial cooperation with Haiti, as called for in OAS Resolution 822.

THE 32nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OAS APPROVES RESOLUTION ON HAITI

The resolution, as approved by the General Assembly, seeks to make available to Haiti the significant sum of monies being withheld, needed urgently to permit Haiti to undertake solutions to its social, economic and political problems.

The resolution "resolves to urge that the Government of Haiti and the international financial institutions, in anticipation of a

negotiated solution to the political crisis and the eventual resumption of normal economic cooperation, initiate discussions, including consultations with relevant Haitian institutions and organizations, to address the unresolved financial and technical issues and procedural steps."

Crime and Security *(from Pg. 1)*

Member States, the Regional Security System (RSS), the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police, the University of the West Indies (UWI), and the Regional Secretariats (CARICOM and the OECS).

Due to the events of September 11, 2001, the Task Force was only able to begin its work in November 2001. Five other meetings were held between January and May last year. The work program of the Task Force was facilitated by six sub-committees that followed up on specific issue areas via e-mail, teleconferencing and regular meetings of the Task Force.

Why would young women risk their lives daily swallowing packets of cocaine as drug mules from the Caribbean to North America and Europe?

Why would a young man risk losing his life by stealing tires to feed his drug habit?

.....Should drug abuse be seen as a criminal act, or is it a health problem?

In establishing its framework, the Task Force recognized that security threats, concerns and other challenges in the hemispheric context are multi-dimensional in nature and scope. It was also recognized that the traditional ways of meeting the challenges needed to be expanded to encompass new non-traditional threats, which include political, economic, social, health and environmental aspects. Given the mandate of the Heads of Government however, the Task Force confined itself to a definition of security, which in essence encompassed governance. Specifically, the concept referred to a state or condition, in which, within the context of a constitutional framework, freedom is enjoyed without fear of

victimization from crime and in which the functioning of governance by a constitutionally elected government is not inhibited or disrupted through criminal activity.

The Task Force therefore established its areas of focus as follows:

- 1) Issues relative to the underlying causes and sources of crime to comprehend the causes of crime, especially in its newer manifestations, that have resulted in escalating fear and panic, with implications for law and order as well as economic prospects, social stability and the general morale of Member States.
- 2) Initiatives against activities that pose a direct security threat to the Region: to examine the interconnected nature of the newer forms of crime, which involve illicit drugs and arms, money laundering and tourism, with a view to proposing policies that would meet the challenges facing Member States and the Region as a whole.
- 3) Multilateral initiatives for international security in respect of which the Region is committed to participating as co-victims of transnational crime, to build capacity through institutional strengthening, shared surveillance and other forms of operation among Member States, and between CARICOM, the wider Caribbean and the international community.

In examining the wide range and complex issues surrounding the causes of crime, the Task Force considered, among others, the following factors: poverty, unemployment, social marginalization and inequality, the illegal drug trade, corruption, trafficking of firearms, deportation of firearms, deportation of criminals and the

Why would young women risk their lives daily swallowing packets of cocaine as drug mules from the Caribbean to North America and Europe? Why would a young man risk losing his life by stealing tires to feed his drug habit? Why should the car owner feel justified in equating that young man's life to four tires? Should drug abuse be seen as a criminal act, or is it a health problem? Are the values we embrace in society in contradiction to our laws? Are traditional methods of policing effective in crime prevention? [Is the crime situation a form of local terrorism?] The Task Force grappled with these and many other questions, in formulating its recommendations. A joint committee of Attorneys-General and Ministers responsible for national security reviewed the report containing over a hundred recommendations. The report was presented to the Conference of Heads of Government at their Twenty-third Meeting in Georgetown, Guyana, in July 2002.

As a follow-up on the work of the Task Force, representatives of member states met in Port of Spain January 30-31. The meeting was expected to develop a work program to deal with these issues in the Region.

[This document was prepared with the assistance of the CARICOM Secretariat.]

NCOCA'S THEME FOR '03

**Caribbean Images 2003:
The Private Sector and**

FTAA (From Pg. 4)

The Regional Integration Fund is not a completely new idea. Similar funds were set up to accompany the integration of the European Union (EU). The four structural funds include the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Funds, the European Agricultural Guidance Fund and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance.

It is important to note, however, that ... the disparities have been far smaller for Europeans.

on guaranteed financial assistance. The regional network can be strengthened to the mutual benefit of all by ensuring successful participation of all countries in the hemisphere. Certain short-term costs necessary to ensure this will be outweighed by the long-term benefits to businesses and consumers in all hemispheric countries. The benefits of free trade are proven by basic economic principles, however, other principles show the complications arising from disparities in economic size. In order to attain these benefits, then, it is necessary to take certain measures to ensure the full participation of all the nations of the Americas. Certainly, the benefits of the US economy, in particular, will be greatest in an FTAA that accords benefits to all members.

The Regional Integration Fund is not a completely new idea. Similar funds were set up to accompany the integration of the European Union (EU). The four structural funds include the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Funds, the European Agricultural Guidance Fund and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance. It is important to note, however, that although the people of the Americas can look to the experiences of the EU for some evaluation of what integration issues must be addressed, they must bear in mind that the disparities have been far smaller for Europeans. The problem areas for the FTAA are much more urgent as the hemispheric nations set about to pursue an effective and integrated free trade policy for the Americas. All the greater, then, is the need for the Regional Integration Fund.

An examination can now be made of the development of the smaller economies, the diversification of these economies, and the unique hemispheric emphasis of the Regional Integration Fund and the benefits that US business can accrue.

Development of the Smaller Economies

The most pressing and most widely recognized problem in the smaller economies is underdevelopment. Assistance with two areas of development would provide a considerable boost to the smaller economies. With time, the positive effects of this economic growth would provide benefits for US businesses, in particular, with enhanced opportunities for trade and investment in the smaller economies.

The first area of development is infrastructural development. This is essential to the economic prospects of the smaller economies. Funding infrastructural development, including development of telecommunications infrastructure, would provide a foundation for US private sector investment opportunities in the smaller economies.

The second area, also fundamental to these economies, is human resource and technological development. As with infrastructural development, this is a basic area of development which can propel the smaller economies to a more competitive level. The positive economic repercussions, too, will be felt throughout the hemisphere.

The benefits of providing funding for development, then, are manifold. First, the funding will spur economic growth within the individual countries, which would indirectly benefit the other FTAA participants. Second, the human resource technology, and infrastructural development will all provide better opportunities for US investors in the smaller economies. Finally, the economic growth provided by the Regional Integration Fund can relieve pressure on US bilateral aid over the long run.

Export Concentration and Diversification Issues

Because of the homogeneity and high substitution elasticity of many of the primary exports of the smaller economies, diversification of these economies becomes a prerequisite for success in the FTAA. As has been stated above, a substantial number of the smaller economies rely on one or two primary product exports, and a number of them tend to rely on the same few exports. For example, smaller economies rely heavily upon sugar, coffee and bananas. If certain nations that produce a primary export commodity are in a more advanced stage of entry into the FTAA, then the resulting disparities in trade and prices could have serious consequences for the other producers of that product.

The health of these economies is dependent on such factors as the world economy, international trade policy developments and the

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FTAA *(From Pg. 6)*

weather. A drop in price for a commodity, tariff adjustments or even a hurricane could devastate one (or likely more) of the smaller economies. In essence, whereas these few export goods constitute a substantial portion of total exports for each individual country, they are a small percentage of total world exports of those commodities. These economies are based on, and dependent upon, a commodity market over which they have little influence. A special emphasis on assisting these economies in the transition to diversification will help to avert the consequences of reliance on the export of a few goods.

The Hemispheric Emphasis

One key requirement of financial assistance is the uniqueness of the facility through which it is distributed. A hemispheric problem cannot properly be addressed through globally-oriented

financial institutions. The intended functions of the existing facilities must be examined. They fail to address financial issues from a Western Hemispheric perspective, as they were designed in the context of worldwide lending. Integration into the FTAA is a region-specific issue which the current institutions, by their very nature, cannot properly address.

A series of financial crises since 1997 has done much to stretch thin the budgets of the major international financial institutions. The limited resources of these institutions and the vulnerability of the smaller economies demonstrate the need for the RIF which can help to stabilize the economic disparities of the region. Should other crises hit, the RIF would be the best way to adapt the integration process to the new financial climate, without the baggage of dependency on any globally-oriented financial institutions.

It seems then, unlikely that the existing institutions would be able or willing to handle such a project. The

constraints on these institutions are already great, and the prospect of providing funding to help the countries of the Americas enter into a regional free trade association is not as savory for them as providing funding to help a nation enter the global market.

Financial assistance for integration into the FTAA is vitally necessary for the smaller economies of the hemisphere. By using current financial institutions, there is no guarantee. The RIF, however, by the very nature of its existence, will guarantee this. All parties will then be able to fully participate, and fully partake of the free trade benefits of the FTAA.

Dr. Odeen Ishmael is Guyana's Ambassador to the United States of America and Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States.

NCOCA President's Report 2002 *(From pg. 2)*

moved a far way towards developing effective working relations with individuals in the OAS.

At the invitation of the Secretary General of the OAS, Mr. Leo Edwards and I attended the 32nd Session of the General Assembly in Barbados, June 2-4, 2002. This afforded the opportunity to attend sessions devoted to Civil Society, the Plenary Session and the General Committee meeting. It also facilitated interaction with Ministers of Foreign Affairs and diplomats from the Hemisphere.

NCOCA Proposals to the OAS

NCOCA presented a proposal to the OAS, developed by Chairman Palmer, that addresses the outflow of skilled workers from the region. It proposes that:

- The OAS develop an institutional mechanism that would link the stock of the human capital from the diaspora with the needs of small Caribbean and Latin American countries. To do so,
 - ▶ the countries of origin would have to know the nature of their labor demands and be willing to accept expatriates; and
 - ▶ there would have to be a sufficient monetary incentive for expatriates to participate in such a program.

An institutional arrangement facilitating the flow of skills from the developing countries to Latin America and the Caribbean would complement the flow of remittances by in-

creasing the skill level of the local labor force, inducing more domestic, public and private investment, and thus reducing the income gap in the hemisphere.

Conclusion

In meeting our OAS obligations, we will move purposefully in two areas. First, NCOCA will strive to be an effective conduit for information between the OAS and the community, using standard techniques (print media, radio, television, town meetings, conferences). Second, we will be prepared to give expert testimony on critical issues impacting the

CARICOM CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS TO NCOCA (from Pg. 2)

clear that we cannot successfully address these problems as individual countries. Therefore it is imperative that we subscribe to and strengthen our regional approach. It is only as a united Region that we will succeed.

On the international front, we must continue to advocate for trade regimes that respond to our situation and to our concerns. While we are committed to free markets, it is clear that unless special and differential treatment as well as infrastructure development funding are provided to allow us to participate meaningfully, we will not be able to enjoy the benefits of liberalization but instead will be condemned to remain on the periphery of international development.

We must continue to advocate for the establishment of a Regional Integration Fund to enable the smaller economies in the hemisphere to compete effectively within the FTAA.

We must also argue for a new financial system and for the democratization of the international financial institutions. This will be a system that recognizes the vulnerability of small states and provides for those vulnerabilities through the development of new instruments and mechanisms for the delivery of loans and grants.

It appears to me that our interests will be best served if we can remain together, forge a common diplomacy, and speak with one voice, to represent our collective constituency.

While we are pursuing these changes on the international front to carve out a more sympathetic external environment for developing countries, there are also policies which we can implement at home to help us to resolve the problems facing

the Community.

Given the changing nature of the world and the high premium placed on education, we must ensure that our education system is refocused and is driven by a new philosophy. We have excelled in the Arts and the humanities and the Social Sciences and must continue to do so by simultaneously we must product Nobel laureates in mathematics, technology, and science.

Our schools must inculcate positive attitudes in our students. Our young people must leave these institutions with pride in their identify, positive values, tolerance and respect for others and the general preparation for survival in any environment.

"Let me once again congratulate NCOCA for its efforts to promote the cause of the Caribbean region. I Wish you all the successes in your future endeavors."

His Excellency President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana, Chairman of the Caribbean Community, (CARICOM)

Our small economies are incapable of generating sufficient capital needed to fuel our economic growth. It is true that the CARICOM Single Market and Economy will facilitate the movement of capital intra-regionally and this will augment local capital sources. However, our low saving rates will not allow us to generate enough resources to meet all of our investment needs.

Therefore we must make our Region more capital attractive. I wish to submit that the Caribbean needs a new breed of entrepreneurs to ensure its survival. However, we are presently not incubating enough entrepreneurs. The development of the entrepreneurial spirit is essential for economic dynamism, solving

unemployment and reducing poverty.

The primary task now is for our universities, our private sector and governments to collaborate, and design programs that will instill the entrepreneurial spirit in our citizens and prepare them to take calculated economic risks.

In the new environment our private sector must be willing to consider new forms of organization. It must abandon insular thinking and actions and perceive the synergies and advantages that flow from in-country and regional mergers. The Governments of the Caribbean must support these processes and must make a serious effort to become genuine partners with the private sector. Acting together will allow us to better face the threats confronting our Region.

We must recognize that strong family values, conflict resolution skills, responsibility for self and love for country are all important to the development of society and for remedying many social ills. We must therefore seek to include everyone in this process. Parents, teachers, churches, communities and other social groups all have a part to play in the moral advancement of our societies.

We will have to create conditions to shift from inherited confrontational politics to politics that serve the interest of our people. Irrespective of whichever side you sit, I believe our people want to see their leaders working together. They want to see them confronting and solving the problems that affect them. Government and Opposition must therefore be guided by what is good for their people rather than by partisan interests. They must work more closely with civil society to overcome common problems and to ensure that democracy grows stronger in our Region. If we cannot work together, we would be more vulnerable to external forces. We must face our challenges as a united team.

Whatever our problems, they should not be permitted to diminish our integration resolve or breed despair. For we are in a time of unprecedented opportunities when, if the efforts of our people are

CARICOM HEAD ENDORSES NCOCA

(from Pg. 8)

properly harnessed through the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and other initiatives, can create more social and economic spaces for greater cooperation, solve many of our problems and lead to a better life.

My country has always believed that such benefits would naturally accrue through our Community. Consequently, Guyana has never wavered in its commitment to CARICOM. All of us in the community must strengthen our resolve to complete the integration process.

Let me once again congratulate NCOCA for its efforts to promote the cause of the Caribbean region. I wish you all the successes in your future endeavors.

*His Excellency Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo is
President of Guyana and Chairman of the
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)*

USA PATRIOT ACT: GEARED TO TRACK

The terrorist acts of September 11 created a new class of Americans: *the foreign class*, subjecting the *foreign* born (legal aliens), the *foreign* student and the *foreign* visitor to intense scrutiny and surveillance under the powers of the Border Security Acts and Patriot Acts – I, II and III.

Congress passed the USA Patriot Acts and Border Security Acts in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Acts give federal officials authority to track and intercept communications, both for law enforcement and foreign intelligence gathering purposes.

They also give the government authority to close our borders to foreign terrorists and detain and remove those within our borders suspected of plotting terrorist acts. They create new crime categories, new penalties and new procedural efficiencies for use against domestic and international terrorists

Although safeguards are written into these laws, critics contend some of the provisions go too far. Although they grant many of the enhancements sought by the Department of Justice, others are concerned they do not go far enough.

Who are most impacted? *Foreign students*, thousands of whom come from the Caribbean. The USA Patriot Act (No. 1) added provisions to expand the existing foreign student tracking system, that is, it gives the federal government the authority to collect data on individuals, particularly foreign students.

The Act gives the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to collect information on:

- The identify and address of the alien;
- Nonimmigrant classification of the alien, date of visa issuance, and any change or extension;
- Academic status of the alien (e.g., full-time enrollment);
- Any disciplinary action taken by the school, college, or university as a result of a crime committed by the alien;
- The date and port of entry on every foreign student; and
- “other approved educational institutions” such as flight schools, language training schools, or vocational schools approved by the Attorney General, in consultation with

the Secretaries of State and Education.

The Border Security Act of 2002 goes even further: it authorizes the use of electronic means to “monitor and verify:”

- documentation of acceptance of a student by an approved school or designated exchange program;
- transmittal of documentation to the Department of State;
- issuance of a nonimmigrant visa to the student or exchange visitor;
- admission of a student or exchange visitor to the U.S.;
- notice to school or exchange program that the nonimmigrant has been admitted to the U.S., and
- any other relevant act by the non-immigrant, including changing schools or programs.

Even though this Student Exchange Visitor Program (SVEP) monitoring system is not yet fully implemented, the Act does require that a *transitional program* be created. This program can restrict issuance of a F,J or M-class visa unless the Department of State has received electronic evidence from an approved institution (school) that the alien is accepted.

It also requires the Department of State to notify the INS whenever an alien has been issued a visa, and, in turn, requires the INS to notify the approved institution that the alien has been admitted to the U.S. Within 30 days of a registration deadline, the institution is required to notify the INS if the alien fails to enroll.

The Acts also give the Attorney General the right to detain the alien if he has “reasonable grounds” to believe he is involved in terrorist acts or other activity deemed to endanger national security.

Information taken from the U.S. Department of Justice’s website. Much more information on the provisions of the Patriot, Border and other immigration Acts are available on the USDOJ’s website : www.immigration.gov

NCOCA Notes

Priorities for 2003

CARICOM ISSUES

1. Free Trade area of the Americas (FTAA) and related matters
2. CAFTA
3. ACS
4. WTO
5. Cotonou Agreement
6. EPAs
7. Single Market & Economy
8. Caribbean Court of Justice
9. Crime and Security
10. Constitutional Reforms
11. Inter-American Democratic Charter
12. Charter for Civil Society in the Caribbean
13. Haiti

USA ISSUES

1. Immigration
2. Welfare
3. Education (e.g. Voucher Program)
4. Health (e.g. Prescription Drugs for Seniors; HIV/AIDS Assistance)
5. International Trade and Economic

The National Coalition on Caribbean Affairs (NCOCA) was incorporated in August 1997 to address issues impacting Caribbean communities within the United States and in the Caribbean region. Membership in NCOCA is open to individuals and organizations that support its objectives, which include:

- Identifying, defining, analyzing and studying problems affecting Caribbean communities within the United States of America and the Caribbean region;
- Proposing possible solutions to those problems; and
- Disseminating information concerning these issues to the widest possible audience.

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The Chronicle is published quarterly by NCOCA to highlight issues and events of interest to the Caribbean, its peoples around the world, and all entities interested in issues concerning the region.

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