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CONTROL COMMISSION**

CICAD

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**OPENING REMARKS
BY AMBASSADOR ALBERT R. RAMDIN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL**

Mr. David Johnson, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and Chair of CICAD;

Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Representative of Suriname to CICAD, and Vice Chair of CICAD;

Distinguished Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers,

Distinguished Delegates and Government Officials;

Representatives of Regional and International Organizations;

Ambassador Adam Blackwell, Secretary of Multidimensional Security at the OAS,

Executive Secretary of CICAD, Mr. James Mack;

Assistant Executive Secretary of CICAD, Mr. Rafael Franzini-Battle;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to join you, again, on the occasion of the forty-eighth regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, CICAD.

This past week we have all witnessed a critical security situation unfold in Rio de Janeiro where the government had to intervene with security forces, including the Armed Forces, to restore the effective rule of law in the several favelas of Rio de Janeiro. The military forces faced stiff resistance from criminal gangs, most of which are deeply involved in the drug trade. Brazil's situation is not unique. In Mexico, five years ago, the government deployed the armed forces in order to match the fire power of the drug cartels, and the confrontation continues to this day. In Jamaica, this past May, the government had to employ force when the Tivoli Gardens district of the capital Kingston resisted extradition procedures against a popular figure and reputed drug trafficker.

Situations like those experienced in Jamaica, Mexico, Brazil, and in other countries demonstrate without a doubt that public security has become one of our most pressing challenges for ensuring regional stability and economic development in our Region. **Today**, achieving citizen security has become more than just enforcing the law. Today, we are faced with a new concept of security which requires a holistic approach to public security in order to protect

individuals and communities from violence, the drug trade, organized crime and human trafficking.

As many of you already know drug trafficking is a multifaceted problem, which has increased in scope and gravity over the last decades. The direct nexus between illegal drugs and crimes of violence, sex crimes, domestic violence, child abuse, corruption, arms trafficking, and other evils, have a devastating impact on national security and governance in all of the member states but with direct economic effects on the smaller and vulnerable economies, such as those in the Caribbean and Central America.

The unfortunate reality is that the “drug trade” has poisoned our societies, distorted our economies and threatened the security and well-being of our youth and most vulnerable sectors of our population. Lately we have observed in many countries a very disturbing trend of drug traffickers influencing, through political campaign financing, our political, electoral and democratic processes. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed with the highest urgency in the most effective manner.

There is, irrespective of strength and available resources, no country acting alone capable of fully combating the consequences of organized crime, drug trafficking and consumption. The requirements of public security and the imperative of success in this endeavor call for a coordinated, multilateral approach to the application of resources by and among states and regional and international organizations.

In is in the interest of ALL in the Western Hemisphere to participate actively in society. ALL stand to benefit from peaceful societies and stable economies the development of new mechanisms, share information, coordinate actions and operations as much as possible, and support those countries which do not have the means to effectively counteract the threat posed by international organized crime and drug trafficking in their territories. In the end it is in the interest of ALL in the Americas to limit or eliminate these destabilizing forces that can threaten stability, peace, prosperity and security.

CICAD is the political forum tasked by the OAS to “address the health, social and criminal consequences of the “drug trade”. When I spoke to you last, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, at the fortieth regular session and the twentieth anniversary of CICAD, I suggested that member states might undertake “a focused and timely revision of the CICAD strategy and programs which would allow member states to renew and reinvigorate their commitment to the mission and goals of CICAD.”

Five years later, I commend you for having approved the new Hemispheric Drug Strategy last May and immediately started to draft its Plan of Action. The Commission achieves this policy renewal, not because I happened to mention it, but because the time was ripe; and the circumstances and your constituencies demanded it.

On this occasion, and in the context of the existing and newly developed institutional arrangements in the Western Hemisphere, I urge you, to undertake a comprehensive analysis of what is in place, how more effective collaboration can be achieved and how synergies can be build within this new architecture of mechanisms, tools and institutions. I believe that this will be an important exercise as we move toward the celebration of the next anniversary of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism.

On a personal note, I am pleased to note that today, here in CICAD, for the first time since Trinidad and Tobago occupied the chair of the Commission in 2000, a Caribbean member state will be standing for election to this important post. It is doubly gratifying because Suriname, my homeland, is the candidate, and that the previous and current Government of Suriname have designated Chandrikapersad Santokhi as its representative to undertake this responsibility.

I have known Chan Santokhi for more than 25 years and appreciate his long-standing commitment to CICAD and the MEM, and his efforts to deal with the drug and security issues in our country, first as police commissioner and then as Minister of Justice and Police, and for the past year as Vice Chair of CICAD. The fact that Suriname is on the verge of being elected as chair is recognition of the years of effort that the various Governments of Suriname have

invested in the CARICOM, CICAD and in the OAS. I also consider this a clear expression of the new administration in Suriname to continue and intensify the fight against illegal drug trafficking and we look forward hearing their views.

I also recognize and welcome the nomination of the Republic of Argentina for the Vice-Chairmanship of CICAD.

Over the past decade, since the Caribbean last held the Commission chair, the OAS has made enormous strides in broadening the meaning of security. In October 2003, a special conference approved the Declaration on Security of the Americas, which broke out of the old mold that limited the concept of security to traditional topics, such as the armed forces, border security and geo-political power.

Today, thanks to this innovative conceptual framework, a new approach has been institutionalized within the General Secretariat in the form of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security. CICAD, along with the Inter-American Committee on Terrorism and the Department of Public Security, falls under this broadened security mandate. A quick survey of the security landscape shows that we still have a way to go before we can transform the concept into reality. I am confident that our member states, with our assistance, will continue to invest in the kind of security measures the people of the Americas need and deserve.

With pleasure I note that during the forty eight regular session of CICAD this week, you will be engaged in an extended discussion about drug policies and security strategies in the Caribbean. Mr. Adam Blackwell will provide you with a useful overview of how the General Secretariat of the OAS proposes to tackle these issues with a comprehensive strategy. Although he is new on the job -- we asked him join us for our second term in the General Secretariat by taking on the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security -- we have come to trust his management skills, his years of diplomatic experience and his single-minded dedication to the OAS mission when he was serving elsewhere in the General Secretariat.

On the same panel this morning, you will hear from other major stakeholders in the Caribbean:

- The CARICOM Secretariat will be represented by Lynne Anne Williams who is heading up the Implementation Agency on Crime and Security (IMPACS) and will speak about the impact of drugs in the Caribbean.
- Makila James will explain the U.S. government's Caribbean Security Initiative from her vantage point as the Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs at the State Department.
- Finally, Chandra Algoe will show how one country, in this particular case Suriname, has applied a systematic approach to dealing with drugs and security in practical terms over the past five years.

These presentations should provide a firm foundation for a frank and open discussion of the issues by Caribbean member states and by the rest of the Commission. Indeed, this discussion should lead to finding common ground between Caribbean interests and broader hemispheric perspectives. Allow me, in this context, to urge you to develop a special program for assisting the Republic of Haiti in strengthening their resilience and institutional mechanisms to combat illegal drug trafficking and organized crime, as the country faces many challenges on different fronts.

In later sessions, this Commission will discuss the progress being made on the Plan of Action of the Hemispheric Drug Strategy, which in itself is a welcome revamping of drug policy in light of the shifts of the past decade. You also will consider for approval the country reports and recommendations of the Fifth Evaluation Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism. These are necessary tasks, in and of themselves, but at this juncture, we can no longer consider either of these processes as isolated topics, but part of a holistic approach, that should build towards more comprehensive, multilateral consensus.

For this very reason, I applaud that you have included the topic of the strategic alliance between the MEM process and the CARICOM Secretariat because we must begin to engage stakeholders across institutional lines. Beverly Reynolds, Program Manager, CARICOM Secretariat, has the experience to outline how CARICOM see this process happening.

The agenda also holds other regional focused presentations, such as Costa Rican vice Minister of the Presidency Mauricio Borashci's presentation on the plan of action of the Central American Permanent Commission, known more widely as the CCP. You will also hear about a new initiative to support drug treatment courts in the Caribbean, including a Jamaican judge who is already using this approach to help wean offenders with drug dependence from a life of crime and addiction. We will also hear about the establishment of a regional training center to deal with the issue of money laundering in Lima, Peru, thanks to the vital support of the government of Peru.

As an international guest, you will hear from Carmen Pavón de Paula, the Head of Service for European Relations, of the Spanish Ministry of Health, who will explain the new Cooperation Programme between the European Union and Latin America on Anti-Drug Policies (COPOLAD). Spain is the lead country implementing this project, which will focus on developing national drug observatories, supply and demand reduction, and improved mechanisms for EU-LAC coordination and cooperation. CICAD will serve as an associate organization to the project.

Perhaps, no issue is more linked to a long-term vision of security than the development of human resources, and, in CICAD's case, its support for the development of human resources to reduce the demand for drugs in the Americas.

This week you will hear a panel presentation on the development of human resources on demand reduction from three different perspectives: the first, from the Dominican Republic on the drafting of a comprehensive national strategic drug plan for universities, including both academic aspects and drug use prevention; second, from Canada on the partnerships with CICAD for building international research capacity by offering specialized training and research

opportunities to select university faculty, and, finally, from Mexico on assessing the medium-term career choices of nurses who have graduated from three nursing schools that have adopted drug-related curriculum sponsored by CICAD.

In closing, I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to David Johnson for his work as chair of CICAD. Considering the multiple demands for his time, CICAD was fortunate to have his leadership, commitment and support this past year. Our gratitude is also extended to his team at the State Department.

I take the opportunity to thank Mr. James Mack for his leadership as Executive Secretary of CICAD and to his department who work on some of the most innovative training and preventive programs in combating the effects of the drug trade in the Hemisphere. You are indeed a significant part of the glory of the OAS.

And, once again, I thank all of you for your work of this body to address the drug issue in all its facets. Thanks to the constant efforts of CICAD and its member states, we are gradually but surely are building a more regional, and comprehensive approach to the problem of illegal drug consumption and trafficking in the Americas that ultimately will make the communities of our Hemisphere more healthy and secure.

I wish you the best in your deliberations this week. I look forward to hearing from you on the concrete results and recommendations of this very important meeting.

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