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Speech by

Dr. the Hon. Peter D. Phillips

to the Diplomatic Corps

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Salutations,

Greetings at the start of Diplomatic Week

Jamaica has always taken its international relationships and its international reputation extremely seriously.

It is a stable, mature democracy.

- State is respectful of human rights and civil and political rights
- Observant of due process in its dealings with citizens
- Developed educational and health systems that have achieved enviable results

Still, today Jamaica faces many challenges.

- It is a developing nation in Globalized environment
- Pressures of competition on local industry
- Liberalized economy with all the opportunities and dangers that it entails
- Crime problem which threatens the State

The Crime Problem

Perceived by the population as the single biggest problem facing the country

It is hurting tourism, a major pillar of the economy

- tourism is a fickle industry

- Globalization of information means that trouble in Jamaica is beamed across the world-instantaneously.
- Distinctions are not made by potential consumers of the tourism product between Kingston and the rest of Jamaica

Crime hurts other aspects of the economy

- increases risk for investors, therefore discourages investment
- increases costs to business

There is a high social cost

- strain on all institutions (especially hospitals and the like)

Hurting the positive international reputation of the country

Analysis of crime problem:

- narcotics trade has supplanted all other causes as the major cause of crime in Jamaica routes that narcotics traders use are also used to transport guns and ammunition
- posses that are linked to the drug trade expand into other illegal activity
- huge amounts of money are offered to public and private officials to facilitate the drug trade
- general ethos of disregard for law and order develops in the society

There is intelligence suggesting that approximately 70 to 100 tonnes of

- cocaine pass through Jamaica annually
- intelligence reports of massive money laundering involving billions of dollars
- evidence that the drug cartels are not only using Jamaica as a trans-shipment port, but have actually set up operations here.

There needs to be an effort to educate the Jamaican populace about the nature and extent of this danger. It is easy to underestimate.

Things to be done

There are a number of things to be done to address this pressing problem

These include:

- **Border Control:**
 - tightening the security of the airports and seaports
 - use of improved technology
 - strengthening immigration department
 - expanding cooperation with overseas forces
- **Money Laundering:**
 - Money laundering Act will be amended to broaden the mandatory requirements for reporting suspicious money transfers

- Strengthening Financial Crimes Unit
- Intelligence:
 - Overseas assistance in reviewing intelligence structures
 - Finger Print Act to be amended to make it more efficacious
 - Plea - Bargaining Act
- Manpower:
 - increasing the numbers of security personnel
 - non-critical functions will be given to civilians
 - new protocol with the Security Industry
- Reorganization of the JCF:
 - Modernization of the Force
 - Strengthening administrative capability
 - Focus on community-policing with assistance from the British Government's Department for International Development
 - Improved equipment to the JCF
 - Peace Management Initiative
 - Strengthening of the Police Public Complaints Authority

These are some of the local initiatives to address the problem.

An important consideration: International dimension of crime problem

- criminals operate vast international and trans-national networks
- events and crimes in one country have repercussions in others
- increased sophistication of the criminals

All of this underscores the need for an internationally coordinated response to this threat

Jamaica has been the beneficiary of assistance in the past

- Gratitude for assistance already granted

The Government is open to international assistance

- This can include operational assistance

Additionally, there is a need to address the community component of the crime problem

There is a culture of violence that has spread along with the narco-terroristic trade and the channels it opens up.

Certainly one exacerbating factor is poverty

Much has been done in the context of scarce resources to tackle the issue of poverty

- Decline in poverty over the last dozen years of this

administration's tenure

Nevertheless, much more to be done

This is an area where other countries can offer help and guidance.

In conclusion:

Jamaica faces a serious challenge

There is a need for positive action

- There is a plan to deal with the problem
- There is no short-term solution
- The problems are real but not insurmountable

There is scope for increased international cooperation

Enjoin all to take an active part in the effort to face these challenges

Must harness the new spirit of international cooperation in the wake of the September 11 disaster in the United States.

Once again, best wishes on the start of what I hope will be a fruitful Diplomatic Week.

