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WEDNESDAY - MARCH 6TH, 2019

75 CENTS

SENIOR POLICEMAN FIRED

Opposition claims victimization by Gov't

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The Opposition Progressive Liberal Party is claiming that a senior Police Officer has been victimized by the government. Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Clarence Reckley has been instructed to take vacation following which, early retirement.

According to Opposition Leader, Philip



► Clarence Reckley

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Death Penalty Project Targets Bahamas

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
 Journal Staff Writer

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM - The World Coalition Against The Death Penalty has embarked on a regional death penalty reform project in the Eastern

Caribbean and plans to seek the involvement of The Bahamas.

The project is in partnership with organizations such as the Death Penalty Project, Greater Caribbean for Life and the World Coalition.

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\$18 Million For WSC Wastewater Treatment Plant

BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

The Water and Sewerage Corporation (WSC) has embarked on a \$18 million rehabilitation of small pumping stations and the construction of several Waste Treatment Plants and Pumping Stations in New Providence.

"The main benefit of a centralized sewer col-

lection and treatment system is the reduction in the number of septic tanks and outside toilets, thus reducing the threat of contamination of the environment and the risk of waterborne diseases. This is the right of all citizens of the Bahamas, irrespective of their socio-economic situations," Mr. Gibson said.

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Bahamas Looking to Eradicate HIV

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

News that HIV has been deemed undetectable in a London patient following a stem cell transplant is landmark – after all, it is only the second such case.

However as Health Minister Dr. Duane Sands said to reporters

outside Cabinet yesterday, it is certainly not ready for what he called "primetime."

"It's certainly not the approach we would want to take with everyone suffering with HIV, but I will say that The Bahamas has made the commitment to try to be

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Englerston MP Concerned About Police Lag

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The Opposition's spokesman on National Security Glenys Hanna-Martin has expressed concern over the police's apparent lag in the reporting of apparent

kidnappings.

This follows the case reported this past Sunday where a male abducted a child from a home on Wilton Street.

The child was found by a passerby a short

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► M.P., Glenys Hanna-Martin

PM SPOUSE VISITS CENTRAL ANDROS SCHOOLS



► Spouse of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Patricia Minnis led a delegation that included Senator the Hon. Dr. Jasmin Turner-Dareus and endocrinologist Dr. Kristine Parker-Curling to Central Andros and paid a visit to Rock Sound Primary on March 5, 2019. She interacted with students, who had gathered to perform for the E. Clement Bethel National Arts Festival adjudications at the school and especially encouraged female students about their future and that they can be anything they wanted to be. (BIS Photos/Eric Rose)

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

SENIOR POLICEMAN FIRED

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Davis, the instructions were sent from The Office of The Prime Minister.

He said, "I just received a call, just before the start of this press conference, that The Office of The Prime Minister directed the Commissioner of Police to sever the employment of Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Clarence Reckley. He is to take immediate vacation and that at the end of that vacation, he should be retired."

ACP Reckley's reported early retirement comes just weeks after his wife, Former Deputy Director of Urban Renewal in Grand Bahama, Michelle Reckley, was locked up, arraigned and spent a night behind bars along with three others on a litany of fraud related charges.

Mr. Davis said, "What manner of persons are running this country? He terminates the services of a Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police who has served the police force well.

"As far as I am aware, there are no questions about the merit services that he provided in his role as a police officer serving this country. He is fired, but Marvin Dames still remains," the Opposition Leader said.

The four accused persons were eventually released on bail. The Bahama Journal reached out to National Security Minister Dames for comment on the issue, however those calls were not returned at press time.

The Opposition Leader's comments came

at the Progressive Liberal Party's monthly press meeting at the party's headquarters.

Mr. Reckley was enlisted into the Royal Bahamas Police Force on 22nd August 1980, graduating from the Police College as best Recruit "C" Squad thus obtaining the coveted button of Honor. Upon graduating he worked at several divisions in Nassau including Southern Division, Internal Security, Criminal Investigations Department and the Mobile Patrol Division.

In late July 1982, he was transferred to the Grand Bahama Division where he worked at every major Division except the Lucayan Division. He was elevated through the many years in Grand Bahamas from a constable to now Assistant Commissioner of Police.

He obtained his early education at the Bluff Eleuthera all age school and High School education at C.C. Sweeting Senior High School in Nassau. Further he obtained his Associates of Arts Degree in Business Management

from the College of the Bahamas and several certificates in Police Management from Dalhousie University Canada.

Mr. Reckley benefitted from several overseas courses such as: Public Corruption Investigation in Trinidad, Senior Investigations Course at the West Yorkshire Police training facility in Wake Field United Kingdom, Crime Analysis Course at the West Yorkshire police training facility in Wake Field United Kingdom and numerous courses locally at the Police Training College.

Death Penalty Project TARGETS BAHAMAS

Continued from / PAGE 1...

The project aims to create a platform for reforming the use of the death penalty in Barbados and Eastern Caribbean states with the ultimate goal of its abolition.

Also, providing alternatives to the death penalty and reducing the scope of the death penalty is a huge part of this project, which also encourages the vote on the United Nations Moratorium Resolution.

During an interview at the 7th World Congress Against the Death Penalty in Brussels, Belgium, Chairman of the World Coalition Against Death Penalty and Representative of the Caribbean Coalition Kevin Miguel expressed that The Bahamas would eventually be included in the project's efforts because the country is a part of the Greater Caribbean for Life initiatives.

Although funding for the project is allocated for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean countries, Miguel said if there is

funding to create more alternatives to the death penalty and reduce the rate of crime in the Caribbean, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty would embrace it.

"Of course, if there are any other considerations like local organizations against the death penalty in The Bahamas, we are always willing to work in networks," Miguel explained.

Some of the alternatives to the death penalty the project promotes include life without parole, life with parole and reforming the justice system in Caribbean countries.

"We know that justice can be better and we can have better systems," Miguel said.

However, he believes leaders throughout the region should take this step forward because there are some Caribbean countries that have the death penalty as law, but it is not carried out.

"Just having it there, what if something happens tomorrow? That doesn't work," Miguel said. "Let's go and play with the key factors that really



World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and Representative of the Caribbean Coalition Kevin Miguel, along with Bahamian journalist Deandre Williamson following their interview on the the regional death penalty project in the Caribbean.

gives us a better life standard. Let's go attack crime. Let's solve crime better. Let's have economic alternatives to those who are in organized crime. Let's have

better juvenile systems of justice. So I think that should be the new scope."

The escalating levels of crime is a concern for many countries in the region, but it's been

proven that the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime.

"Impunity is a big issue in some of the Caribbean countries," Miguel said. "So impunity shouldn't

be there as a factor. We should put in real resources in trying to solve crime. Then of course we will be understanding the value of life."

\$18 Million For WSC

Continued from / PAGE 1...

The WSC signed a contract with Island Site Development for \$18.7 million to assist with the project. Chairman Adrian Gibson said the work is critical for sewerage treatment plants as the Corporation has embarked on a development of a Wastewater Master Plan which began in 2015.

The contract is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as a part of a loan agreement signed in December 2011 for the implementation of WSC's Support Program Water Supply and Sanitations Systems Upgrade in New Providence.

"Included as part of the

third component of the WSC Support Program, WSC embarked on the development of a long term Wastewater Master Plan 2015- 2035 to address; wastewater collection, treatment and disposal needs of New Providence as well as the rehabilitation of critical sewerage infrastructure on the island.

"The long term objective of the Master Plan is to divide the island into three drainage areas with three regional wastewater treatment plants," Mr. Gibson said.

The treatment facilities span West, East and Central areas including Airport Industrial Park Plant, Fox Hill Plant and Gladstone Road Plant.

"This will help to

reduce maintenance cost to the corporation and increase the efficiency of the wastewater collection and disposal system.

"The Master Plan was completed in October 2015 and from the plan it was determined which works were to be addressed as a part of the immediate or critical works," Mr. Gibson said.

Taking the media on a tour of the plants, Mr. Gibson explained that the construction project was divided into two parts, Small Works that addressed small lift stations and Major works which include the treatment plant as well as major pumping stations.

Construction -Major Works- is presently taking place at the Malcolm Park,

Flamingo Gardens and the Lynden Pindling International Airport Major Pump Station, as well as at the Fox Hill Pretreatment Facility.

Small Works saw the rehabilitation of at least 10 sewerage pumping stations.

"Installation of 1,000 feet of gravity collection mains and other related works which include earth works, concrete works, electro-mechanical works, installation of standby generators and landscaping works," Mr. Gibson said.

The sites completed include Nassau Street, Rawson Square, Supreme Court, Vista Marine, Lewis Street, Big Pond and Pinewood.

"The Sewer Master

Plan has estimated approximately \$600 million to provide sewer services throughout the island of New Providence.

"A study was conducted on the cost to provide sanitary sewer services and this was estimated to be approximately \$80 million.

"This is presently being reviewed by the government," Mr. Gibson said.

As for the Malcolm Park Pump Station location, that sits near Potter's Cay waters, ISD contract and project manager, Kirk Smith said there is no need to fear, particularly since last year's conch poisoning scare.

"We knew that this site would be an environmentally sensitive site, but dur-

ing our construction we had no water or nothing from our construction activities that went into the water body.

"We did all of our disposal of water on site or off site and not in the sea body.

"We are definitely in dialogue with WSC, we knew that was an ongoing concern so we took every measure not to allow or to have anything like that happen for this site," Mr. Smith said.

The Treatment Plants are set to service residents without private sewerage systems, moving them from septic tanks to a regulated sewer system.

The construction project is anticipated to be complete by the end of this month.

Bahamas Looking to Eradicate HIV

Continued from / PAGE 1...

the first country to eradicate HIV in the world.

"We have now looked at whether we can become once again the world leader. The Bahamas was once the world leader in vertical transmission or mother to child transmission of HIV.

"We kind of lost some

ground; we believe that with modifying our approach to HIV, to make sure that everybody that is tested has access to therapy and that the therapy suppresses the virus," he said.

A major component of HIV therapy is manufactured in The Bahamas. According to Dr. Sands, the company behind this

has expressed a willingness to partner with The Bahamas in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"We have revised our approach to the management of HIV, resisted HIV, we've modified the plan for testing HIV and we're going to start rolling out a pilot program to do universal testing.

"This would be volun-

tary obviously, but once you know your status, then that's the best way to avail yourself of treat-

ment," Dr. Sands said.

There are said to be 5,000 plus people living with HIV. Meantime, UK

researchers say it's too early to say if the London patient has been cured of the disease.

Englerston MP Concerned About Police Lag

Continued from / PAGE 1...

time later walking in the area of Woodland Gardens.

Mrs. Hanna-Martin stressed in a release that timely alerts are important as they allow for the community to be vigilant and may even possibly

increase the chances of protecting children in such circumstances.

The PLP MP for Englerston is strongly urging National Security Minister Marvin Dames to implement the Marco Alert System, as there may be a disturbing trend of the victimization of

the most vulnerable in society.

For his part, Minister Dames recently explained that tests were being done on the Marco system.

He noted that the company tasked with the job is now putting together a proposal.



PUBLIC NOTICE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/11/2018 on behalf of The Diocese of The Bahamas and Turks & Caicos Islands is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

A public meeting will be held on March 12, 2019 at 7pm at Sybil Strachan Primary School (Formerly Carmichael Primary)

The Diocese proposes to develop a portion of the land occupied by St. Gregory's Anglican Church, Carmichael Road and Golden Sun Way, as a burial ground and Columbarium. The project is proposed in two phases, with the in-ground precast vaults comprising the first phase. The construction of the Columbarium is a part of the second phase.

Preliminary plans for the proposed development are available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice. Submissions can be made via P.O. Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed
Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning

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National Security Threats Have Drastically Changed

Minister of National Security the Hon. Marvin Dames said the increasing volume, variety and velocity of security threats have drastically changed and are expected to continue to evolve.

“Therefore, today’s

law enforcement professional must have education intangibles that a college student has. Furthermore, he or she must have the inclination for continued learning,” Minister Dames said while speaking at the

launch ceremony for a Senior Professional Certification in Law Enforcement Leadership Programme at The University of The Bahamas, Monday, March 4.

It is expected that the

course participants will be exposed to a range of modules on written and oral communications, finance, budgeting human resource management and critical global issues and trends facing law enforcement leaders,

he said.

In addition, Minister Dames said senior officers from the Royal Bahamas Police Force and the Department of Corrections will have the opportunities to participate in international lead-

ership training initiatives with the Los Angeles Police Department’s Leadership Programme and the Executive Management Programme at Northwestern University’s Centre for public safety.



PUBLIC NOTICE
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that a Site Plan Application (SPA/2/2019) on behalf of Tonel Investments Limited is being reviewed by the Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

The applicant proposes to construct a shopping plaza along with a storage facility on a 2.5 acre parcel located at the intersection of Carmichael Road and Stew Fish Road and immediately west of Cousin McPhee A.M.E. Church.

A public meeting will be held on March 18th 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Sybil Strachan Primary School (Formerly Carmichael Primary School) located on Carmichael Road.

The preliminary site plan and file for the proposed development are available for viewing at the Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during normal working hours.

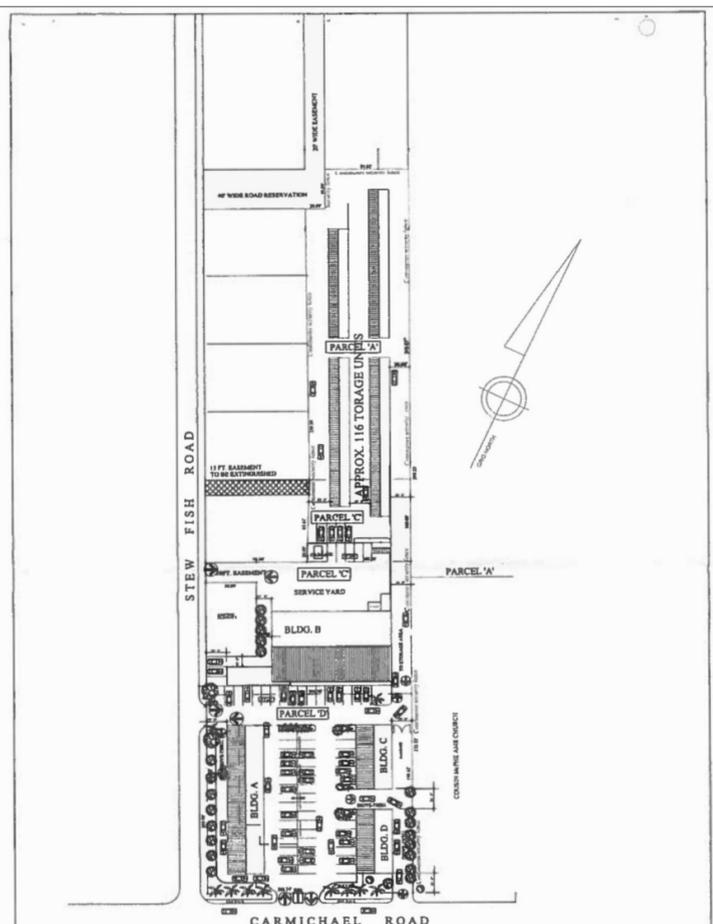
Interested persons and organisations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice.

Submissions should be made via P.O. Box N -1611 Nassau, Bahamas or fax (242) 328 – 3206.

Further inquiries should be made to the Acting Director via Tel: (242)322-7550/2 or (242)328-3202 or CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed

Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning



SITE PLAN

PROJECT NUMBER 18-009	SITE & LOCATION 18-009	PROPOSED SHOPPING CENTRE THE ROYAL PALM PLAZA CARMICHAEL ROAD NASSAU, BAHAMAS	PATRICK RAHMING ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS • INTERIOR DESIGNERS 100 W. BAY STREET, SUITE 200 NASSAU, BAHAMAS
APPLICANT A-00	DATE 18/03/2019		



► Minister of National Security the Hon. Marvin Dames brought remarks at the launch ceremony for a Senior Professional Certification in Law Enforcement Leadership Programme at The University of The Bahamas, Monday, March 4. (BIS Photos/Raymond Bethel)

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WARNING SHOT



By Jerry Hutchinson

Dismissive Behaviour Towards the United States – Again!

“If history teaches anything, it teaches that self-delusion in the face of unpleasant facts is folly”

Ronald Reagan

Democratic nations have a moral obligation to protect their citizens. Sometimes this is achieved through diplomacy and moral suasion. In other cases, harsh sanctions, public shaming or war is the only solution. We are not yet at stage where the United States feel that we require heavier a hand but, we are certainly at the naming and shaming stage; moral suasion appears not to have worked. In any event, the dismissive and abrasive behaviour of our public officials towards our major source of tourism after the issuance of travel advisory's is troubling and dangerous.

America, like Canada and other nations have a moral obligation to warn its citizens of potential danger in places that they visit. For our officials to dismiss warnings of crimes and other criminal behaviour in the Bahamas especially Nassau, without it appears researching the complaints shows a level of immaturity and self-absorption which is becoming a hallmark of our country. Canada also issued an updated travel advisory on 28 February 2019. Canada's warning reads, "Exercise a high degree of caution in The Bahamas due to high rates of crime, especially in Freeport and Nassau." Cruise Radio.net

Each travel advisory is met with a series of frantic, ill-advised and self-serving press statements which totally ignores the subject of the advisory and focuses on some supposed slight by the issuing country. How dare they make statements and assumptions on crime in the Bahamas? The most recent statements by our officials are real doozies.

Like this one reported in the Tribune on 26th February, 2019.

"Tourism Minister Dionisio D'Aguiar says he expects some level of "push back" from local officials to a recent US travel advisory, as he expressed dismay over the alert's timing yesterday. Addressing the warning outside of Cabinet, Mr D'Aguiar said local officials believed US Embassy personnel would regard decreases in local crime as a step in the right direction. The Freeport MP, in noting his overall shock at issuance of the alert, said the use of exaggerated verbiage and the alignment of the Bahamas with countries like Mexico and Jamaica did give even more cause for concern".

Wow! The last time I checked the US was not only the worlds only superpower but also a friend, ally and the source of our economic success. So, precisely what form the threatened "push back" will take is unclear; but remember words have consequences! As to the timing of the advisory, warnings are issued when they are issued. If the timing of the release is inopportune, then so be it; nations will protect their citizens as they feel fit. The US will certainly not be bullied like the cruise lines. Another unfortunate statement by the Minister was this one.

"I mean to lump us in the same category as Mexico and Jamaica; to us seems a little harsh and we thought a lot of the verbiage in the advisory was an exaggeration," he added. Precisely what is meant by this assertion eludes me. Crime is crime wherever it occurs; crime proliferates in areas where there are "soft targets" such as naïve, vulnerable tourists and citizens. Unfortunately, tourists from many nations have been victims of assaults and worse in the Bahamas. The proximity of the Bahamas to the US makes it the destination of choice. For example, it is English speaking, has good communications, relatively short flight times, familiar foods and a historical US consular presence.

Not to put too fine a point on it, I really don't give a damn about another country's crime; I don't live there. I am more concerned with crime in the Bahamas and how we can mitigate its malign effects on visitors, our citizens, and by extension protect our "golden goose". It should be readily apparent that the Bahamas tourist related crime rate would mirror that of other popular tourist destinations. So, there is nothing sinister here; we just happen to have the same crime problems as Jamaica and Mexico and, travel advisories are historically issued around the US Spring Break period which is taking place now.

Then, perhaps under the influence of multiple microphones and television lights the Minister doubled down and made this utterance.

"The Ministry of National Security is looking to see exactly how many foreign visitors experienced some sort of crime activity or crime incident. We feel that it is negligible, so we are going to push back a little bit. We are now dialoguing with the US Embassy and we are going to push back," he said.

We think that even though there may be areas, pockets of crime; really the effect on foreign visitors to a country is so negligible that it doesn't warrant the very strong language that they said in that crime advisory. So, conversations will continue."

Some thoughts here. We are complaining that tourists are assaulted but the numbers are negligible; what is the basis for this assertion? I would have thought that dialogue with the Embassy would have been the first option preferably before making statements to the media. But, that's just me, my logical mind and

sense of process. This sense of process leads me to my next statement. Shouldn't Bahamian diplomats who are versed in these matters been allowed to discuss the US security concerns with their counterparts?

Putting these aside lets drill down on other parts of the Ministers statements. Bahamians know and by extension visitors to our shores are aware that sexual assaults and robberies are of enormous and ongoing concern for US authorities. Recent reporting in the Nassau Guardian of December 20,2018 revealed that there were 55 rapes as at 18 December 2018, an increase of 12%. We know from international research that sexual assaults and rapes are underreported by victims. There are possibly hundreds of victims in our society and beyond who have not reported crime especially sexual assaults. Victims who urgently require our support and help and who if untreated may fall into despondency, shame, lack of self-esteem, depression and who may self-harm. These victims most likely include citizens of foreign countries as well given the millions of tourists who visit the Bahamas each year.

These statistics align with those of the Women's Crisis Centre which on Thursday 28th February 2019 stated: "The Bahamas has an "epidemic" of sexual violence, according to Director Sandra Dean-Patterson who made the remark as the organisation plans to launch a campaign, #SilentNoMore, to destigmatise sexual abuse and encourage victims to share their stories".

The reality is that unless a crime is reported to and recorded by police there was statistically no crime committed. Indeed, police crime statistics are so suspect that many countries conduct independent crime surveys to confirm or refute them. The most notable is the British Crime Survey. We have no way of knowing what victims of crime in the Bahamas report when they return home. But their families and friends and US authorities do. As former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld once said, "We Don't Know What We Don't Know". It is however certain, that many of these are reported to consular officials located in the country in which their citizens were victimized; so, we must be careful with our words.

In the event, stating that the impact of crime on visitors is negligible is a hope not grounded on facts. Nothing positive will come from engaging in a public war of words with the US each time a travel advisory is issued. There is just too much that we don't know but, foreign law enforcement might. As an example, how do local hotels deal with crime reports especially allegations of sexual assault? Do they as a matter of business practice offer to refund the guests vacation expenses and, do they treat the report with the concern and compassion it deserves? How many victims of crime have left the Bahamas after making a report to private security; return home thinking that it would be forwarded to police and never hear from it again? How many properties, seeking to protect their brand give guests reports on crime short shrift? These are some of the matters unknown to local authorities which may be driving the increasingly strident travel advisories from the US and Canada.

Travel advisories will continue to be the bane of our existence until we correct the problem. Officials must accept that there are unacceptable levels of crime in the Bahamas whose many victims includes tourists; there is no getting around this fact. The United States have a solemn and moral obligation to ensure the health and safety of their citizens at home and abroad; just as we have one to ours. So, why pillory them if they take their obligations more seriously than we do?

What we are seeing being played out here in real time is driven by a fundamental misunderstanding of the United States and its people. Many Bahamians, including this writer attended university in the US. Alas, some did not learn much outside of the contours of their courses. They are informed by reality shows and the like which, are entertainment although part of American culture but, not really grounded in reality. I submit that it is not until you are associated and train with American icons like, Col. Jeff Cooper, Dr Richard Kobetz, G. Gordon Liddy, etc; spend weeks in their presence, engage in conversations, share MRE, s and hardship with other trainees in the field, that you truly begin to understand American culture. Consequently, Bahamians misunderstand and therefore underestimate just how tenacious Americans are. Unlike British Caribbean colonies, which got so-called freedom for the asking, Americans fought for their rights and freedoms. If they feel that their rights have been abridged or that their citizens are being victimized, the US will react and strongly. They are relentless; they will not stop until satisfaction is obtained and matters resolved. So, if we believe that bluster, ill-considered remarks and voluntarism ignorantism will dissuade the US State Department from issuing travel advisories on the Bahamas, we are wasting our time.

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The Bahama
Journal
Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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Vice President/Operations

E D I T O R I A L

BLACKLISTED, NOW BLACKMAILED

The Bahamas is operating in the new global economic order, with many of its leaders not yet realising this. Our government and many of its officials continue to work or behave as if we are in the colonial era. Today many policies and programmes of the government are in conformity with conventions of the United Nations and its agencies or the rules of international organizations such as the European Union, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, The Organization of American States and even to a lesser extent The Caribbean Community.

Change in the global order came at a rapid pace and with profound effects on virtually every aspect of life of the peoples in the developing countries like the Bahamas. These changes have been even more dramatic in the last two decades. Countries like the Bahamas are made to follow the dictates of the industrialized nations or suffer the consequences. This is why a Minister of the European Parliament Sven Giegold had the gumption to lecture the government of the Bahamas recently in an interview in Brussels, Belgium, with our Staff Writer Deandre Williamson.

Ms. Williamson took the opportunity while in Europe to conduct many interviews with European officials and got their views on governance in the Bahamas. Mr. Giegold was very presumptuous in his criticism of the Bahamas on the conduct of our Financial Services Sector. He said, "the Bahamas is a stubborn case" and insisted that the country must carry out money laundering convictions before we can be considered for removal from the European Union's blacklist.

He said, "according to the figures I have, there are no convictions on the Bahamas because of money laundering. If in certain jurisdictions, although it has a larger financial place, a larger financial centre, nobody is convicted, that is a clear sign that your regime doesn't deliver," he said.

This comment by this European Minister should be castigated by all right-thinking Bahamians and condemned by members of the legal profession and people with authority in the financial sector. We are a country of laws and no foreign politician in Europe should dictate to us in a sovereign country, how laws are to be enforced. There is no politician or banker in the Bahamas who is condoning money laundering. Mr. Giegold himself should be challenged to identify an instance where anyone was found to be involved in money laundering in the Bahamas who was not arrested and charged.

He must know that laws against money laundering are on the books in the Bahamas and successive governments have passed a raft of legislation over the years to guard against it. If he knows of a case, then he should step up to the plate and declare it. He should not sit in an Ivory tower or in a plush office in Germany or Brussels and assume that the activity is taking place in the Bahamas with impunity and with the knowledge of Bahamian officials.

The government of the Bahamas must register its objection to this utterance of Mr. Giegold and tell him to put up or shut up. His statement is yet another indication of the moving goal post by the European Union in seeking to penalise the Bahamas unjustly. How can anyone demand a conviction before the country is removed from the blacklist. Any Minister of a European Parliament should have an appreciation for the independence of the Judiciary in a Commonwealth Country. The Executive in the Bahamas cannot dictate to a Judge to have someone convicted of a crime to please some official in Europe. This amounts to blackmail. We have been blacklisted, now we are being blackmailed.

Countries like the Bahamas have a difficult road ahead. Economic power has been evenly spread among a number of highly industrialized countries. The last few decades have seen an increasing movement towards regional economic groupings with the European Economic Community being the most outstanding example. We are losing certain rights as a sovereign country and our democracy is at risk by a new kind of dictatorship and repressive regimes.

This state of affairs has been adversely affecting the economic growth and development of the Bahamas and the Caribbean. There have been great differences in the progress made in various regions of the world as a result of external pressures. After a period of reasonable growth in the 70s and 80s, there was a retrogression of growth in the developing countries over the last decade and a half, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, in the majority of countries of these regions, there has been a set-back of standards of living to those achieved in the 1970s, and this is not only in the area of economic growth, but also in the social sectors.

The adverse external environment must be protested by all countries in our region if we are to survive. Insensitive government officials in Europe must be given an education on the challenges of small developing territories.

THE BAHAMAS
Sun, Sand, Sea and the
The Bahama Journal
NO BETTER READING

The advertisement shows a newspaper cover with headlines: "Four Bodies Claimed", "Brush Fire Scorches Acres of Land", and "22ND MURDER VICTIM Identified". The background is a beach scene with waves crashing on the shore.