



## **HIGH ALERT ON TERROR**

By Andre Badoo Thursday, April 18 2013

**MINISTER of National Security Jack Warner yesterday expressed sadness and outrage over Monday's Boston marathon bombings, warning that "the forces of evil do not sleep" and the only response was to keep vigilance on "high alert".**

The Minister was addressing a closed-door session of a workshop hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Hilton Trinidad, St Ann's, which was aimed at discussing ways of implementing a United Nations Security Council resolution which calls on nation states to cut terrorists off from access to nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction.

"Let me also take this opportunity to express my sympathy with the United States of America and indeed persons from throughout the world who would have been affected in some way by the act of terror committed on Monday in Boston," Warner said at the event, according to a copy of his speaking notes.

Three people were killed in the blasts caused by bombs made of pressure cookers, nails and gunpowder. Four Trinidadians Christopher Battoo, Learie Lezama, Marlon Bascombe and Ingrid Mathison took part in the marathon but are safe.

"We the people of Trinidad and Tobago share your sadness and we share your outrage at the scant regard that has been shown for human life by the cowards who perpetrated that act," the minister said. "While that incident did not involve nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction, it did bear the characteristics of an act of terrorism."

Warner stated for Trinidadians, the incident brought back memories of the dumpster bombings in Port-of-Spain in 2005.

The minister said, "I am sure for many Trinidadians and Tobagonians, Monday's incident in Boston would have triggered flashbacks to 2005 when similar explosions occurred in our capital city, though on a smaller scale, with less destruction and without the loss of life, however still with serious injuries to several persons." He said while both events were different, they both caused trauma.

"While it is not my intention to compare our local experience with what occurred in Boston or to try to draw any nexus between the two incidents, I think it is fair to say that we can imagine the trauma that our friends in the United States are going through,"

Warner said. “And may I say that our concern is also rife for the fact that the United States – particularly Boston and New York City – is home to thousands of persons who have roots that connect to these shores, and who no doubt would have been touched in some way by this event.” Warner noted that there were reports on Tuesday of poison-laced letters being sent to US senators. Yesterday, it was also reported that a poisoned letter to US President Barack Obama was also intercepted.

“Also being investigated is the discovery of a poison-laced letter at the US Senate mailroom just yesterday (Tuesday),” Warner said. “In the context of our purpose here today, to strengthen our counter-terrorism controls, these incidents remind us of certain realities of the day.”

He continued, “It reminds us that the forces of evil do not sleep. They are constantly awake: working, prodding and digging diligently to identify gaps, weaknesses and vulnerabilities in our systems to exploit. They look for lapses in judgement that create openings. They look at how and when we let our guard down if even just to exhale. They do so in all forms and fashions least of all in their writings.” He said the most the State could do is remain vigilant.

“All we can really do is to keep our vigilance on high alert and to take precautions,” he said. “This, of course, entails constant examination and re-examination of ourselves and our systems, checking for weakness and filling in the cracks as far and as fast as we can.”

Warner appealed to the UN for assistance in “strengthening domestic capacity”.

At the open session of yesterday’s proceedings, the chairman of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee Kim Sook warned that terrorism does not respect borders.

“Terrorists do not respect borders,” Kim said. “The global effort against terrorism is as strong as the weakest link in the chain.”

He said the opening up of Caricom borders to allow greater freedom of movement of people has brought increased risks which, if not properly addressed, will disrupt the region’s security and prosperity “down the line”.

Also speaking at the open session was Caricom’s regional coordinator for Resolution 1540, O’Neil Hamilton, who warned that terrorism, in addition to claiming lives, has economic reverberations the world over. He estimated that US\$900 million in revenues were lost in the Caribbean region and thousands of jobs cut in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks.

Acting Prime Minister Winston Dookeran – who is also Foreign Affairs Minister and hosted the workshop – noted that Trinidad and Tobago’s economy would be vulnerable to terrorist attacks since it is based on the petrochemical sector and on the country’s position as a “trans-shipment” hub.

“Our economy is at risk,” he said. “At the root of the security issues lies economic forces at work.” Dookeran continued, “We recognise that national security is indeed important at the local level but to fight that at the local level it is necessary to collaborate at the global level.” Yesterday, the Congress of the People, the coalition partner, also expressed empathy to the American people in the aftermath of the bombings.

COP leader Prakash Ramadhar, in a statement, expressed condolences to the families of those who died and wished for the speedy recovery of those who were injured.

Ramadhar said the COP has always held dear and sacred the principles of justice as a basic human need.

“As such, the party stands firmly behind the call to ascertain the burden of responsibility for such cowardly acts, and to ensure the full brunt of justice is appropriately applied. We must never allow our freedoms to be curtailed by such dastardly acts,” he said.

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