

# Address given by H.E. Nigel Dakin CMG, Governor of the Turks and Caicos Islands, following the murder of four young men, over one weekend, in the Five Cays area of Providenciales

Good evening Turks and Caicos.

For those listening on radio I'm speaking to you from the Premier's Office. With me I have: the Premier, Hon Charles Washington Misick; the Commissioner of Police and the Minister of Education, Hon Rachel Taylor, in whose Constituency the tragic events of this weekend unfolded. Many members of Cabinet are with us in the room.

The tragic events, of the weekend, that the Commissioner will talk to in some detail don't, for the moment need any further description from me other than to say that this weekend, the historic community of Five Cays, at the hands of a small number of criminals, degenerated into a lawless place of gang and gun violence and lethal retribution. Fear stalked a community where citizens should be able to go about their lives feeling safe in the streets that most grew up in.

The Premier, Commissioner, Honourable Taylor and myself, were in Five Cays this morning talking to residents, shop keepers and school aged children. It didn't take them long to tell us they were frightened. We promised them we would deal with this, and we promise you. We do that against a back-drop – and we shouldn't hide the fact – that we know there are those determined to continue this cycle of violence and that for some, they are beyond reason.

We therefore stand together as one team determined to deal with this. We have different responsibilities and different powers that overlap and these powers are best deployed in concert – be that operational command of the Police, the ability to fund different branches of government and pass laws, the opportunity to bring in international support and provide oversight and the need to work closely with the community.

Along with all members of Cabinet and the NSC we also have the ability to bring multiple arms of Government together – often convened through the NSS. When she speaks, Honourable Taylor may touch on such longer term initiatives that she champions in her crucial role of Minister for Education. Whatever, a National Security Council meeting convenes tomorrow, that will develop and strengthen the immediate response we are going to collectively describe to you now.

Before I say anything further, let me say this. Those who are intimidating a whole community are small in number. They can think no further than their

ego, reputation or their wallet. While they seemingly live in the moment, unthinking of the consequences to themselves or others, all that will eventually happen, and faster than many imagine, is that they will die at the hands of a rival, or be imprisoned.

One of our media outlets talked about these young men walking with a metaphorical target on their backs and that is right. It's not a question of 'if' but 'when' one of these two outcomes occur. We all have enough evidence, in terms of what is happening to the young men who choose this way of life, to know that this is true.

For today though, I'm going to keep my intervention short and describe the immediate action that is underway to bring in strategic support to our overall enforcement posture.

I will end with an action that you can take that may well be more important than anything I say today. I thank the Beckles and Cox family for alerting the Territory to this, in their plea, over the weekend, a weekend that saw them bury Justin. Channelling the families voice, of a wholly innocent victim of gun crime, is where I want to end my intervention.

First, lest there be any doubt whatsoever, and addressing this particularly to the Residents of Five Cays, there is only going to be one outcome to the immediate problem we face – it is going to be dealt with – firmly – because it has to be dealt with. If it isn't, chaos reigns. This result isn't discretionary – it has to happen.

Second: The Tactical Unit of the Police were in Five Cays in the early hours of this morning. They were there again around midday. Over coming days, they will be making arrests against a list of individuals that we believe are responsible for this mayhem. If this is 'you' I strongly suggest that, if and when the Tactical Unit confront you, you immediately lie down with your arms out-stretched showing beyond any doubt that you are not armed. If a Police Officer fears for his life, or another's life, his rules of engagement are very clear and unfortunately very final. They are well trained, well-armed, and you won't win.

Third: Police resources are presently being reconfigured to ensure the thin blue line that stands between the population and the criminals prevails. More Police will be visible. The Commissioner may say more on this but that operational planning has been done and is now being executed.

Fourth: I've requested Helicopter support – from the Cayman Islands – with night-time surveillance capability. This can provide an over-watch for Policing operations and for the community. I am grateful to the Governor, Premier and Commissioner in Cayman – and colleagues in London that this has been very quickly supported. It will arrive shortly and it will be in direct support of our police force. The surveillance it can provide (close in – or stood a long way off) is a very significant Force Multiplier to law enforcement.

Fifth: I was in a senior officials meeting this morning with UK Home Office,

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office colleagues laying out the challenge we faced in TCI over this weekend. In terms of the Overseas Territories it will be one of the first things new UK ministers will be briefed on. The officials are anyway familiar with the context because many have visited.

The UK has been building lines of capability within our Police Force. But as of my meeting today with UK officials, we are now working through how we can deliver a far more significant uplift to the UK's direct support in terms of forming a unit focussed on 'Gangs, Guns and Drugs'. The preparatory work has been done though a report the Commissioner and myself had already asked UK policing to prepare. In agreement with the Commissioner, a senior UK Police Officer will be making recommendations shortly that the UK can act on. My aim would be that they not only deliver results quickly but also build up the local forces capacity while being under local Police leadership.

Sixth, and this is slightly longer term, the procurement of a sophisticated surveillance aircraft by the UK – with state of the art collection capabilities, night and day, but with great persistence is now well underway with suppliers expressing their interest. It will make an enormous difference to securing our borders not just from the large people trafficking sloops – who we are now adept at intercepting – but also the fast boats that bring in guns, drugs and ammunition. Such fast boats will not know they are being observed until they are interdicted and the Police's Marine Branch is doubling in terms of manpower with three new vessels procured this year. Such an aircraft can also provide the type of over-watch to our communities and Policing Operations that the helicopter we are bringing in from Cayman, will do quickly.

Seventh, we now have in place the agreements and technical capability to allow us to intercept, track and analyse those who are involved in gangs and serious organised crime including people smugglers and those bringing in arms, ammunition and drugs. To switch it on we have the legislation – best of breed in the Caribbean – in terms of democratic legitimacy and judicial oversight – is drafted, will come to Cabinet and the House shortly, and that will then enable this type of capability to protect the Islands not only from those who believe they have the free run of our streets, but also believe they can command, communicate and co-ordinate their illegal activities internally and internationally with impunity through the digital and telecommunications world.

Eighth: the Director of Public Prosecutions has been invited to ask for that support from the UK that he believes he needs to tackle these complex crimes. The UK's Ministry of Justice will, they told me today, support.

Beyond these eight actions there is much more that can be said about how individuals can support the Police. Much of this has already been said and perhaps others will repeat it. There is though one thing you can do within your family, right now, wherever you are in TCI, that doesn't involve the authorities, and in the long term it may be the most effective thing you can do.

If you are the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the cousin, the uncle, a friend, of someone you love and someone who you believe risks being on the fringes of this activity, then say something very clearly to them, preferably tonight.

Which is, if you continue on this road, you are going to be drawn into a world where you either die or you go to prison. If, for example, you are found with a weapon – that is a mandatory seven years in gaol. It may well increase and that will form part of our discussion at the NSC. If you kill someone, that's thirty years in gaol. If you kill two people, you die in gaol.

If the person you love as a member of family, or as a friend, has come into the possession of a firearm, tell them they have to give it up. Nothing good will come of it. The thoroughly decent young man, Justin, whose funeral I went to on Saturday, would be alive today, had a weapon not been so readily available. A trivial argument escalated beyond all reason.

So as a ninth action – done in memory of Justin Cox-Beckles – we will bring back the gun amnesty in the hope that the tragic events of the weekend, and the common sense and love of family members, can now prevail on those who are at the start, rather than the end of this journey. A press release will follow on this, with detail, after the National Security Meeting.

I now hand over to the Premier of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Premier Misick...