

H.E. Governor Nigel Dakin's remarks Queen's Birthday Parade

Good morning Turks and Caicos and a particular welcome to all on this parade. Let me compliment you on your turnout, your foot and rifle drill and your bearing.

It is the 95th Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In our national Anthem we sing "Long to Reign Over Us" and she most certainly has. She is the longest-reigning monarch in English History, surpassing the reign of Queen Victoria six years ago.

In those 95 years of life she has been our Monarch for 69 of them. She has been on the throne during the time in office of 14 British Prime Ministers and 14 US Presidents, the first being Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Harry S Truman respectively. A remarkable record of Service and of experience.

It is therefore entirely appropriate that we link this Parade with the notion of 'service', and also longevity of 'service'. Service as personified by those stood before me today, who I have had the privilege to inspect, and who stand before our nation. As all of us here thank Her Majesty for Her Service to us, I, on Her Majesty's behalf, and on behalf of the people of this Territory, thank you for your service to the People of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

This year thirteen have 30 years of service, two have 25 years of service and twenty eight have 18 years of service. This year they come from the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force, Her Majesty's Prison, the Customs Department and Immigration Department. They of course share in common the concept of 'enforcement'.

Enforcement takes skill and judgement and of course physical and moral courage. Wield your powers in to draconian a way and in the end there is a loss of public consent. Wield them too lightly, and there is a loss of respect not just for you, as an individual, but for the very law itself and at that point society starts to unravel. You carry a heavier constitutional burden than many understand.

If I may, at this Parade, I wish to particularly offer my thanks and respect to the Prison Service who marched past with pride today. An extraordinary change occurred at the Prison this year and that was due to leadership, teamwork and getting that balance of enforcement in exactly the right place.

To keep you out of the burning sun – and because there was no parade last year so the list is long – I will present medals today only to those Police Officers serving in Grand Turk. For those Police Officers in Providenciales we will present your medals at a Commissioners Parade later in the Summer which will also give the people of Providenciales the opportunity to enjoy

the spectacle of the Police Band and your foot and rifle drill.

Moving away from this parade ground for a moment, and on the occasion of Her Majesty's Birthday, and given the loss she suffered of her consort and most loyal supporter, I would also pay homage to Her late husband, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. Throughout his life, he dedicated his time to many issues close to his heart. Two of them are worth dwelling on for a moment.

So first allow me to recognise the young people and their teachers with us today. The late Duke's mission was to develop and empower young people to realise their potential. There is a moment in every child's life when that potential is limitless but also their lives require focus and purpose. As a result he founded the Duke of Edinburgh Award. 13 million award journeys; 6 million awards gained; and 120 million hours of voluntary service achieved. One unique international accreditation, reaching 168 countries, over 65 years.

Young people from TCI have received in the past their Silver Awards through regional events and one young woman was presented her Gold Award by the Duke of Edinburgh himself. The Police Cadets, represented here today, and the British West Indies Collegiate, have run programs to deliver the late Duke's vision to inspire and invest in our youth, allow them to discover their potential, learn new skills and most important, forge new friendships along the way. This is how self-confidence and self-discipline builds something that our Cadets on parade today exemplify who are a credit to themselves, their parents and the wider community.

The Cadets are not for everyone, I accept, and as the consequences of pandemic subside I hope we might look again at the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme as one of many approaches to developing the child here in TCI. Our own children participated in the scheme, gained much from it, and myself and Mandy stand ready to support and will be looking to re-energise this program during the coming year.

As a former President of the World Wildlife Fund, the late Duke was also personally engaged in wildlife and environmental issues; a theme that runs throughout the entire Royal family. On the occasion of Her Majesty's Birthday, her son, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has sent out a message to the world drawing attention to the environmental tragedy that is impacting us all.

The protection of our environment against climate change and preserving our natural assets for many generations to come is increasingly seen as a global priority. Climate change is reaching a tipping point. Humanity's relationship with our beautiful planet is incredibly precious but endangered. Whilst we retain hope for the future, a degree or two more and we risk losing both our coral reefs and our beaches.

The world organises around a Climate Change Summit this year hosted in the UK. It's known as COP26. The Overseas Territories have between them extraordinary environments hosting amazing bio-diversity from the Antarctic

to the Indian Ocean, to the Mediterranean and the Pacific, and of course closer to home here in the Caribbean.

We in TCI steward, on behalf of the planet, the third largest barrier reef in the world. An extraordinary responsibility and while we are 'Beautiful by Nature' we know all too well, that as the seas warm, and as we are at the start of the Hurricane season, we are at the mercy of nature who does not always show us here her 'beauty' but also her extraordinary destructive power.

It is entirely in our interests, in TCI, to stop sea temperatures rising, and sea levels rising, and so let us all play our part – small as it may seem – and protect our marine life; our crystal clear waters; our beautiful beaches; and the mangrove and vegetation that surrounds us through local initiatives to reduce waste and fossil fuel energy consumption in our beautiful by nature islands.

Forty Six Thousand people cannot change the world alone, because it will take a global effort, but as a small island state who bears the full brunt of nature's capriciousness we should provide leadership to the world in all that we do.

I end on welcoming, for the first time, the newest addition of those who serve TCI to this parade ground, if not this parade. You will see members of the Turks and Caicos Islands Regiment stood near to myself and the Premier today. This small contingent, who form the regular nucleus of our Regiment, will be joined next month by our own newly recruited reserve Marines who will undergo basic training run right here in TCI by the British Army, in July.

Next year, the TCI Regiment, seasoned through their first Hurricane Season and having been operational in support of our Maritime Police, and twinned with one of the British Army's most prestigious Regiment's 'The Rifles', will be stood on this Parade Ground joining you – the remarkable people of TCI who put yourselves before others in service of our Territory. That will be a remarkable Parade and, God willing, I intend to be here, to take that salute.

So may God Bless Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. May God bless the Turks and Caicos Islands. May God bless all those before me and everything you represent in terms of serving our people, following the example that Her Majesty herself has set over an extraordinary life. 'Long May She Reign Over us. God Save the Queen'.