

Merry Christmas

Jamaica PM insists cooperation with Cuba on drug smuggling has changed since 2009

CaribWorldNews: Jamaica: Jamaica Prime Minister Bruce Golding is defending a WikiLeaks cable that claimed the Cuba authorities were frustrated with the response of Jamaica officials to drug smuggling.

The PM said in a statement Thursday that while an investigation by his Minister of National Security confirmed that the 2009 concern by the Cuban Ministry of the Interior was correct, the unit has since been reorganized and renamed the Transnational Crime Narcotics Division. He added the officer who headed the unit at the time has since been replaced.

Golding, in the statement, said that since then, "there has been full and active cooperation between Jamaica and Cuba on counter-narcotics surveillance and interdiction and no concern has been expressed by officials of the Cuban government."

He added that the new level of cooperation has since assisted in the conviction of a number of persons on charges of drug trafficking and that officers from the Transnational Crime Narcotics Division and other security forces personnel have made a number of visits to Cuba, the most recent being less than a month ago, to confer with Cuban authorities on ongoing efforts to combat drug trafficking and measures to strengthen cooperation between Jamaica and Cuba.

"These include greater interface among high level officers of both countries involved in counter narcotics, intelligence sharing and interdiction

operations," the statement added.

According to the cable, Cuban Ministry of Interior (MININT) officials on multiple occasions contend that narcotics smugglers from Jamaica were utilizing both Cuban airspace and waters to transport narcotics ultimately destined for the United States, but their repeated attempts to engage Jamaica on the issue had been ignored.

"A prevailing concern and significant frustration on the Cuban side is the reportedly complete lack of cooperation afforded them by the GOJ when it comes to CD information sharing," the cable states, citing conversations between the U.S. Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Specialists and "no fewer than 15 Cuban MININT officers whose primary missions/roles are drug interdiction or support to drug interdiction."

"Collectively and continually, they express frustration over the GOJ's consistent ignoring of Cuban attempts to increase the flow of drug-related information between the two island nations to increase interdictions and avoid 'being surprised by drugs,'" added the document.

The Cuban officials also reportedly claimed that narco-related information on go-fasts and aircraft transiting to/from Jamaica in the vicinity of Cuba was passed to the government of Jamaica in English but "GOJ officials still do not respond."

"MININT officers mention that Jamaican officials commonly agree to greater information sharing in person; however, that is the extent of their efforts," stated the cable.

BIDC Trade Mission to French

Caribbean a success

Barbados is expanding its trade reach into non-English speaking markets

Bridgetown -- A multi-sectoral trade mission led by the Barbados Investment & Development Corporation (BIDC) and the Barbados Coalition of Services Industries (BCSI), has unveiled significant opportunities for trade and investment between this country and the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

According to the BIDC's Director of Export Promotion and Development, Sonja Trotman, a total of 16 companies participated in the venture, some having secured direct and immediate business opportunities and others having forged relationships and exchanged dialogue in pursuit of strengthening commercial ties.

"Representing firms from Barbados' construction, food and beverages, apparel and accessories, information communication technology, cultural industries and financial services sectors, the group reported positive outcomes and high-potential prospects for doing business with the French territories.

"They were able to initiate discussions with prospective business partners, while showcasing

their product and service offerings during the pre-arranged business-to-business (B2B) meetings and networking receptions," Ms. Trotman revealed.

Approximately 100 such B2B meetings were facilitated during the November 17-24 visit, through the efforts of consulting firms Nouvelle Dynamique Martiniquaise (NOUDYMA) and La Tribu, who were contracted to organise the business matchmaking and mission logistics in Martinique and Guadeloupe, respectively.

Discussions centred mainly on the efforts needed to conquer language and cultural barriers, as well as initiatives which could be explored to build strategic alliances, facilitate increased bi-lateral trade and investment, and support cultural exchanges between Barbados and the French Caribbean.

Following on the success of the mission, it is envisioned that Barbados, Martinique and Guadeloupe will establish wider country-level cooperation, beyond increased market penetration and enhanced business linkages. Both the BIDC and the BCSI are com-

mitted to active follow-up and engagement of the participants to ensure that the initial in-market discussions translate into successful projects.

The presence of the Barbadian delegation attracted much media attention. On arrival, delegates were welcomed by representatives from the Regional Council, the Chambers of Commerce, business support organisations and the business community in both territories, all expressing a keen interest and desire to enhance commercial relations with Barbados.

Martinique and Guadeloupe emerged key markets of interest to exporters within CARICOM, following the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between CARIFORUM and the European Union (EU), of which France and, by extension, the French Caribbean territories are signatories.

Though characterised by small manufacturing and minimal exporting bases, it is believed that these relatively untapped markets, with populations estimated at approximately 400 000 each, hold much potential for select products

Defense now wants April trial for Jamaican born OLINT Chief

CaribWorldNews, MIAMI, FL: The defense in the case of accused Ponzi schemer, Jamaican-born OLINT founder, David A. Smith, now want a spring trial.

Attorney Oliver A. Smith this week filed a motion for an April trial instead of a January 3rd trial as had been agreed between the two sides last week.

Smith, no relation to the accused, claims that given the 46,000 pages of documents his side must go through, the complexity of the case and the need for investigation and the possibility of retaining experts as well as conflicting dates, the trial should be postponed further into 2011.

Smith also claims that the prosecution has agreed to the date change based on his conversation with the District Attorney's office and now wants the

court to grant them the motion "unopposed."

OLINT's Smith was charged on Aug. 18th in U.S. District Court in Florida with fraud and money laundering in a \$200 million Ponzi scheme he allegedly operated from the Turks and Caicos Islands, Jamaica and Florida.

He waived his right to be indicted by a grand jury, allowing the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida in Orlando to charge him with four counts of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, and 18 counts of money laundering.

The government also seeks to seize \$128 million that Smith handled through allegedly fraudulent wire transfers; a Windermere, Fla., residence; various jewelry and precious stones; and \$40,000

that Smith transferred to a husband and wife, according to court documents.

Smith was on September 23rd convicted on fraud charges in the Turks and Caicos Islands but was last month extradited to the U.S. to face fraud charges here. He remains in a Florida jail. Special agents from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Homeland Security Investigations picked up Smith from Grand Turk on Nov. 18 and flew him to Orlando. There he appeared in U.S. District Court on Nov. 19 to face a 23-count information lodged against him Aug. 18.

Smith had waived being indicted on the charges and willingly went to the United States to face them. At his arraignment, he pleaded not guilty.

Drunk urinating from verandah falls to death

By Kaieteur News - KNews

The usual Christmas preparations and celebrations for the Hinds family of Block 22 and Silvertown Wismar, Linden have been severely thwarted with the sudden and unexpected death of their relative 70-year-old Ludwig Hinds. According to the dead man's younger brother, Evereth Hinds, he had spoken to Ludwig for the last time shortly after 9pm on Saturday night. He reminisced sadly that his brother's last words to him were, Evereth alluh try win da (domino) trophy, I

gon come late, because me wife got to come to put up dem blinds." Ludwig had already done the Christmas cleaning, Evereth reported. Unfortunately that was not to be, as Ludwig's body was discovered by his nephew in his yard at the back of his house, early yesterday morning. Hinds pointed out that his brother was clearly under the influence of alcohol, as he had been 'partying' with friends all day on Friday. The man said that he suspects that Ludwig must have gone to his back door to urinate as

usual, when he lost his balance and fell over, as the back door has no verandah or rails. There was a clear indentation in the sand, which indicated that the man fell on his head. Informed sources later told the family that the man's neck was broken. Evereth Hinds said that he will miss his brother, as they were very close, and even shared their work. They were both carpenters. "Now instead of preparing for Christmas the family got to prepare for funeral," Hinds stated sadly.

Cooperating with French Territories

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financing from the European Development Fund

and services niches.

Barbados exports just over \$1 million in goods annually to Guadeloupe and about the same to Martinique. These comprise mainly printed labels, perfumes, insecticides, unsweetened biscuits and liqueur.

(EDF).

Madame Penchard, in conformity with the outcome of Council of Ministers of Overseas Territories also raised the possibility of involving the French Caribbean and Guianese regional authorities toward participation in future meetings of the OECS and CARICOM, a point that was particu-

larly well received by Prime Minister Douglas.

During the talks, Prime Minister Douglas underlined the importance of these links in his capacity as Chairman of the OECS. "We ardently wish to develop cooperation between the French territories and our community in the Caribbean," said Dr. Douglas.