

H. Res. 865

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

April 9, 2008.

Whereas, in his 2006 New Year's address, then Prime Minister of Jamaica, P.J. Patterson, said, "Without a doubt, the high level of violent crime remains our most troubling and pressing problem.";

Whereas, in opening the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago in September 2005, President George Maxwell Richards said his country was in crisis due to the escalating crime rate;

Whereas, in March 2007, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) issued a report entitled, "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean";

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report presents detailed analyses of crime and violence in the Caribbean region and offers possible policy responses;

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report draws on input from governments, civil society organizations, and Caribbean experts;

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report that the Caribbean region has the highest murder and assault rates in

the world, with murder rates at 4 times the level of the United States;

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report that high crime levels have long term developmental effects on the Caribbean—

(1) crime cost the Jamaican economy \$12,400,000,000 in Jamaican dollars, 3.7 percent of its gross domestic product, in 2001; and

(2) reducing the region-wide homicide rate by $\frac{1}{3}$ could over double the rate of economic growth per capita; and

Whereas the UNODC and World Bank report reached the following conclusions—

(1) Caribbean countries are transit points and not producers of cocaine. Interdiction needs to be complemented by other strategies outside the region: principally demand reduction in consumer countries and eradication and/or alternative development in producer countries;

(2) illegal gun trafficking is a dangerous outgrowth of the drug trade. Better enforcement methods help, as can improved gun interdiction in ports;

(3) deaths and injuries from youth violence constitute a major threat to public health and social and economic progress across the Caribbean. Youth are disproportionately represented in the ranks of both victims and perpetrators of crime and violence;

(4) although the average deportee from the United States to the Caribbean is not involved in criminal activity, a minority of deportees may be causing serious problems, both by direct involvement in crime and by providing a perverse role model for youth. The report rec-

ommends that more services be offered to reintegrate deportees, with deporting countries contributing to the cost of these programs;

(5) some types of crime, such as organized crime and drug and illegal firearms trafficking, are impervious to alternative prevention initiatives and require an efficient criminal justice system, and therefore urgent priorities for improving the criminal justice system in the region include the development of management information systems, tracking of justice system performance, monitoring of reform programs, and increased accountability to citizens;

(6) several Caribbean countries are increasingly investing in crime prevention—using approaches such as integrated citizen security programs, crime prevention through environmental design, and a public health approach that focuses on risk factors for violent behaviors;

(7) youth violence is a particularly serious problem in the region, and youth homicide rates in several countries of the region are significantly above the world average. To address issues of youth violence, Caribbean policymakers should invest in programs that have been shown to be successful in careful evaluations such as: (i) early childhood development and mentoring programs; (ii) interventions to keep high risk youth in secondary schools; and (iii) opening schools after hours and on weekends to offer additional activities and training; and

(8) many of the issues facing the Caribbean transcend national boundaries and require a coordinated regional and international response. Demand for drugs emanates from Europe and the United States; deportees are sent back to the region from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada; and many weapons that

are trafficked are brought from the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) welcomes the recommendations for more effective law enforcement and crime prevention efforts contained in the March 2007 UNODC and World Bank report, “Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean”, to the extent those recommendations do not conflict with existing U.S. law;

(2) urges the United States Government to consider fully and carefully the recommendations in the UNODC and World Bank Report and to take the recommendations into account when developing United States policy toward the current member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic;

(3) urges the governments of United States and other drug-consuming countries to increase counter-narcotics assistance to the current member states of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic;

(4) urges the United States Government to increase coordination on policy development and implementation with the current member states of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic to help combat crime and violence in the region;

(5) urges the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security to work with the current member states of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic to mitigate the negative effects of United States deportation policy;

(6) urges the current member states of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic to consider fully and carefully the recommendations in the UNODC and World Bank Report, and to take the recommendations into account, especially regarding improvements in their criminal justice systems; and

(7) urges the United States Government to consider the impact on the current member states of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic of the proposed Merida Initiative to combat drugs, violence, and transnational crime in Mexico and Central America, especially whether a successful plan will drive narco-traffickers from Mexico and Central America to the current member states of CARICOM or the Dominican Republic.

Attest:

Clerk.