

The Diplomatic Courier

Vol. 1 | Issue 1 | July 17, 2016

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EDITORIAL

We and Our World!

Ware the world! Michael Jackson and scores of other international stars sang this sweet song by that name, which reminds us that we are all, countries and people big and small, part of a global village.

Diplomacy and protocol have their irreplaceable place in global, regional and national affairs of all states that make up our global village. The Diplomatic Corps in every sovereign state plays a valuable function necessary for both the country represented and the host country.

The diplomatic community also includes offices of regional and international inter-governmental organizations, including the United Nations and its related organizations, as well as Latin American and Caribbean organizations. Unfortunately,

however, what they do and what it means for the state is not always sufficiently highlighted and thus not sufficiently known.

With the help of the diplomatic community, The Diplomatic Courier Online will change that situation – and for the better.

This inaugural issue of The Diplomatic Courier covers the most recent reports from embassies and issues of interest not only to the diplomatic community, but also anyone interested in regional and international affairs.

We look forward to continued cooperation with the diplomatic community to keep this publication going – and we pledge to keep the Courier coming your way regularly.

PM sends condolences to France after bloody Nice attack

The Saint Lucia Prime Minister has sent the nations deep condolences to the Government and People of France following the recent attack in Nice.

A statement from the Office of the Prime Minister says, “Once again the world has to bare the pain of another dreadful attempt to terrorize innocent people.

“The attack in Nice, Paris France was an attack against people on a day that celebrates Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

“People across the world need to draw strength from the French people’s commitment to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

“We are reminded in this time of tragedy that the bonds of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are not only values that the French share but they are values that most of the world share.

“We implore the entire world to embrace those values to make certain that these ideals endure far beyond any act of terrorism or hateful crimes.

“On behalf of my Government and all Saint Lucians, I offer our deepest condolences to the friends and family of those who were killed and our hopes for a speedy recovery to those who were injured.



The carnage in France resulted in over 80 deaths at first count.

“I was happy to stand alongside the French ambassador and delegates yesterday at the Bastille Day celebrations in Saint Lucia.

“Our nation will continue to stand firmly with the French people and provide every support and comfort to the French ambassador and delegates during this time of tragedy”.

French Embassy closed to open Condolence Book following NICE Massacre



Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

French Ambassador Eric de LA MOUSSAYE has announced that due to the National Day of Mourning in France following the attack carried out in Nice on July 14th 2016 which took the lives of more than 80 persons, the French Embassy will be closed to the public on Monday, 18th July 2016.

The ambassador also says that a condolence book will be made available at the Embassy on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th July from 10am to 1pm and at the Alliance Française on Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd throughout the day.

Persons residing outside of St Lucia, wishing to extend their condolences, are invited to send an email to: frenchembassy@candw.lc

Stronger security for French Embassy in Castries following deadly Nice attack

Stronger security measures are being put in place at the French Embassy here after Thursday night's attack in France.

Eighty-four people, including ten children were killed.

They died after a 31-year old French Tunisian attacked Bastille Day celebrations in Nice, by speeding a truck for about one mile along the crowded promenade. Over two hundred people were injured.

French Ambassador, Eric de La Moussaye, told the Times that increased protection has been requested from authorities here for the French Embassy, the Ambassador's residence and the Alliance Française.

The French diplomat said that his thoughts and sympathy were with the families of those who perished in the atrocity.

De la Moussaye declared that the incident will only strengthen the resolve of the French to fight against people who have no values.

He told the Times that it would have been virtually impossible to prevent Thursday night's incident.

The French diplomat asserted that the French police have been doing a fine job, as was evident in an incident free Euro 2016 football final held in France recently.



Mourners in aftermath of Nice attack (Courtesy BBC.com)

The attacker in the Nice incident was named as Mohamed Lahouaiej- Bouhlel, a chauffeur and deliveryman who was born in Tunisia, but had lived in France for years.

According to reports, three police officers exchanged fire with Lahouaiej-Bouhlel during his rampage and found him dead in the passenger seat of the truck. (Courtesy St. Lucia Times Online)

All Saint Lucia parliamentarians to get diplomatic passports



Government said it remains committed to ensuring that a new approach to governance is taken and that all Members of Parliament (MPs) are treated fairly.

Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy said there are agreed courtesies that are extended to persons who have served or are serving in certain offices, and government will extend those courtesies.

"We believe that all parliamentarians on all sides of the House should be given diplomatic passports and my government will take the necessary steps to make this happen," she said.

The island's head of state noted that the government will also undertake to facilitate the office of Leader of the Opposition in playing its rightful role in the country's democracy.

Additionally, the government said it is committed to putting in place appropriate parliamentary sub-committees to review legislation before presentation to Parliament.

This will provide greater opportunity for dialogue and for consensus on both sides of the House in working together for the good of Saint Lucia and will serve as a new approach to governance.

Dame Pearlette Louisy said both sides will therefore function on the basis of mutual respect and with due regard to the conventions of Parliament and the Constitution.

"A new approach to governance requires the co-operation of both sides of the House and my government anticipates the full support of Her Majesty's Opposition in cultivating this new approach," she said.

While in opposition, the United Workers Party (UWP) had articulated the need for a new governance structure aimed at empowering citizens and putting them at the centre of development and decision making processes.

"We remain committed to these ideals, and during this 11th Parliament, will do everything possible to realise such objectives," she stated.

Progressive Saint Lucian author has launched latest new book

The author, Clement Wulf-Soulage, was in full bloom as he explained why he is proud to be "a progressive" today.



The much-expected launch of the book *Conscience of a Progressive* took place yesterday at the Corinth Secondary School, where the author, Clement Wulf-Soulage took the stage to announce that this his third book is by no means his last publication.

Having lived and worked in Germany for 17 years, Soulage, now back home, explained how he came about writing his latest book, which is a collection of articles written locally, all with local, international and regional appeal and interest.

Themes range from politics and economics to social affairs and literature - including the increasing loss of Reading as a habit or hobby, best explained through his chapter on *The Death of The Bookshop* here.

Yesterday also heard poems by three young ladies, with remarks by several persons and a book raffle.

Guests included Tourism Minister Dominic Fedee and ex-Foreign Affairs Minister Alva Baptiste, Permanent Secretary Titus Preville, along with several friends of the author, as well as fellow newspaper columnists Jon Peters and Earl Bousquet, writer Dawn French and others

The book is on sale at EC \$80 per copy and a copy of the three titles by the author can be got for \$200.

Venezuelan Cultural Ambassadors reaffirmed similar Caribbean heritage through local performances



On Saturday, July 2nd, the Venezuelan experimental folk group “Tambour y Gloria” (Drum and Glory) arrived in St. Lucia to participate in cultural activities in celebration of the 205th Anniversary of the Independence of Venezuela.

The Venezuelan musicians conducted workshops at the Vide Bouteille Primary School from Monday, July 4th to Friday July 8th. The participants (Children, youth and adults) had the opportunity to participate in intense sessions on song, dance, the Cuatro (a Venezuelan traditional instrument) and Afro-Venezuelan percussion.

These renowned Cultural Ambassadors, contributed to the further strengthening of the bonds of friendship and integration between Saint Lucia and Venezuela, through the teaching Venezuelan music to 150 participants from various communities.

They offered a repertoire of different genres of traditional Venezuelan music as Joropo from the east, central and plains Venezuela, Golpes larenses, Bagpipe Tambora, quitiplás, drums of Aragua, Parrandas, Calypso, among others.

The group “Tambour y Gloria” was born March 28th 1981 in the parish of San Juan in Caracas with the primary objective of spreading the appreciation of Venezuelan traditional music throughout the country.

In the group’s 35-year existence they have had the opportunity to participate in various national and international cultural festivals. They have facilitated various workshops in

communities across Venezuela – and continue to do – in the field of the Traditional Music Arts. Most of the members are teachers at many cultural institutions, facilitate online courses and are also involved in a variety of cultural projects.

Finally, on Friday July 8, the concert of the Tambour y Gloria, held in commemoration of the 205th Anniversary of the Independence of Venezuela, took place at the Convent of Benedictine Nuns at Coubaril, located in Castries, with Governor-General Dame Pearlette Louisy in attendance, along with several Ministers of Government, Ambassadors accredited to Saint Lucia, other specially invited guests and the general public.

Upon completion of each of the performances, the musicians provided a brief explanation of the instruments used in Venezuelan musical genres, such as: the cuatro, mandolin, the bandolas (eastern plains and central), maracas, Afro-Venezuelan drums (cumaco, the quitiplás, the pujao or carouse drum, bells and Bumbac (to play Calypso).

The Concert performance, which included workshop participants, was composed of several songs and dances in different languages - Spanish, English and Creole - demonstrating the similarities between our traditional cultural expressions and reaffirming, once again, that the whole Caribbean shares the same cultural heritage, and that as such, it is important to promote and consolidate the integration process between Venezuela, Saint Lucia and the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America.

Argentina hosted Bicentennial Independence celebrations



TANGO SAINT LUCIA TOO! A scene from one of the artistic presentations by the Argentinean performers

On Thursday July 7th, the Embassy of the Argentine Republic to Saint Lucia and the OECS celebrated Argentina's Bicentennial Independence, to commemorate the events of July 9th 1816 and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which led to the emancipation of Argentina from Spanish colonial rule.

The reception, held at the Sandals Halcyon hotel, was hosted by Mr. Ramiro Alfonso Hidalgo, Chargé d'Affaires of the Argentine Embassy and honoured by the presence of Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations, Government authorities, Argentine citizens and other distinguished guests.

The Governor General, during her opening remarks, recalled the efforts and struggles of Saint Lucia and Argentina to achieve their independence, and underlined the mutual benefits of strengthening the bilateral relationship.

The Chargé d'Affaires of the Argentine Embassy, during his

speech, highlighted the common challenges and opportunities that both Argentina and Saint Lucia face as developing countries and regional neighbours.

He also emphasized the need to take full advantage of existing complementarities to enhance trade, deepen technical cooperation, explore language training programmes, among other areas with much potential for working together.

With only two years since the establishment of the Argentine Embassy in Saint Lucia, Mr. Hidalgo stressed that this was only the beginning of a partnership with much space to grow.

The cultural event featured live folklore and tango performances by dancers Oscar Caballero and Karel Wolberg, with musicians Miguel Vettorello (bandoneon) and Jorge Pinillos (guitar).

The guests also enjoyed a selection of artwork from Argentine painters Florencio Molina Campos and Nora Iniesta.



The guests were treated to some splendid performances at the bicentennial event.

US Embassy denies Saint Lucia PMs claim!



The United States has absolutely denied the claim by Prime Minister Allen Chastanet that is repatriated 800 criminals to Saint Lucia in one year. The denial came in a statement from the US Embassy in Barbados on Wednesday, July 13.

According to the statement, A July 11 article in The Barbados Nation newspaper titled "Chastanet Blames US" reported that Saint Lucia Prime Minister Allen Chastanet said that the United States government was slashing funding for security assistance in the region and contributing to regional crime by deporting criminals back to their countries of origin.

He was also quoted as stating that 800 criminals were deported to St. Lucia in one year.

But the US denies the claim that it is slashing security aid.

In fact, the statement says, the United States, in partnership with Eastern Caribbean governments, is committed to strengthening security in the region.

As evidence of this commitment, the United States government points to what it terms as steadily increased funding for regional security since President Obama launched the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative in 2009.

It adds that funding from the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) alone increased 31% between fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016.

The US says that in 2016, INL plans to spend approximately US\$3.94 million on equipment, infrastructure upgrades and law enforcement training to combat trafficking, enhance security, and strengthen justice systems in the Eastern Caribbean.

The United States says it is also contributing US \$8.25 million to a joint U.S.-Canadian project to refurbish the Regional Security System (RSS) Air Wing, which will improve RSS interdiction and search-and-rescue capabilities.

As to the issue of deportees, the statement points out that any International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) member-country has an obligation to accept its nationals who are deported for crimes committed in another country.

It says, St. Lucia is an ICAO member (as is the United States) and is thus subject to this obligation. United States government statistics indicate that the total number of deportees returned to St. Lucia in the last five years was less than 100. In 2015, the statement adds, there were only eight such cases.

The United States government has never wavered in its security commitment to the Eastern Caribbean, and continues to invest heavily in building the capacity of our partner nations to make the region more safe and secure.

Opposition says PM statement Reckless and Untrue!

Saint Lucia main opposition party says the islands Prime Ministers statement about the US repatriating over 800 criminal deportees to the island in one year is not only reckless, but also untrue. Following is the full text of the SLP statement.

Whilst in Barbados last week, Prime Minister Allen Chastanet is quoted in an interview with the Barbados Nation as stating that the United States deports several hundred criminal deportees to Saint Lucia.

He said that in "some years you had 500, 600, 800 criminal deportees including murderers." The Prime Minister added that the repatriation of nationals "is one of the most horrific things the US could have done to this region." In addition to being reckless, the Prime Minister's statement is patently false.

What exactly was the Prime Minister attempting to achieve by painting our country as one which annually receives 800 criminal deportees from the United States of America? What is the message being conveyed to potential investors and visitors if not to suggest to them that Saint Lucia is not a safe country to either do business or visit?

None of what the Prime Minister has stated is true. The fact is that on average the United States deports less than 10 Saint Lucians annually, not all of whom are criminals.

Indeed, the United States Embassy, in a rare display of chiding a leader of a sovereign state, took the unusual position of publicly refuting Prime Minister Chastanet's comments.

According to the US Embassy, the US advised that the number of deportees over the past five years total less than 100 and that in 2015 the number was just 8. Where then did Prime Minister Chastanet get his figures?

Prime Minister Chastanet went further and indicated that the US had slashed funds allocated to the Caribbean's security. Again, the US Embassy showed the Prime Minister's assertion to be false indicating that funding had actually increased by 31% over the last year.

In his short political career, Allen Chastanet has consistently shown a blatant disregard for truth. Just last month, he publicly stated that he had signed documentation to bring about a reduction in petrol prices.

Contrary to his stated position, however, petrol prices have already risen twice under his watch. Additionally, during an earlier stint in government, the OECS Court of Appeal had found Mr. Chastanet not to be a credible witness. Now, Allen Chastanet's penchant for exaggeration and prevarication has caused one of our country's strongest allies to issue a stinging and embarrassing rebuke.

The Saint Lucia Labour Party calls on Allen Chastanet to ensure that his comments, whether made locally or internationally, should be based solely on the truth so as not to cause embarrassment to our country and earn rebukes from international powers. (SLP)

BCCC sees bright future for Caribbean tourism despite 'Brexit'

The British Caribbean Chamber of Commerce (BCCC) has asserted that Caribbean tourism will continue to have a bright future, despite the 'Brexit' vote.

The chamber made the assertion today in a statement welcoming the announcement that The Right Honourable Theresa May, will assume the office of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on Wednesday evening.

The BCC has observed that Mrs. May has made an unequivocal statement, for the avoidance of doubt, that her policy is that "BREXIT means BREXIT".

"She has indicated that she will negotiate a fair arrangement for both the United Kingdom and the European Union, recognizing the outcome of the Referendum in Britain last month," the BCCC statement noted,

It said the UK now has stable leadership with a strong message and a clear mandate for a properly negotiated and well-ordered exit from the political structures of the European Union.

The Chamber stated that as well as challenges, new opportunities lie ahead for traditional trading partners in the Caribbean, with whom there are long-standing and historic links.

The BCCC said it is looking forward to working with business and political leaders in the region in determining these.

It observed that the caution of OECS regional leaders in assessing what significant changes in the European political



Never mind the sayings of the naysayers, the British Caribbean Chamber sees brighter skies and calmer seas for regional tourism.

structure may mean in terms of the short, medium and long-term is understandable.

But the Chamber expressed confidence that it is within the grasp of European governments to embrace the challenge of BREXIT in a well ordered manner, with no reason for any to take a pessimistic view of the future.

"Our essential message is that Britain is not going away and British tourists will continue to see the Caribbean as an attractive and desirable destination," the BCCC declared.

It noted that it is the essential quality of the Caribbean tourist industry, based on targeting those with higher than average disposable incomes, which is its greatest strength. (*More Brexit reports inside*)

Invest Saint Lucia CEO on new Black Bay hotel project

A powerful validation of the return of investor confidence to Saint Lucia!

The head of the islands main investment agency has welcomed the latest major investment to be secured under the Citizenship by Investment Program (CIP), saying it is yet another sign of a sure return of investor confidence in Saint Lucia.

The CIP announced recently that Range Developments, an international developer specializing in luxury hotel projects in the Caribbean, has signed an official agreement to be the Master Developer of Black Bay.

Speaking at the official press conference to introduce the new hotel investment, CEO of Invest Saint Lucia (ISL), McHale Andrew, said "Given their record of similar projects in the Caribbean and their tried and tested association with

some of the world's top hotel management brands, Range Development's proposed project in Black Bay is a powerful validation of the return of investor confidence to Saint Lucia."

"Such investment flows are imperative to the economic development of Saint Lucia," he continued, "but must be done in a manner that burnishes the country's image as a choice investment location in addition to enhancing the overall welfare of its people as well as Saint Lucia's economic competitiveness in an ever changing global landscape."

The CEO also remarked that there are other proposed major investment projects in the pipeline, which ISL will be happy to announce once the requisite agreements are finalized.

UWI launches Global Giving Week

The UWI Open Campus Saint Lucia has launched Global Giving Week under the patronage of Her Excellency, Dame Pearlette Louisy, Governor General of Saint Lucia.

The week will run from August 1 - 7, under the theme "Educate, Emancipate, Donate." It will mark the beginning of what is intended to be an annual tradition to cultivate support among alumni and donors that will strengthen UWI's capacity to drive regional development.

Traditionally, the university relied on regional governments for financial support. However, "the future funding of the university is uncertain as governments grapple with regional challenges, and in recent years, the university has recorded substantial reductions in the level of subventions from contributing governments," a release from the university stated.

In this regard, the "Global Giving" campaign aims to target alumni, public and private sector organizations, donor agencies and members of the public with the objective to bring them closer to the university. Proceeds from the campaign will go towards student support, research, facilitates, equipment, capital projects and infrastructure.

"We expect Global Giving Week to be a point on our calendars when we take time to reflect on what this region would be without the University of the West Indies. I will give you a brief moment to think about that. Our imaginations would be greatly challenged to come up with such a picture. I'm sure you agree because the UWI from its humble beginnings as a tiny university college has grown into a tightly woven unit which makes up the very fabric of this region we call home," Head of the UWI Open Campus, Dr. Veronica Simon, said.

"We all have a duty to give back," she continued. "We give back so that our children can move through this century with confidence and pride, knowing that they have inherited a legacy that allows them to navigate the world – the legacy of a strong university built against great odds by our own hands and whose mission it is to nurture that sense of Caribbean selfhood which is the catalyst for true independence."

While contributions to UWI are welcome throughout the year, UWI Global Giving Week kicks off on Emancipation Day (Aug. 1) which is celebrated annually across the Caribbean Community.



Open Campus Head Dr Veronica Simon says proceeds will go towards student support, research, capital projects and infrastructure.

12 Saint Lucian students awarded Cuban scholarships while 22 await replacement opportunities

Twelve Saint Lucian students have been awarded scholarships to pursue studies at universities in Cuba, under the 2016 Cuban Scholarship Program.

The scholarship awards were presented by the Cuban Ambassador to Saint Lucia, His Excellency Jorge Soberon, at a ceremony held recently at the Bay Gardens Hotel.

Ambassador Soberon said there has been an increase in the number of scholarships awarded this year.

"The awarding of these scholarships is a major effort of the government and people of Cuba—a small, independent, developing state, as is Saint Lucia," the ambassador said.

"We have maintained our scholarship program with great results for 50 years -- and even in difficult moments. Cuba assumes all costs relating to the scholarship, excluding airfare. The scholarships granted by Cuba include one year of preparation of Spanish, which is an opportunity to establish a cultural and fraternal relationship with the people of Cuba for life."

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Esther Brathwaite, wished the students success and advised them to take advantage of the opportunity presented.

"Learn a lot, do well, come back and make your country proud; and remember it was your dream that has actually placed you at that level to get this scholarship, so it is your responsibility to live up to that dream and visualize that in the next five years, what your future can be."

The majority of scholarship recipients will pursue studies in medicine.

Since the inception of the scholarship program, over 245 Saint Lucians have graduated from Cuban universities.

Meanwhile, some 22 students who were on similar scholarships in Venezuela are now back home after being recalled by the Education Ministry, ostensibly in their security interests, following expressions of concern by some students and parents about the political and economic situation in the country.

Now back home, the former Venezuela scholarship holders are praying that the government will be able to secure other scholarships elsewhere.

Taiwan pledges another \$2.2 million to continue Black Sigatoka fight



Taiwan continues to tangibly support efforts to restore Saint Lucia's banana industry by providing funding, scientific and technical assistance to the fight against the Black Sigatoka disease. Farmers are expressing satisfaction with the results of the Taiwanese assistance, which has already started to bear fruitful bananas on many farms, contributing to Saint Lucia's ability to have been the only Windward Island to export bananas consistently to Europe in the past three years.

Taiwan continues to support development of the banana industry in Saint Lucia, with another \$2.2 million to be pumped into the fight against the Black Sigatoka disease this year. This assurance came during a recent visit to the islands northern banana farms by Taiwanese Ambassador to Saint Lucia, Ray Mou.

The Ambassadors banana farm visit, which preceded two others to other banana belts, came ten days after the change of government occasioned by general elections here and one week following congratulations to the new government by the President of Taiwan.

In a letter delivered by Ambassador Mou, President Tsai Ing-wen congratulated new Prime Minister Allen Chastanet and told him Saint Lucia and Taiwan have become indispen-

sable partners through close cooperation.

The Taiwan President also said she looks forward to working closely with the newly-elected government of Saint Lucia to enhance the cordial ties and friendship between the two countries.

Taiwan has a long history of association with Saint Lucia's banana industry. Much Tissue culture research has been done here over many years by successive Taiwanese researchers.

In addition, Taiwanese involvement in agriculture and fisheries here has seen development of a local aquaculture industry that involves local farmers long engaged in prawn harvesting and tilapia fish production, as well as recent construction of jetties to facilitate fishers on the islands East Coast at Savannes Bay and Praslin.

BREXIT AND THE CARIBBEAN

EU Ambassador says Caribbean effect of Brexit unclear

Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the Eastern Caribbean Countries, OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM, Ambassador Mikael Barford said that it is difficult to predict the effect of Britain's exit from the European Union.

Ambassador Barford's comments were made in Barbados soon after the Brexit vote, at the opening ceremony of a regional technical meeting on the implementation of the 10th European Development Fund, CSME and Economic Integration Program.

Barford said that there could be some consequences for the Caribbean, such as re-negotiations of trade deals with

the United Kingdom, as the UK is a major trading partner for many CARICOM member states.

He opined that the EU is better off together than standing alone, and is counted in the global arena because of this cooperation.

"Through the EU, many small countries can make their voices heard. This is why there is support from the EU for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy," he said.

"The EU knows first-hand how integration can benefit small countries, and although the process is not a quick achievement, the challenges related to regional integration are worth taking even though it, at times, has a gloomy reputation. (GIS)

Britain still plans to be heard loudly



worldwide, despite Brexit!



(Following is a statement issued by the British High Commission to the Eastern Caribbean following the June 23 Brexit vote.)

The British people have made a clear and robust decision in one of the largest democratic exercises in British history. We had a tremendous turnout – over 33 million people from across the United Kingdom have had their say, with 52% voting in favour of leaving the EU.

This campaign was vigorously contested, as is right and proper for a decision of such magnitude. Now is the time for the United Kingdom to come together. The Prime Minister has been clear: the will of the British people is an instruction that must be delivered.

Now that the dust has settled, I wanted to address some concerns which I have heard.

I should be clear that nothing will change overnight. British tourists will keep coming to the region, keep contributing to the local economy and keep enjoying these beautiful islands.

The re-energised partnership between the UK and the Caribbean, launched by my Prime Minister on his visits to the region last autumn, will continue. As he said then, "We want to help the Caribbean on their path of development – supporting economic growth and creating new opportunities for people living here".

That has not changed. The UK remains the largest bilateral donor to the region.

And the British Chancellor to the Exchequer, George Os-

borne, has reassured the British people and the global community that Britain is ready to confront what the future holds from a position of strength.

He said, "No one should doubt our resolve to maintain the fiscal stability we have delivered for this country. To all companies large and small I would say this: the British economy is fundamentally strong, we are highly competitive and we are open for business".

The UK remains a great country, and will always be capable of thriving and prospering on the world stage.

Our voice will always be powerful. We are a top-table member of the UN Security Council, of NATO, of the G7, the G20 and the Commonwealth. The UK is one of very few countries in the world to meet the UN's 0.7% goal on development assistance.

This ongoing investment in international development enables us to shape the world around us rather than be shaped by it, growing our global influence.

Our cooperation with the Caribbean is an important part of who we are and what we do.

Our close co-operation and partnership is underscored by our deep links, bonded by our shared values and through our close linguistic, historical, cultural and political ties. These are essential to our relationship and will not change.

BREXIT AND THE CARIBBEAN

The OECS Director General offers a comprehensive assessment of the implications of Brexit for the smallest Caribbean island grouping.

A REFLECTION ON THE LESSONS OF BREXIT FOR OECS INTEGRATION

— By Dr. Didacus Jules, Director General, OECS —

We have all been saturated with news and views on the British vote to exit the European Union in the past week and there is much more to come by way of analysis and revelation as things unfold. Not unexpectedly, the Brexit has created the opportunity for those who are opposed to regional integration efforts all around the world to find comfort. Not unexpectedly in the Caribbean there are also those who seek to mimic the British and are also calling for exit of sorts from regional integration. These calls are nothing new – almost fifty years ago Sir Arthur Lewis, the intellectual author of OECS integration, was very clear about the main impediments to the realization of regional integration:

“What has stood in the way of Federation is not the sea... The real stumbling block has been the opposition of small local potentates. The larger and more far seeing capitalists realize the immense advantages that would flow from Federation, and advocate it. But it is the small potentate – planter or merchant [one might add: politician] – fearful that his voice, a big noise in a small community will be unheard in a large federation and has so far succeeded in preventing it.”

Whatever position one may hold on the Brexit question, it is now becoming painfully clear that this divorce will be a long, protracted, painful process in which much will be lost.

Ian Bremmer of the Eurasia Group summed it up adequately: “You are talking about the diminishment of the most important alliance of the post war order, the transatlantic relationship which was already before Brexit at its weakest since World War II. You’re talking about not only the removal of the UK from the EU but you’re also talking I think reasonably likely about the eventual disintegration in further part of the UK itself. And you’re talking about a severe diminishment of what the European Union actually means, its footprint globally, its common values, and its ability to continue to integrate.”

There is much work to be done to determine the implications and impact of Brexit on the Caribbean’s relations with Europe and with Britain but the situation provides us with a special opportunity to reflect on the lessons of Brexit for regional integration in the Caribbean and in the OECS in particular.



The OECS Director General presented this paper within days of the June 23 Brexit vote.

Lesson 1 – Connecting the people to the process

From all of the analyses of the post referendum public sentiments, it is clear that Brexit was a rejection of an integration process that the average person in the street did not apparently understand. Google’s announcement that the

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TOP QUESTIONS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION
in the UK since Brexit result officially announced

Google Trends

- 1 What does it mean to leave the EU?
- 2 What is the EU?
- 3 Which countries are in the EU?
- 4 What will happen now we've left the EU?
- 5 How many countries are in the EU?

google.com/trends

BREXIT AND THE CARIBBEAN

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most searched queries in the aftermath of the referendum were “What does it mean to leave the EU?” and “What is the EU?” is a very disturbing indication of the failure of public education on the matter. A referendum assumes that the electorate is provided with extensive information with the pros and cons thoroughly argued so as to arrive at an intelligent decision. As electoral campaigns tend to go, the battle is often to win the hearts more than the heads of voters and the results of referendums do not always suggest that there has been that deep introspection.

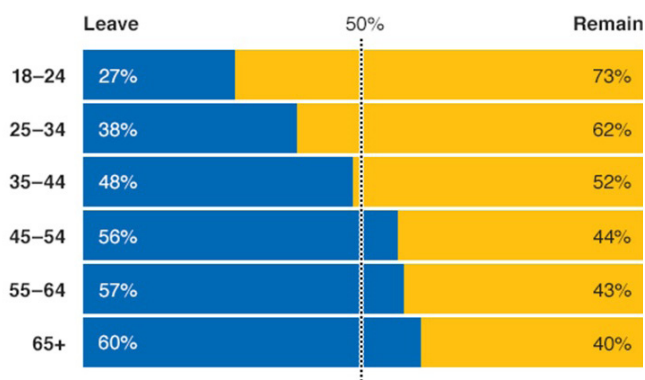
The moral of that Brexit story for the OECS is that connecting the people to the process must be a continuous commitment not simply to giving and sharing information but also an obligation to listen to people. Integration processes must connect not only with people’s dreams and aspirations but also listen to and address their fears.

The OECS Communications Strategy which is currently being rolled out in phases seeks to put this capacity to share and to listen in place. It involves among other initiatives, the launch of a new interactive website that links social media with a communications platform that enables outreach to the widest universe of stakeholders from the highest to the humblest across the full spectrum of economic and social interests.

Lesson 2 – Engaging and Empowering the Youth

One of the most glaring contradictions exposed by the Brexit referendum is the near perfect correlation of age with voting position and also with educational level. The Wall Street Journal reported that 68% of those voting to leave were persons who did not graduate from high school; while 70% of those voting to remain in Europe were college graduates. As the BBC graph shows, the relationship between voting in favour of Brexit and age is strong – young persons voted to remain; older persons voted to leave. The unfortunate reality of this situation is that those who voted to remain will have to live with the consequences of Brexit much, much longer than those who instigated it.

How different age groups voted



The lesson of that reality is the importance of empowering and engaging youth. Regional integration projects are essentially about creating a very different future – by removing the barriers within the geographic space, they alter the mental geography and consequently the range of opportunities available. It also points to the difference in perception that education makes – higher education predisposed most British youth to seeing themselves as European. It can be argued that narrow insular identities are inherently restrictive if they embody a closed mentality. The challenge of that experience to us in the region is whether we are educating our youth to see themselves as global citizens with a Caribbean identity that is rooted in their national consciousness. Accomplishing this is a complex task that requires a fundamental reengineering of our education systems and how this can be done (easily) will require a separate discussion. Suffice it to note that the nexus of age and education points to an emerging global divide – older and less educated citizens have experienced the disadvantage of globalization while the younger more educated citizens recognize the opportunities that it presents. For a regional integration effort to be meaningful to the people, it needs to connect that divide.

With the world becoming increasingly smaller and interconnected through new and emerging technologies, we must work through a new education paradigm to empower youth to recognise that they are indeed the custodians of a better tomorrow. History has demonstrated the power of youth to affect change through the shaping of public debate and policy. Whether it be the Young Women’s Christian Organisation pioneering race relations, labour relations and the empowerment of women across early America, to radical student activism reviving the issue of racial-apartheid in conservative South Africa in the 1980’s, a collective youth voice has always remained omnipotent.

The cost of inaction in not educating and empowering youth far outweighs the cost of action. The long term potential human cost from right wing and nativist groups across Europe being emboldened by the Brexit move illustrate this point. While the Caribbean does not share this exact same dynamic, the fact remains that until seventy years ago a fragmented European continent was at war almost continuously for a thousand years. Any moves that result in a discord to the unity enjoyed by Europe over recent years will only help fuel ill-informed nationalistic groups, present in every European nation. These groups by their very nature frequently attract pliable young people and the disenfranchised seeking a populist cause often manifested in a myopic anti-immigration platform. It is from this platform in which they seek to vent and justify their call for isolationist policies and a homogenous society devoid of those from other cultures, ideals and backgrounds. This could have serious and direct implications for the Caribbean diaspora.

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BREXIT AND THE CARIBBEAN

Continued from Page 12

Lesson 3 – Respecting the Sovereignty of Member States

The issue of the sovereignty of Member States is always a touchy matter because at some point in every integration process – even when it is limited in scope – the process will necessitate a decision on whether or to what extent national priorities will prevail or yield to regional imperatives. And not every proposition may be a win-win.

How this is handled invariably revolves around the calibre of political will around the table. It takes leaders of exceptional vision to look beyond the immediate to the strategic and to invest their political capital in the decision. History has recorded such moments. It was demonstrated by Nelson Mandela when he decided to throw the support of his new Government behind the South African Springboks and the sport of Rugby – both endemic symbols of Afrikaner culture. By this singular act of courage he won over many Afrikaans to the rainbow nation. It was demonstrated in the OECS in the signing of the Treaty of Basseterre 35 years ago when leaders such as Maurice Bishop of revolutionary Grenada found common ground with an infinitely more conservative Eugenia Charles of Dominica. Despite deep differences, they were able to commit to a Treaty that has stood the test of time out of which institutions of demonstrable value have emerged.

In the Brexit scenario, Brussels was portrayed in some quarters as an overarching and overbearing supranational authority that trampled on the traditions and rights of national governments. Regional organizations such as the CARICOM Secretariat and the OECS Commission need to be mindful of such perceptions and to ensure that our way of working engages Member States in manner that is respectful of their differences. At the OECS Commission, the approach is to maintain an ongoing dialogue with national authorities and to shape the agenda jointly with execution being done through engagement of expertise within both Commission and Member States.

Lesson 4 – A Facilitating Role for the Commission

The fourth lesson is also related to the portrayal of the European Commission as an intrusive and imposing bureaucracy by the forces opposed to integration.

The OECS Commission has adopted a more facilitating role in its management of the integration agenda. The Councils of Ministers meet twice a year in face to face mode but have agreed to meet as often as is necessary via video conferencing. Working Groups involving experts from the respective portfolios in Member States meet as often as needed largely via video conferencing to prepare harmonized policy briefs, develop project proposals, and define specific collaboration actions. The OECS Commission in this context plays a facilitating role in convening these meetings but the agenda is constituted by all participants prior to the meeting.

By working synergistically with line ministry expertise both process and product are more acceptable to Member States.

Lesson 5 – The Four Freedoms are Indivisible

The fifth lesson is expressed in the warnings of the European leadership that the four freedoms on which the European Union is built are indivisible:

- Freedom of movement of people
- Free circulation of goods
- Free movement of capital
- Free movement of services.

This indivisibility makes it difficult for countries to “cherry pick” those elements that they deem more favourable to them while rejecting others. This challenge is also at the heart of the difficulties faced by the CSME and to a lesser extent the OECS Single Space. Big businesses welcome the opportunity for the free circulation of goods and capital because it gives them access to a much bigger demographic. In the case of the OECS, the Anglophone OECS is a demographic of 600,000 and with addition of Martinique that figure moves to 1 million. Free movement of goods and capital within such a market – in the context of the small states that constitute it – is a real boon to doing business. The free movement of people however is a different challenge as the same arguments are raised whether in Brexit or CSME – the coping ability of Member States for a large influx of persons from economically stressed parts of the union to another. Certainly the free movement of services is hampered without the free movement of people and it is the genuinely free movement of people that will ultimately create a regional mind-set. As more and more people travel to work, live and reside in different parts of the economic union, their mental geography changes and they begin to belong to all parts.

What has compounded the European situation has been the unusual wave of migration resulting from wars and instability in adjoining regions. In the case of the Caribbean, it can be argued that the prosperity and global “relevance” of countries such as (Antigua & Barbuda?), Sint Maarten and Cayman Islands is underpinned by their relatively large migrant populations.

Conclusion

As the drama of Brexit unfolds, it is imperative that we go deeper in our analysis of that experience for two reasons: firstly in order to better re-position ourselves and advance our interests/relationships and secondly in order to learn the lessons of the European experience to improve our own integration effort. From the OECS perspective, there is an additional political dynamic that must be brought to center stage and that is the consequence of Brexit for the British Overseas Territories. Brexit means that they will be losing their EU citizenship and access to all opportunities that emanate from the EU because of someone else’s decision (the British Electorate). The people of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, and Montserrat did not have a say in this decision and, given the extent of what is at stake here, it is incumbent on the OECS to stand in solidarity with these Member States in the assertion of their right to some self-determination on this question.

CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN NEWS

Commonwealth Secretary-General updated CARICOM leaders on priority concerns

Climate change, indebtedness, protecting migrant remittances and banking systems and the consequences of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on small and vulnerable economies were priority concerns for the Commonwealth Secretary-General while in Guyana for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Conference of Heads of Government.

Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said: "Twelve of the member countries sitting around the table at this meeting are Commonwealth members. This is where policies that affect the lives of people in the Caribbean are shaped, so this conference is an opportunity to work towards solutions in support of national development."

During her exchanges with governments and regional organisations such as the Caribbean Development Bank, she made available a Commonwealth policy paper which addressed the unintended consequences on the Caribbean's banking sector and migrant remittances of regulatory measures to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

She said: "We have a situation where financial institutions are reacting to these regulations by terminating or restricting business relationships with clients, or categories of clients, in order to avoid risk."

"It is a big concern for the finance ministers in the region I have spoken to, because it is making it increasingly difficult for local banks to operate effectively with international financial services.

"This form of 'de-risking' is also having a knock-on effect on the many people in the Caribbean who depend on remittances – money from their families and friends abroad."

"Commonwealth experts have come up with key solutions to these issues, which we hope Caribbean leaders will seriously consider. These include capacity-building for financial regulators in developing countries, setting high standards for money transfer businesses to help increase their legitimacy and reputation, and better guidance and standards for banks."

In addition, the Secretary-General discussed the piloting of a Commonwealth Multilateral Debt Swap for Climate Action Initiative, which will write off countries' debt in exchange for climate action.

She also highlighted progress made on the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, which was announced at the



Commonwealth Secretary-General Baroness Patricia Scotland

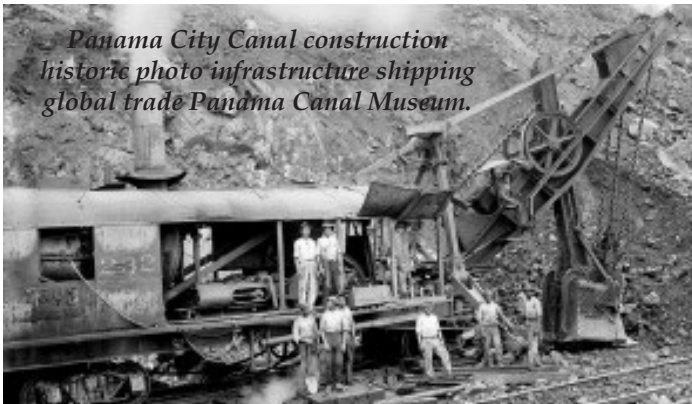
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting last year to help countries access funds to deal with climate change.

"We have already selected a pool of experts for the Climate Finance Access Hub and have requests from a number of Caribbean countries for support to benefit from the substantial funds already pledged for climate action, but which are challenging to access.

"This is part of a package of measures, following our effective advocacy at the climate change summit in Paris last year, to ensure that countries can urgently respond to this existential threat and honour commitments made at COP21," she said. (*Commonwealth Secretariat*)

CARIBBEAN IN WORLD HISTORY

Caribbean workers played vital role in the construction of Panama Canal



The extraordinary history and heritage associated with the construction of the Panama Canal has been recorded since the 19th century, through a magnificent collection of stamps, archival records and photographs, which have been inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register and are being shared with the world.

As Panama gets sets to inaugurate the expansion of this vital waterway on Sunday 29 June, the Director of the UNESCO Cluster Office in San Jose is hailing the extraordinary contributions of thousands of Caribbean laborers whose hard work paved the way for the expansion.

"The history behind this construction is compelling. We also take note of one aspect of the construction which is not often highlighted – the contributions of the laborers. Over one hundred thousand people journeyed to Panama to work on this project. Many of them never returned.

Fathers and mothers left their homelands and families behind in search of better opportunities. This movement of people had a significant impact on the Caribbean and Panamanian societies," Pilar Alvarez-Laso noted.

This documented collection entitled "Silver Men: West Indian Labourers at the Panama Canal," has been promoted by UNESCO through the Memory of the World Programme since 2011.

Its inscription was championed by Jamaica, St Lucia, Panama, Barbados, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The collection also highlights the recruiting process which was ultimately responsible, both directly and indirectly, for the extraordinary pattern of West Indian emigration – one of the most significant movements of voluntary migration to emerge during the post emancipation period after 1838.

The UNESCO official stressed that the inscription of this collection reaffirms the vital role of the Memory of the World Programme.

The vision of the Memory of the World Programme is that the world's documentary heritage belongs to all -- and should be fully preserved, protected and be permanently accessible to all without hindrance. (UNESCO)

Jamaican nurse honored in England as Greatest Black Briton



Mary Seacole was bestowed the title "Greatest Black Briton" for her selfless support of British soldiers.

A statue honoring Crimean War heroine Mary Seacole, the Jamaican-born nurse who cared for wounded British soldiers at a field hospital she independently set up in Crimea in the 19th century has been unveiled in London.

The statue fittingly stands in the garden of Saint Thomas' hospital on London's Southbank, and was unveiled by actress Baroness Floella Benjamin.

Seacole was named the Greatest Black Briton in a 2004 poll, but it took a 12-year campaign for the statue to come to fruition.

In that time more than £500,000 was raised in donations from thousands of supporters.

Chancellor George Osborne announced in November that £240,000 from LIBOR banking fines would be donated to the appeal to pay for installation.

Campaigners said the bronze statue, created by sculptor Martin Jennings, provides recognition of the contribution made by black and ethnic minority people throughout British history.

It is inscribed with words written in 1857 by The Times' Crimean War correspondent, Sir William Howard Russell: "I trust that England will not forget one who nursed her sick, who sought out her wounded to aid and succour them, and who performed the last offices for some of her illustrious dead."

Mary Seacole became known as "Mother Seacole" and, at the time, her reputation rivaled that of Florence Nightingale.

Lord Soley, chair of the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Appeal, said: "After 12 years of campaigning, we look forward to finally granting Mary Seacole the acknowledgement she deserves for her selfless support of British soldiers."

CARIBBEAN IN WORLD HISTORY

Bolivar declared by BBC:

'The Most Prominent 19th Century American'

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on July 5th celebrated the 205th Anniversary of the Final Declaration of its Independence, which officially formalized its freedom from colonial domination after more than three hundred years.

From July 5th, 1811, when the Act of the Declaration of Independence was signed and the first Constitution of Venezuela and South America was created, Venezuela was thrown into a bloody war for its liberation, ending - in the first instance - in 1821 with the Battle of Carabobo, and then ratified with the Naval Battle of Lake Maracaibo which occurred July 24, 1823.

In 1819, even without having consolidated the independence of Venezuela, Liberator Simón Bolívar created the Confederation of Gran Colombia, thus starting - from that moment - the struggle for the liberation of five other nations and an entire continent.

Bolívar's glory is not lost in the eight of all. We can read the arguments put forward by the BBC in choosing The Liberator Simón Bolívar as the most prominent 19th Century American.

- Only 47 years old, he fought 472 battles, being defeated only six times
- Bolívar participated in 79 major battles, with great risk of death in 25
- He rode 123,000 kilometers, more than what Columbus and Vasco da Gama sailed combined
- He was Head of State of five countries.
- He rode with the torch of freedom over a linear distance of 6,500 kilometers, covering 10 times more distance than Hannibal, three times more than Napoleon and twice than Alexander the Great
- His ideas on freedom were written in 92 proclamations and 2,632 letters, love letters and other documents, totalling more than 10,000 documents
- He led battles to free six countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela)

Bolívar's bust at Bideau Place - a fitting tribute to the long history of close ties between Saint Lucia and Venezuela, spanning over 200 years.



- He was the creator of the dream of integration of the Republic of the Gran Colombia (1819)
- The army that he commanded never conquered, it only liberated

On July 05th 2016, The Government and People of Venezuela reaffirmed their commitment to peace, solidarity and friendship with the sister nations of the world -- and especially those of Latin America and the Caribbean, with whom it shares common bonds.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS**OPINION**

Who better to sell Brexit than Boris?

— By Earl Bousquet —

It's difficult to decide whether British Prime Minister Theresa May's appointment of Boris Johnson as Britain's top diplomat was a tactical master stroke, or simply the most obvious thing to do.

Johnson has a long and forked tongue. He has insulted world leaders and heads of poor states alike. He stabbed his friend David Cameron so deep in the back that he lost his prime ministership. But he quite successfully led the Brexit revolt against Cameron in the Conservative Party and across the country -- and his campaign won big.

But for the former London Mayor Johnson himself having been back-stabbed by his own buddy friend, then Justice Secretary Michael Gove, Johnson would most likely have emerged as Cameron's successor. However, the party pulled the rug under Gove and backed Theresa May.

May backed both horses in the Brexit race -- and also had the best of both worlds. She quietly backed the Remain campaign originally, but also silently had a change of mind and backed the Leave camp in the end. Home Affairs Minister for six years, plus her identification with both sides, sold her as a safe pair of hands capable of guiding the ruling party back to unity.

Not elected by the people and having no intention to call a general election, Britain's second lady PM has also insisted,

from Day One, that she will honour the vote to exit the EU. But she would also now need the best person to sell the Brexit reasoning to the rest of the world -- and who better than Boris? After all, he led that campaign that not only deposed Cameron in also started the possible breakup of the United Kingdom -- and the EU itself. So, despite being back-stabbed by his bosom buddy, why let him off the hook by allowing him to slip himself into involuntary oblivion?

As the equivalent Foreign Minister of the U.K., Johnson will have to clean his tongue. Britain's new top diplomat will now have to find new words that probably never fit his vocabulary, but that's what diplomacy is about.

Putting Mr Brexit to sell the Brexit to the world could not have been widely expected in today's world when and where political norms and traditions are being turned on their heads by new electorates fired-up by things and in ways hitherto unknown or even thought of.

Johnson lost the chance to have headlines like "Boris vs Vladimir" that may have described furious verbal clashes with the Russian leader. But now in a position to stick his middle finger to the EU from London and in Brussels, no one -- apart from PM May -- can be more a winner from the Brexit vote than Johnson, the wannabe "Boris The Brussels Buster!"

(Responses welcome to embousquet@gmail.com or bousquetsbulletin@gmail.com)

Taiwan rejects controversial arbitration panel position on the South China Sea

The award rendered by the tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the South China Sea arbitration has been rejected as completely unacceptable to the government of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan.

A statement from the Foreign Liaison Office of the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs says the tribunal's decisions have no legally binding force on the ROC.

The statement outlined two reasons:

(1) In the text of the award, the ROC is referred to as "Taiwan Authority of China." This inappropriate designation is demeaning to the status of the ROC as a sovereign state. And

(2) Taiping Island was not originally included in the Philippines' submissions for arbitration. However, the tribunal took it upon itself to expand its authority, declaring ROC-governed

Taiping Island, and other features in the Nansha (Spratly) Islands occupied by Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia, all to be rocks that "do not generate an exclusive economic zone."

According to the official Taiwan statement, This decision severely jeopardizes the legal status of the South China Sea Islands, over which the ROC exercises sovereignty, and their relevant maritime rights.

Taiwan says, That the ROC is entitled to all rights in accordance with the International Law and the Law of the Sea over the South China Sea Islands and their relevant waters is beyond dispute.

It also notes that The arbitral tribunal did not formally invite the ROC to participate in its proceedings, nor did it solicit the ROC's views. Therefore, it concluded, the award has no legally binding force on the ROC.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Beijing insists on peaceful negotiations for settlement of South China Sea disputes

With a renewal of disputes between the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and some of its neighbours over islands the South China Sea, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs insists on using agreed mechanisms to settle disputes between neighbours, without external involvement or interference. Following is the full text of the official PRC position on related issues.

Islands and reefs of the South China Sea have been part of the Chinese territory since ancient times. China was the first to discover, name and exercise sustained, peaceful and effective jurisdiction of the relevant islands and reefs.

Since the 1970s, some countries have illegally occupied some of the China's Nansha islands and reefs. That is the root cause of the issue of the South China Sea.

China's position on issues concerning the South China Sea is consistent and clear-cut. We have all along been committed to peacefully settling the disputes through negotiations and consultations, to managing the disputes by establishing rules and mechanisms, to attaining a win-win scenario through joint development and cooperation, and to safeguarding freedom of navigation and over-flight, as well as peace and stability in the South China Sea region.

China supports and advocates the "dual-track" approach initiated by countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to handle the South China Sea issue. It means the disputes should be properly resolved through negotiations and consultations between the parties directly involved. The peace and stability in the South China Sea should be jointly maintained by China and the ASEAN countries. This approach is consistent with international law and practice. It is an important consensus reached and solemn commitment made by China and the ASEAN countries in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the most pragmatic and effective way of properly handling the issue of South China Sea at present.

II. The Philippines' unilateral initiation of the arbitration case in January 2013 violates their bilateral agreements with China, violates the agreement of the DOC, and violates Article 280 and Article 281 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). That is to say since China and the Philippines have made a clear choice of negotiation as the means to resolve relevant disputes, the third-party settle-

Leading international law experts said any verdict by the Arbitral Tribunal on the South China Sea will be of no legal validity, at a seminar on the South China Sea Arbitration and International Rule of Law in the Hague on June 26. [Photo by Fu Jing/chinadaily.com.cn]



ment mechanism in UNCLOS is not applicable. Furthermore, China has made, in accordance with Article 298 of UNCLOS, declaration on optional exceptions in 2006 excluding disputes concerning maritime delimitation (historical bays or titles, as well as military and law-enforcement activities) from such compulsory dispute-settlement procedures as arbitration. Therefore, the Arbitration Tribunal has no jurisdiction over the disputes between China and the Philippines. China refuses to accept or join any arbitration and will not acknowledge adjudication.

III. Freedom of navigation and over-flight in the South China Sea enjoyed by all countries in accordance with international law has never been a problem, and will not be affected by China's construction on some islands and reefs in the South China Sea, which will not devastate the ecological environment in the relevant region. China's construction in the South China Sea is within China's sovereign rights. Its activities are lawful, reasonable and justified and do not target any other country. China is firmly against militarization of the South China Sea or interference by any external force.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Taiwan apologized and kept neighbours updated after accidental domestic missile incident

The ROC government has kept neighboring countries informed regarding the accidental launch of an anti-ship missile on the morning of July 1 by a navy corvette in the southern port of Kaohsiung.

The Hsiung Feng III missile passed through a Taiwanese fishing boat without exploding, killing the Taiwanese captain and injuring three crew members, including a Filipino and a Vietnamese. The boat, the Xiang Li Sheng, was about 40 nautical miles away, between Taiwan proper and the outlying county of Penghu. The missile then went into the sea, without crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait.

President Tsai Ing-wen has expressed her condolences to the family of the captain and apologized to those injured. "The government takes full responsibility and all related agencies will assist the families in seeking compensation," she said.

The government notified neighboring countries July 1, making it clear that the incident was a result of human error during a ship's training drill. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Manila Economic and Cultural Office and the Vietnam Economic-Culture Of-

fice in Taipei that a Filipino and a Vietnamese crew member aboard the Xiang Li Sheng had been hurt. MOFA also directed its representative offices in the Philippines and Vietnam to express the government's sympathies to the families of the injured crew members.

The ministry also notified the American Institute in Taiwan, as well as the Singapore Trade Office in Taipei. The Mainland Affairs Council informed Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office, while the Straits Exchange Foundation simultaneously advised mainland China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits of the incident. Japan was also later informed.

MOFA stresses that the incident occurred accidentally, due to human error in a ship's training drill, and has no bearing on ROC cross-strait or diplomatic policy; that the ROC commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the region has not changed; and that the ROC will provide a comprehensive account of the incident following further investigation, to prevent any misunderstanding. ROC overseas missions in countries in the region have been instructed to explain this position to host governments. (ROC)

Philippines President encourages police and vigilantes to execute drug addicts

— By Laura Bult, New York Daily News —

It's a war on drug addicts

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, nicknamed "The Punisher," has called for the executions of drug users as the latest measure in his unmerciful efforts to cut down crime.

"These sons of whores are destroying our children," Duterte said earlier this month in a profanity-ridden speech in front of a crowd of 500 at a Manila slum, the Guardian reported.

"If you know of any addicts, go ahead and kill them yourself as getting their parents to do it would be too painful," he said.

Duterte, who has been called the "Trump" of the Philippines for his penchant for profanity, announced his severe crime-fighting measures a day after he was sworn in as president on June 30 with a promise that 100,000 would die in his war on drugs.

Before he was president, he was known for cleaning up crime in the Filipino city of Davao, known as the "murder capitol," where he was the mayor for more than two decades.

Within the first week of Duterte's presidency, at least 72 suspected drug dealers were killed by police and vigilante groups in extrajudicial executions, according to a "Kill List" compiled by the Philippine Inquirer.

The latest casualty was the death of Ariel Pitong Unay, a former



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was sworn in as the Philippines' 16th president on a severe crime-fighting platform.

Army officer and "top drug personality" in the northern town of Catarma, who was killed during a police buy-bust operation, the Inquirer reported.

Another suspected dealer was killed in Manila last week and left in the street with packing tape over his face and a cardboard sign that read "I'm a pusher" covering his chest.

The murders came after Duterte, 71, issued shoot-to-kill orders to security services, offered bounties for the bodies of drug traffickers and promised he would dump enough corpses in Manila Bay to "fatten all the fish there," the Guardian reported.

At least, 952 confessed drug users and pushers have surrendered fearing for their lives, PhilStar reported. The spate of state-sanctioned killings has caused outrage among human rights groups, including human rights lawyer Jose Manuel Diokno, the national chairman of the Free Legal Assistance Group, who called the deaths a "nuclear explosion of violence."

"Do we really want to give the man with the gun the power to judge who are criminals and to kill them? To decide who is bad and who is good, who deserves to live and who deserves to die?" he wrote in a blog post for the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. Human Rights Watch echoed Diokno's concerns, calling for an investigation into the surge of killings.

"Human Rights Watch is concerned that President Duterte's electoral platform, which included repeated promises to kill those deemed to be criminals and drug dealers, may be interpreted by some as a legitimization of the unlawful concept of extrajudicial killings as an acceptable approach to crime control," said Phelim Kine, the group's Asia deputy director.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Nice massacre victims mourned as French investigators search for motive

Suspect Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel had no obvious links to radical Islam, says Paris prosecutor

French investigators are scrambling to establish why a 31-year-old French-Tunisian with no obvious links to terror groups or radicals rented a 19-tonne truck and killed at least 84 people, including 10 children, on the seafront in Nice, in France's third massacre of civilians in 18 months.

Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, a chauffeur and a petty criminal who lived in the Riviera city, accelerated the heavy goods vehicle through thick crowds for more than a mile along a beachfront esplanade on Thursday night, turning a Bastille Day festival of fireworks and families into carnage before police shot him dead.

In all, 202 people were injured, 80 of them critically, and the death toll is expected to rise. About 50 children were injured, many of them young, many of them seriously. No European attack in recent years has taken such a heavy toll on preteens. France will start three days of mourning on Saturday.

The French president, François Hollande, extended for another three months the state of emergency imposed after last November's Paris attacks, and flew to the scene of Thursday's massacre.

"We are facing a long battle because we have an enemy who will continue to hate all the people who enjoy liberty," said Hollande, who is coming under increasing pressure to take more decisive action to defend France from its gravest security crisis since 1945. "The whole of France is facing the threat of Islamist terrorism," he added.

But according to François Molins, the Paris prosecutor leading the investigation, the perpetrator, pinpointed by identity documents found in the truck, had no obvious links to radical Islam.

Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was "totally unknown to intelligence services ... and was never flagged for signs of radicalisation", Molins said.

Molins said the perpetrator was known to police for a series of minor fracas over the past six years, including one violent altercation with another motorist earlier this year for which he received a suspended sentence.

The prosecutor said that although no group had claimed the attack, "this sort of thing fits in perfectly with calls for murder from such terrorist organisations". He noted there were two Kalashnikov rifles, bullets and a grenade in the cab of truck, where the driver was shot dead by police.

Locals from the area of Nice where Lahouaiej-Bouhlel lived said he did not seem religious and did not go to the mosque.

The attack began shortly before 11pm on Thursday when the truck somehow gained access to the Promenade des Anglais and began mowing into bystanders and revellers, who had gathered to watch Bastille Day fireworks. Officials said the driver weaved



People gather in front of a memorial on the Promenade des Anglais for the victims of the Bastille Day attack. Photograph: Ian Langsdon

along the road, knocking people down "like skittles", for at least 2km (1.2 miles).

Witnesses said people pushed each other out of the way, jumped down to the beach and even ran into the sea to avoid the vehicle. Others described victims being hurled around like mannequins, bodies littering the esplanade in the wake of the zigzagging truck.

A local official said the vehicle was only brought to a stop by the heroics of a person who tried to jump on to its front. The driver then opened fire before police killed him with a volley of shots through the windscreen.

Most of the dead were French, but there were also at least three Germans, two Americans and one Russian national, as well as Tunisians and Algerians. A number of Britons were also caught up in the attack.

World leaders were sympathetic in their responses. Barack Obama, Angela Merkel and the new British prime minister, Theresa May, all spoke with Hollande to convey condolences. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, sent a message to Hollande, saying: "We have sympathy for and solidarity with the French people".

Religious and political leaders across the Muslim and Arab world condemned the attacker. He committed an act of "extreme cowardice", the Tunisian government said in a statement. The hashtag #PrayforNice trended worldwide on social media.

Solidarity rallies were announced in at least a dozen French towns and cities for the weekend, and a mass for the victims was held in Nice Cathedral on Friday evening. The mood in the city was one of anger rather than despair. (*The Guardian*)