

**VISIT OF THE BERMUDA INDEPENDENCE COMMISSION
TO NEW YORK (the U.N.)**

I FEBRUARY 17, 2005: (SEE ATTACHED SCHEDULES):

A. 10:30 a.m.: Opening (1st Meeting) Session of the SC-24:-

The BIC delegation had the honour and privilege of witnessing the elections and deliberations of the Decolonization Committee or SC-24 which returned His Excellency Dr. Julian Hunte of St. Lucia as Chairman.

The BIC delegation sat behind Mr. Simon Williams of the office of the U.K. mission to the U.N. whose office under Deputy Permanent Representative, Ambassador Aslam Thompson, facilitated in its entirety, the BIC's visit to the U.N. The Chairman of the SC-24 personally and warmly welcomed the Chairman of the BIC and his delegation to the meeting. Other countries, notably Dominica, Bolivia, Cuba, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Fiji and Papua-New Guinea added their welcoming remarks. The Chairman also invited all of the members present to join his SC-24 in informal consultations with the BIC delegation at 10:00 a.m., February 18, 2005 in Conference Room 8, U.N.

B. 1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.:

Mr. Simon Williams entertained the BIC delegation at a lunch at a scenic U.N. dining room where he discussed, amongst other matters, the functions of the various organizations and agencies of the U.N. This luncheon was followed by a tour of the Security Council and General Assembly Chambers which, of course, invited further discussion in respect of the utility of these U.N. organs.

C. 3:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.: U.N. Secretariat Decolonization Team:

Ms. Tamara Pozdnyakova, Senior Political Affairs Officer of the Secretariat of the Decolonization Unit of the U.N. entertained a visit by the BIC delegation with a five (5) member team of this Unit- Maria D. Maldonado, Chief, Decolonization Unit, Department of Political Affairs; Lone Jessen, Political Affairs Office, Decolonization Unit, DPA; Scott Smith, Political Affairs Office, Electoral Assistance Divisions, DPA and Irma Lacey, Programme Assistant, on a number of issues concerning Decolonization, the purpose of the BIC, the function, purpose and mandate of the SC-24, Resolutions 1541, 1514 etc. and the SC-24's timetable for 2005.

The BIC delegation discussed various pertinent issues concerning Bermuda's position and reactions to the issue of Independence, referenda, General Elections or indeed a visit or visits by the SC-24 to Bermuda for March and May 2005.

This unit formally answered many of the questions (see attached) posed by the BIC prior to the BIC's visit. The Unit clarified a number of issues arising out of the dialogue generated by the BIC's visit as well.

Finally, the Unit supplied the BIC delegation with a great quantity of documentation and literature on the process, procedure, philosophy and options open to non-self-governing territories on the issue of integration, free association or Independence. The Unit said it stood ready, willing and able to assist the BIC in respect of any relevant information or documentation it may require. The meeting then adjourned.

II FEBRUARY 18, 2005: (SEE ATTACHED SCHEDULE):

A. Meetings with C-24, including Chairman, Julian Hunte, St. Lucia, Conference Room 8, U.N. – (St. Lucia Mission (1-212-697-9360))

Once again the BIC delegation was warmly and respectfully received; even commended on the noble and daunting task it had undertaken.

The Chairman of BIC was asked the address the SC-24.

The Chairman of the SC-24 took the view, which was echoed by other distinguished ambassadors present, that the BIC and Bermuda were tackling the issue of Independence in the correct manner by educating its population first and giving Bermudians themselves a chance to make the choice of maintaining the STATUS QUO by remaining as they are OR transitioning to Independence.

Issues discussed ranged over the three (3) options under Resolution 1541 i.e. full integration with the administering power (U.K.), free association (associate statehood) with the U.K. or another Independent Country or full Independence.

It was pointed out by the BIC delegation that Bermuda only had two (2) choices left to it, one of which was not under Resolution 1541, that is, the STATUS QUO or full Independence since the

U.K. had rejected full integration of Bermuda into the U.K. along the French model for Guadeloupe, Martinique, Tahiti, etc. or indeed the Aruba model with the Netherlands which is essentially the U.K. equivalent constitutionally, of Associate Statehood. On the issue of the remaining option, Independence, the U.K. had adopted a “fence-sitting posture” in saying that it would not force any of its dependencies to Independence nor stand in the way of any Overseas Territories transitioning to Independence after a “clearly and constitutionally expressed wish” of the people to do so. This expressed wish would have to be APPROVED by the Westminster Parliament in the U.K. before a GRANT of Independence to the given Overseas Territories (O.T.) would be GIVEN by the U.K. Government. It was revealed at this meeting, and in the meeting with the Decolonization Unit, that under resolutions 1514 and 1541 to name two, that the U.K. could not take such a “fence-sitting position” and were under an obligation and duty to be more proactive by informing the SC-24 (which reported to the General Assembly) of the PROGRESS of a given OT’s ‘readiness for Independence’ or one of the three (3) options under resolution 1541. Ambassadors from Dominica, Jamaica, Papua-New Guinea, Bolivia, Cuba, the Congo and Syria spoke to these issues and said that in the final analysis, the direction that the country would eventually go should be left to be determined or decided by the people at the ballot box. They are the ones to determine the OUTCOME one way or the other, i.e. STATUS QUO or INDEPENDENCE, after being educated on the PROS and CONS of EITHER choice or option. The ambassador from Papua-New Guinea said the ‘grass is not always greener on the other side’ and the people should have all of the information at their disposal, “ultimately it is the will of the people themselves who must make a CONSCIOUS and INFORMED choice on the available OPTIONS. He believed the present PROCESS of education underway presently in BERMUDA is the PROPER one”.

The consensus of the meeting was that the SC-24 would gladly participate in the educational process underway in Bermuda and would indeed work through ‘moral suasion’ with the administering power, the U.K. in whatever option or direction of self-determination the Bermuda Government and its people wished.

On the issue of the SC-24 coming to Bermuda, the Chairman said the former SC-24 Chairman was disappointed that the Bermuda Government had rejected its offer late in 2004 to visit Bermuda and hold its Annual Regional Seminars in May 2005 and had now made arrangements with St. Vincent and Grenadines which has graciously consented to HOSTING these Seminars.

Notwithstanding that, the Chairman said he will put the matter to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and to the Decolonization Unit, which handles these matters, on this coming Thursday, February 24, 2005 to see if the SC-24 could accommodate the BIC and Bermuda for March and May 2005. Perhaps the SC-24 can send a “visiting mission” with some features of a larger ‘regional seminar’ included.

Firstly, however, the SC-24 would have to receive a letter primarily from the Bermuda Government REQUESTING our presence with the CONCURRENCE of the administering power, the U.K., and perhaps a formal letter from the BIC Chairman on behalf of the BIC. These letters would have to be received expeditiously because of the short time-frame.

On an invitation by the Chairman of the SC-24, the representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) said that he would be very pleased to participate in the activities of the BIC. He noted that all issues as they pertain to Bermuda are handled in UNDP’s office in Jamaica. The UNDP (which deals with UNESCO, FAO, etc.) would be glad to be a part of any ‘mission’ to Bermuda. The UNDP reports indirectly and directly to the General Assembly, a body of one hundred and ninety-one (191) Nations.

Lastly, on the economy of Bermuda, it was expressed by the Chairman of BIC, Commissioner David Rowntree and government liaison and constitutional lawyer, Mr. Philip Perinchief, that BOTH tourism and the international companies would not likely be adversely affected by a transition to Independence as long as Bermuda continued to enjoy a stable POLITICAL and SOCIAL environment with the prevailing economic prosperity and status quo maintained. The SC-24 concurred. The expressions referred to above were in response to the issue of the expected ‘scaremongering and tactics’ employed by the protagonists of constitutional change or Independence experienced almost everywhere where such change had been contemplated.

The meeting ended at approximately 1:00 p.m.

B. AMBASSADORIAL MEETINGS:

- 1) BAHAMAS: (2:00 p.m.) —→ Dominica (IN LIEU):

Bahamas unfortunately had to cancel because of a competing and clashing SCHEDULE. The BIC delegation was nevertheless able to meet with the ambassador from the Republic (non-executive) of

Dominica who graciously fielded our questions (which were not PRIOR received).

These questions ranged over the cost of Dominica's Foreign Affairs Ministry, its constitutional transition from a colony to a republic, the benefits and challenges of transitioning to Independence and any academics, historians he could provide to assist the BIC in its quest to gather current, accurate and relevant information for the people of Bermuda.

The ambassador explained that Dominica was a poor country but Independence did not bring that about as it was poor under the U.K. It had a per capita of approximately \$9,000.00 (U.S.) but, although struggling, it was making progress. It had missions in major places (UK, Amsterdam, N.Zealand, Canada, Singapore) where it had TRADE RELATIONS for its sugar, etc. but was able to cut COSTS of these missions by SHARING with other Caribbean Independent countries. Dominica is helped greatly by its association with the Commonwealth Secretariat (70%) in the U.K. and the U.N. with these two organizations various development programs. Dominica is a signatory to all the Treaties that affects it; is a member of CARICOM and other regional organizations that advances its interests. It also has defence and security pacts through these organizations and the U.N. Its passport is also RECOGNISED INTERNATIONALLY as a result of these affiliations. Dominica has a population of approximately 70,000 people. It is much larger than Bermuda in square kilometers (305)

- 2) ST. KITTS & NEVIS: (2:45 p.m.)
Ambassador Joseph Christmas, Permanent Representative

This ambassador had similar questions posed to him and answered in much the same vein EXCEPT he said St. Kitts & Nevis moved from Independence to a Constitutional Monarchy (with the Queen as Head of State) rather than a REPUBLIC because the Government didn't want to go 'too fast' for the people at the time. But because of what is happening in other parts of the Caribbean (Barbados and Jamaica for example) St. Kitts & Nevis may look at a Republic soon. Nevis was reviewing their position with St. Kitts desiring to become independent of them.

St. Kitts and Nevis had a mission of Foreign Affairs in Washington DC (shared with other Caribbean and African countries) where it dealt with its affairs with the U.S.A. embassy and the O.A.S. (Organization of American States) which involved St. Kitts & Nevis in regional matters of mutual interest, mostly trade, defence and

immigration. There is internal and regional defence. In some places St. Kitts & Nevis cut costs by having Honorary Consuls,” who are not in short supply since they obtain a passport from us and they see to our trade and visa relations e.g.: in Miami and the West Coast of U.S.A. I don’t know how much our Ministry of Foreign & External Affairs costs but I can find out for you if you write to me.” Passport design not changed but is outsourced to the UK. Possible contact person for visit is Dr. Timothy Harris.

- 3) U.K. MISSION to the U.N. Ambassador Adam Thompson, Deputy Permanent Representative (3:15 p.m.)

The Ambassador was asked questions about the U.K.’s position on resolution 1541 in particular (the 3 options) and the perception by the BIC delegation that the U.K. is “fence-sitting” on the issue assisting Bermuda in respect of these 3 options, two of which appear to be ‘out of reach’ of Bermuda, i.e. full integration with the U.K. or free-association (Associate Statehood).

The Ambassador said he was not as aware of these matters as he should be and that Simon Williams (who was present) of his offices would be better placed to answer these questions. Simon restated the “fence-sitting” position and said that the U.K. (although one of the authors of resolution 1541, it disagreed with some parts of it and voted against it) thought there were other options than the three (3) presented in resolution 1541. When asked what were these other OPTIONS for Constitutional change, Simon said the U.K. never articulated them so he doesn’t know. Nevertheless, the U.K., in his view, would be supportive of any constitutional change Bermuda wanted to make.

Ambassador Thompson said that his officers had a good relationship with the SC-24 and would be ready to help in whatever direction Bermuda wanted to go. He informed the BIC delegation that a part of his role at the U.N. was to look out after Bermuda’s interests. With respect to the ‘policy’ as that relates to self-determination for Bermuda, the BIC should address such questions to the FCO in the U.K.

- 4) TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: - Ambassador, Philip Sealey, Permanent Representative (3:30 p.m.)

Trinidad decided to go from a colony straight to a non-executive REPUBLIC because of strong reaction against the U.K.

Trinidad has EXTENSIVE missions in the Caribbean, Caracas (Venezuela), London, Ottawa, Toronto, Washington DC, New York, Miami, Brussels, Nigeria, New Delhi, etc. to look after its trade and resident affairs. Ambassador Sealey's view was that you had to 'spend money to make money' and that on balance the COST of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was worth it. There were many INTANGIBLE benefits of running your own affairs which were NOT amenable to MONETARY QUANTIFICATION. Majority of the treaties previously held with UK maintained.

Ambassador Sealey's view was that RACE RELATIONS between the Indian and African Communities in Trinidad were always problematic but have IMPROVED since Independence as both groups have begun to think of themselves as TRINIDADIANs having a common destiny and stake in Trinidad's success and not as solely AFRO or INDO-TRINIDADIANs as TRINIDAD progresses CONSTITUTIONALLY and economically.

No, he could not see Trinidadians wanting to go back to a DEPENDENT existence constitutionally or going to an EXECUTIVE REPUBLIC like its neighbour GUYANA anytime in the foreseeable future.

- 5) TIMOR-LESTE (EAST TIMOR): - Ambassador Jose Luis Guterres, permanent Representative_(4:15 p.m.)

Timor-Leste had a difficult history. Colonised for many years by Portugal. Upon throwing off the Portuguese in 1974, by 1975 Indonesia invaded and occupied Timor-Leste decimating and pillaging the country (85% of the infrastructure was destroyed). Timor-Leste is very poor, has over seven (7) different languages and one or two schools. However, the U.N. is assisting it in reconstructing and since which there has been an upward trend in economics (gas & oil) and other areas. They believe Bermuda can be of some assistance in helping it establish international companies etc.

No, Timor-Leste is happy to be the worlds NEWEST Independent Country (2-1/2 years) and has established Missions in Portugal, Indonesia, China, S. Africa, Washington, New York, and other neighbouring countries. It hopes to establish a mission in London, U.K. soon and Brussels as a gateway into Europe. A defence study was performed by the RC of Defence - London. Passports were printed in Thailand. They have population of 960,000.

- 6) BARBADOS: - Ambassador Charles Chesterfield Burnett, Deputy Permanent Representative (5:00 p.m.)

Barbados came out of a failed federation of West Indian Islands in the late 60's and when individual Islands had to 'go it alone' or remain dependent on the U.K, Barbados chose to go alone.

Barbados in 1966, had division amongst the people on going Independent. After a while both the Government and the Opposition met. After this meeting there was no dispute on going INDEPENDENT from the U.K. but the Opposition wanted to go with a federation of smaller Eastern Caribbean countries and the Government wanted Barbados to go on its own. Today, Barbados is exploring moving from a Constitutional Monarchy (where the Queen is the Head of State) to a non-executive REPUBLIC (where a Barbadian national is the President or Head of State). The Government believes that the country is moving away from wanting DIRECT constitutional ties with the U.K. or CROWN, but wishes to remain within the Commonwealth because of the many political, diplomatic and economic benefits this relationship permits.

Barbados has approximately 13 missions in its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It set up its first one at the U.N. (New York) on the 30th November 1966; in December 1966 it established its missions to the U.N. Many of our 'missions' came out of a "consular mission culture" whereby even before they went Independent, they had smaller offices (Tourism etc.) in cities looking after their affairs. Because of the large numbers of their citizens in the U.K., Canada and U.S.A., they have a High Commission in the U.K., a Permanent Mission to the U.N., diplomatic presence in Washington DC and Consulate-Generals in Ottawa, Toronto, Miami, New York, Latin America (Caracas), Geneva and Brussels to look after their commercial interests, oil imports, residents visas etc. and other consular matters. "Caracas offers us a gateway into Latin America, Geneva for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Brussels because of the potential markets for our exports and negotiations on trade generally in a united Europe. In fact, we are presently considering talks with Nigeria and South Africa with a view to expanding trade in that direction which may entail us establishing High Commissions in those places."

The present COST of Barbados Ministry of Foreign Affairs is between \$5 – 6 million (US) dollars. "The BENEFITS are difficult to quantify on an annual basis because such benefits are sometimes UNQUANTIFIABLE. I mean how can you QUANTIFY benefits that

FLOW to your country over a long period of time as a result of your trade agreements which are longer than a year in duration? One thing is clear, we in Barbados believe the benefits of having a MFA far outweigh the COST of \$5 – 6 million (US) dollars a year.”

“Well yeah, we think our race relations are good in Barbados. Even better today than when we were not Independent.”

- 7) JAMAICA: Ambassador Norman Taylor Roberts, Deputy Permanent Representative and Janice Miller, Counselor, Permanent (5:30 p.m.)

The Independence movement in Jamaica was over a period in time – a PROCESS. A large number of people were saying it wouldn't work. Our economy will go down; our dollar would be worth nothing. We don't know what we are doing and Independence would fail. Who is going to defend us etc. etc. etc.

So Jamaica decided to have discussions in schools, clubs and in the community to explain to people what Independence means. They had a NATIONAL discussion.

No, Jamaica's economy or dollar did not go down or Jamaica did not become poor as a result of Independence. We are better today. Our difficulties in our economy are a DIRECT result of our COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS and TRADE RELATIONS with the U.K. being LOCKED into the PRICES that the U.K. said we MUST pay BEFORE we went Independent. The U.K. was our ONLY market and made agreements that Jamaica could not sell its exports to ANY other country but the U.K. and put up HIGH IMPORT tariffs etc. on some of our goods. This COST us greatly financially and we are still recovering from the effects of that.

However, we also suffered from the fact that we:

- a) Set our EXPECTATIONS too high at first
- b) Had an over-enthusiastic leadership
- c) Got rid of our multi-national organizations too quickly. Should have phased out ones that were NOT helpful to our economy.

But, we also have had some successes of late, too. We successfully negotiated with Cable and Wireless to lower its very high (monopolistic) telecommunication rates which is important for the development of our economy. Key to our movement to Independence was EDUCATION and KNOWLEDGE. It seems the

more people understood what Independence was all about the more they wanted it. But it was difficult at the beginning because of the negative comments.

Our FOREIGN AFFAIRS and DEFENCE was phased in. Our first mission was in London and our SECURITY was with the U.K. for a while until we joined other alliances and the U.N. in a 'phased-in' move until we are now completely free of the U.K. although we still have a good relationship there. We have a LARGE number of Jamaican nationals in the U.K., you see.

We decided to move from a Colony to a Constitutional Monarchy at the people's pace. But now there is TALK of a non-executive REPUBLIC for Jamaica, within the Commonwealth.

Report adopted and signed on behalf of BIC

Bishop Vernon G. Lambe Sr.
Chairman