HAPPY NEW YEAR 2012 TO ALL OUR READERS

FROM DECEMBER 2006 TO DECEMBER 2011 – FIVE YEARS OF DAYCLEAN GLOBAL!

This month December 2011, marks the 5th anniversary of Dayclean Global. Conceived as an online publication designed to upkeep and promote contact and dialogue between the diaspora and Guyanese at home it has been promoting those goals for five years and its readership is growing. Dayclean Global will continue on a bi-monthly basis into the future.

The editorial of the first issue in December 2006 said the following:

“This Dayclean Global effort then is one accomplished with little technical skills and without any editorial support and the format reflects this– but should be seen as a challenge. In other words we might be able to do the necessary and revive the spirit among us. One of the key tools in this effort is the ability to discuss and hear other folks out within the WPA ‘community’ at home and abroad. The effort hopefully allows for medium of communication other than letters to the editor of Stabroek and Kaieteur News but discussion among us on the critical issues of the day. While race and the debates on electoral politics will naturally accompany any critical discussion on Guyana it is also essential that we extend our humanity to the massive and crippling economic, psychological, and physical blows that the working people of Guyana face in their daily lives.”

TRANSITIONS

DAYCLEAN GLOBAL offers its sympathy and solidarity on the recent deaths of political activists Sheila Holder (Alliance For Change) Everall Franklin (Guyana Action Party).

Solidarity is also extended to Kwayana family on the passing of Pastor Terrence Evanson Kwayana of Buxton, a younger sibling of Eusi Kwayana.
WPA REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT AND REGIONAL COUNCILS IN THE PARTNERSHIP (APNU)

Rupert Roopnaraine MP
Desmond Trotman MP

Region #2 (Pomeroon-Supenaam) RDC (Regional Democratic Council) list Mr. Wazeer Latiff of the WPA
Region # 4 (Demerara-Mahaica) RDC Deon Abrams and Ali Majeed
Region# 6 (East Berbice-Corentyne) RDC Poonai
Region #10 (Upper-Demerara-Berbice) RDC Stanley Humphrey Collins

Images from the APNU campaign
Rupert Roopnaraine of APNU greets crowd at a public meeting

Rupert Roopnaraine and David Hinds on the campaign trail for APNU

David Hinds explaining the right to march to a police officer
Dear Editor,

At 12.54 am today, November 21, I finished reading a statement by Minister Robert Persaud, a young star of the People’s Progressive Party and its Civic partner in the PPP’s token version of a government of national unity.

I cannot hold Mr Robert Persaud, rather, young Brother Robert Persaud, responsible for a record of experiences he did not live through. Youth has its own big advantages. First-hand experience of the past is not one of them. Older people do better there.

Brother Persaud has chosen to apply a single test to the issue of loyalty to the outstanding servant of the people, the late Dr Walter Rodney.

Minister Persaud seems to accept an outlook on things that makes him think that organisations remain what they had been fifty years earlier. This, by popular testimony, is not true of the PPP, which has gone through changes of leading personnel, of behaviour, of values and of policy. Then there is the outcry against its glittering life-style. It seems to be Brother Robert Persaud’s conviction that the PNC has remained static in the things I have listed. I think I am most vigilant and cautious about the PNC, because of its well-known record of governmental excesses. Yet I hope I am not so daft as it assume that it has remained the same, unlike the PPP.

The advice to the WPA to keep out of PPP areas, “because they are organized and have education” is not a piece of fiction. I am one of the persons who received this advice. It followed a conference at NAACIE of many groups including the WPA to consider the PPP’s proposal for a National Patriotic Front. And this was in spite of the experience of Arnold Rampersaud of the PPP. Did the WPA accuse the PPP of betraying anyone? It was the late B H Benn who condemned the PPP’s move. Later he could become a High Commissioner of the PPP government.

The NPF conference and the PPP and the WPA agreed on number of district conferences to promote the proposals. The WPA drew up a schedule of proposed meetings which were spread out in PPP and PNC strongholds or, centres of support. It was at that time, long before the assassination of Rodney, while Rodney was active and ready, that the PPP knowingly and firmly took that position. “Spend your time in PNC areas.” One conference was held at Buxton-Annandale and no other took place, as the WPA did not agree with the PPP’s wish to keep out of its strongholds. Later things changed. That is number one.
Secondly, the PPP held, proposed and engaged and dreamed of unity with the People’s National Congress before and after the assassination of Darke, Dublin, Ohene and Walter Rodney. The PPP proposed the NPF in 1977 when no state killing had taken place. It then entered bodily and with documents and conditions, into talks for a national government in 1985, five years after Rodney had been removed.

The PPP has political divinity. It sprinkled political holy water from the Cup on those talks and made the sign of the sickle, and all became clean. It hid the 1985 talks from the party of Walter Rodney. Some think it was because it wanted a “piece of the action.” I think it wanted to act in defence of Guyana against external enemies. We in the WPA also felt the need but would have made our stand, if it became necessary, outside of government. On occasion we did so.

The PPP has always judged people and things according to its own interests and desires. Now, I am “Brother Eusi Kwayana.” A year ago in the Guyana Chronicle I was guilty of ethnic cleansing and a life of luxury. Letters disagreeing were not published. Brother Robert claims that I was a lone voice against the post-2001 madness. I was not. So was the same David Hinds, now turned enemy. And who was it that made the famous rebuke of violence, “Not in my name”? A small, strong woman named Andaiye. Does Brother Robert Persaud see how strong the temptation is to revise things? Or shall I continue?

When some gunmen in Europe planned to take over the world, they relied on the “law” that some powers would never join with the Soviet Union in defence, and the Soviet Union would not join with certain powers. Those hostile powers joined against the gunmen of Europe. That is how the present rulers were able to go to school in the USSR.

I have been absent from home, but that is my problem. In Guyana the government has made the country a hell for the majority, and a bawdy house for the corruptly rich minority. In the ’50s the late Keith Carter reminded us of a duty. In his words, not original, but timely, “I place my country before my party.”

The PPP as well as the PNC may well have had those words and that duty in mind when it gave critical support, when it proposed the 1977 NPF and when it joined in secret talks in 1985.

So what?

Brother Robert Persaud does not seem to think that assassination results in death. For my part if a change of word could make the PNC support the call of an investigation into the killing of Walter Rodney, let the change be made. We shall know in time whether the PPP’s abstaining on that word removes its commitment to an enquiry, and whether those who voted for it were in fact abstaining.

For the past 55 years, Guyana has been torn apart against itself. All communal or racial conflict has been carried out in support of one or more of three parties, the United Force being the third. Why import a water cannon when the bulk of the country has no fire
service? To give the conflict a chance to begin to end it, why not try, for the first time, a
government of national unity, of all social forces? The old order is falling apart. Peace!
Shanti! Salaam! Umoja na Kazi (unity and work)

Yours faithfully,
Eusi Kwayana

David Granger says committed to inquiry into claims of wrongdoing, rigged elections

By Stabroek staff  |  SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2011

APNU’s presidential candidate David Granger says that a government led by him will not be “afraid of investigating anything”—including allegations of rigged elections during the 28-year rule of the PNC.

“I do feel that, and I have committed myself to convening a Commission of Inquiry into any allegations of wrongdoing,” Granger said in a recent interview with this newspaper. “If there were allegations about the conduct of elections, I will inquire into all of the elections up to 2006; from 1968 to 2006, all of them. I’m not afraid of investigating anything,” he stressed. “I have nothing to fear. I have nothing to hide,” he added. Granger had been asked whether as the former PNCR presidential candidate he felt the PNC had anything to apologize for during its time in office.

Granger, 66, said he would investigate any wrongdoing or any allegation of wrongdoing on the part of any government of Guyana including the death of former leader of the Working People’s Alliance (WPA) Walter Rodney. He is also keen to have an investigation into the murders of all those who died during the crime spree between 2002 and 2008. “I know it is important because families want answers,” he said. “So it is a commitment, I don’t have to be prodded into doing that. We are going to do that because the country was badly divided and if we are to achieve a high level of national unity answers have to be provided to those events,” he told Stabroek News. As president, he said, he would not only investigate all these issues but promised that were persons found culpable of committing crimes they would face the courts.
“It has now been accepted in several countries, particularly those... traumatized by violence that some form of reconciliation [must] be made,” he said, when asked how important these inquiries are to the nation as a whole.

Meanwhile, questioned about the continued allegations he faces from the government about his involvement in the shooting to death of two PPP activists at Number 64 Village Polling Station during the elections of 1973, he said that at some stage he may resort to legal advice to see how to stop these allegations. The allegations were first made by President Bharrat Jagdeo earlier this year while addressing the memorial service for former presidents Cheddi and Janet Jagan held at Babu John, Port Mourant. Granger has denied these allegations. However, since then, government officials have repeated the accusations. “It is a scandal. It is a lie and a person of the level of the president would be expected to withdraw a statement which is a complete untruth. But he hasn’t done it,” Granger said.

Granger again pointed to the report coming out of the inquiry done by Justice Dhanessar Jhappan into the incident, saying that this proved his innocence. “I made it clear that I was not even on the scene. I was not the commander of that operation. I had nothing at all to do with it. And the Commission of Inquiry pointed out who did the shooting and who had, I would say, responsibility for the disorder and the blame was put firmly at the feet of Dr Cheddi Jagan who instigated the young people to behave in a lawless manner,” he said.

He told Stabroek News that there were clearly racial and political motives for the President mentioning his name with this matter. “The point about that event is that I certainly couldn’t have been the only officer in the army at the time. Why didn’t Jagdeo mention the name of other officers who were directly involved in the operation or who were serving in the army at the time?” he said.

Recently, Office of the President Press and Publicity Officer Kwame Mc Coy, in a letter to the editor, charged that Granger bears some responsibility for the death of the men in the incident since he was responsible for the political education of soldiers at the time. Granger, when asked about this, said while he did have responsibility for political education of soldiers the purpose of this exercise was to train soldiers to operate in a post colonial setting.
According to him, there was a difference in the type of training that was done in the colonial era to the one required in the period following independence and as such the training was in a way ensuring that there was a smooth transition between the two eras. “I did have responsibility for political education at a time when several countries in the developing world had been threatened by military coup d’état,” he said. “This was a period of decolonization, particularly in the immediate post 1966 era... and the whole purpose of political education at that time was to ensure that there was better understanding of the policies of the government,” he added.

“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil”

By Rohit Kanhai

12/3/2011

It is being reported by OneVoiceCanWin.com that there is a rumor that the AFC is negotiating with the PPP for the Prime Minister post and other ministerial positions in exchange for their support. Let us speculate on the rumor, just as the stock market does, and see what we can profit from it.

The redeeming quality of the Guyana elections is that it forces the opposition to work together if they want to remove the corruption, degeneracy, etc., etc., etc., that characterized the 19 years of rule of the PPP government. For the first time in the history of Guyana, a divided government holds the possibility of making the government and opposition work together for the good of the country or towards the destruction of the parties for failing to do so. This delicate balance would be upset if the AFC were to prostitute itself to the PPP. We can only pray that the AFC will not be led into temptation by joining with the PPP, but will remain in the opposition in order to deliver us from the evil of the PPP.

While politics do make strange bedfellows, the fundamental principle is not to screw the people who you claim to represent in order to aggrandize yourself. Otherwise, you are engaged in prostitution, using the resources of the people for your personal gain at the people’s expense – which is precisely the charges hurled at the PPP by the AFC during the
electoral campaign. To give them the seat that GECOM failed to do, is to undo the virtue of the electoral result.

The redeeming feature of the electoral result was that despite the obvious manipulation of the votes, it did not lead to the PPP gaining an absolute majority. Because of this, the PPP could be held accountable despite its gaining of the presidency. Were the AFC to join with the PPP, then there would be no point in the APNU’s acceptance of the manipulated results, since it would relegate 33 percent of the electorate to the will of the 66 percent represented by the PPP and the AFC. Mathematically, this may seem fine, but it represents a betrayal of the 51 percent of the electorate, the majority which voted to remove the PPP, those who voted for the APNU and the AFC.

The AFC claims to hold the balance of power, but it was premised on an anti-PPP platform which it campaigned on, not a pro-PPP platform. If the AFC’s claim is that the voters gave them the votes to represent them, and this is what they are doing, then they should make this case to the public before they engage in this process. There is no difference between the TUF and the AFC if the AFC were to reverse their pre-electoral campaign and join up with the PPP for the perks of office. This would constitute a betrayal of their supporters. They would be in a Mansoor Nadir’s position - either join with the PPP before the elections so the people would vote on that basis or try to win some seats against the PPP before the elections and then throw it to the PPP after the elections in exchange for a ministerial position. Nadir and the TUF paid a price for the betrayal of their supporters. The AFC must be willing to take that chance if they seek to betray those who gave them their support on an anti-PPP platform.

The AFC is free to make the claim that their negotiations are in the “national interest” but they will be hard pressed to do so, especially at this early stage. To betray the people who voted for them without even attempting to make a divided government work is to preempt the result of the elections.

Moses Nagamootoo would be hard pressed to explain these machinations to those who cast their support to him. Instead of parting the Red Sea with his staff, he would be drowning the AFC in the Red Sea of Freedom House and the PPP were he to engage in double dealing those who felt that there was a semblance of decency left in him as he broke with the degenerate PPP. Of course, Rohee would be more than willing to welcome him back into the family, along with Ramjattan, arguing that this is a principled behavior by members of the family. Where would that leave Trotman? Nah! The AFC could not be that stupid.
Elections outcome could bring national healing, says Kwayana
- Hopes parties will pursue unity gov’t

By MARK MCGOWAN  SUNDAY STABOEK, DECEMBER 11, 2011

With the outcome of the recent general elections, former WPA executive member Eusi Kwayana believes Guyana has its best opportunity to end years of bitter rivalry between the major races and he says now is the ideal time for the political parties to work towards a national unity government.

Guyanese of Indian and African descent have been in rivalry since colonial times and this has been perpetuated into the modern day because both the PNC and the PPP/C regimes excluded other races, Kwayana, a stalwart in local politics, argues. As a result of this history, he believes that “any serious offspring of a slave or an indentured servant” would not want to spend the rest of his/her life fighting each other.

The political leaders, Kwayana told Stabroek News in a recent interview, need to realize this and address it effectively. “I’m hoping that the people who are engaged and appointed by the people by their votes on one side or the other side or any side will try to come to a clearer understanding of what has presented itself to them; the opportunities that now present themselves to the healing of the nation and the healing of the nation in such a way that no part of it suffers,” he said.

“Not the kind of healing that you can get by cutting off a part and casting it aside; but the healing of the nation in such a way that no part of it suffers,” he added, while emphasizing that no part of the country should be without representation in such an arrangement. He singled out the Amerindians as having an important part to play in this arrangement and also warned against the planting “of seeds of anger” in the process.
Following the November 28 polls, the PPP/C, which had a majority government since 1992, retained the presidency but lost control of the 65-seat Parliament to the opposition APNU and AFC. With no party securing an outright parliamentary majority, political consensus will be critical to the effective functioning of the government.

Kwayana, who migrated to the US in 2002 and was recently in Guyana to attend the funeral of his brother, said the electorate had clearly spoken and added that the voices of all citizens need to be heard. “I hope nobody will try to demean and put down others simply because of numbers. That has happened in the past and it has led to disaster,” he said. “Fighting for the prize of Guyana has been a bloody and costly business. I hope that I can have the assurance and hope in myself that my fellow Guyanese will come to the position that enough damage has been done, enough destruction has been done. We’re just coming out of a period of maximum destruction of people [and property],” he added.

He said that he had called for former president Bharrat Jagdeo to be given a chance when he assumed the office of president but he was disappointed with the result. “I was the one who said give the young man a chance. When people thought it was most absurd that somebody of Jagdeo’s age could be president, I said give the young man a chance because I didn’t know he was bringing burdens; bringing baggage,” he said.

“The people are jobless, the place is upside down with corruption and nobody is doing anything about it,” Kwayana declared. “People want a stop to that, all sorts of people want a stop to that; it is a most disquieting experience,” he added. “Righteousness exalts a nation,” he said, referring to the Biblical verse, which he said is reflected in several other religious texts.

Kwayana suggested that the more minds put together towards solving Guyana’s problems the better it would be for the country. “No one party could have all the brains to solve this country’s problems. Any claim of one party that it has the brains is either an innocent pretence or a deliberate crime because we must know that no one set of people, the modern world is not like that, where knowledge is pocketed in one kind of aristocracy,” he stated. If any administration were to feel this way, he said it would be deeming itself nothing but an aristocracy, which he opined would be the worst possible choice at this time.

“If anyone is really thinking of healing and a government of national unity instead of another five years of cutthroat operations, with all the excesses that we know to be repeated and repeated and covered up. If anybody is at all patriotic and wants to do something about making peace attractive and possible in Guyana, they could not want a better situation than this one,” he contended.

“To continue this obscenity of a one-party government in these circumstances is very disgusting to me,” Kwayana said emphatically, while adding that “people in power and people in certain positions have to ask themselves, ‘is this country for me alone or is it for everyone?’” The country, he argued, belongs to all, not only to those that voted for the political party that won the most votes at an election.

Were he in the position of President Donald Ramotar, Kwayana said, he would move to engage other stakeholders to establish a government of national unity. “The only wise thing
any clown could do in this situation was to address the issue of a government of national unity from which will flow the energies for unity among the people. But the President is not a clown, he is far from [one],” he said.

Kwayana added that establishing a government of national unity will take time and would require the constitution to be revised. He said that while this is being done, there would need to be an interim arrangement that the parties should agree to. He was hopeful that the all-PPP/C Cabinet named by Ramotar is just a “holding Cabinet” until a government of national unity is established. The whole posture and direction of governance, he said, will have to be less partisan.

He said that contrary to a popular myth, having a government of national unity does not mean that there would be no opposition in Parliament. Every Member of Parliament (MP), he said, should be free to criticize the government, thereby cultivating a new form of democracy. “MPs must not be muzzled,” he noted, while stressing that the government belongs to the citizens of the country and that the citizens must have a say.

Wazir Mohamed (Indiana University) Video: “From the margins of history: to multiracial equality in Guyana”

An interview given to rootsandculture(c) by historian Wazir Mohamed, Phd that lays the foundation for the serious discussion and work needed on resolving ethnic insecurity in Guyana and elsewhere. Ethnic Africans, Indians, Amerindians, Chinese and Europeans, and all the mixtures must understand the history before plotting a way forward. These groups are thrust together in communities all around the world in Africa, parts of Asia and the metropole.

Listen to the full video at:  http://vimeo.com/33761879
Global crisis: Transmission channels to Guyana

By Dr Clive Thomas  SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2011 (Stabroek News)

Introduction

Last week’s column indicated that, during the coming weeks, I would be assessing the present state of the global crisis, which began in 2008. In that column I also sought to briefly identify the core elements of the global crisis. Additionally I sought to establish that the present crisis could only be properly assessed after taking into account the negative effects of its immediate precursor that is, the highly inflationary food and fuel price-induced crisis of 2007-2008. That precursor crisis had several negative impacts, particularly in poor developing countries where explosive social and political eruptions took place. These events dramatized the highly destructive and rapid transmission of the negative effects of high food and fuel prices across the world, especially in the main the developing areas.

The global crisis that emerged in 2008 had multiple transmission channels, which produced even greater hardship than that which occurred during 2007-2008. It would be useful therefore, in this week’s column to observe each of these transmission channels before proceeding to evaluate the current state of the global crisis.

Transmission channels

In a recent study, entitled Global Economic Crisis: CARICOM Impacts and Responses, published in the Caribbean Development Report Vol. 2, I had urged that the negative impacts of the global economic crisis has been transmitted to Guyana and the wider Caricom sub-region through ten major channels. Although I had identified these channels separately, it remains the case that in practice they interact continuously and indeed the incidence of their impacts through these multiple channels also varies.

The first channel has been the sector exporting goods and services. In Guyana this would have negatively impacted our mineral exports (mainly bauxite), our agriculture exports (sugar, rice and other non-traditional crops) and our forestry exports. In the services sector our fledging eco-tourism industry would have also suffered.
Secondly, our corresponding import sector was another important channel. Fluctuations as well as inflationary increases in the imported prices for food, fuel, intermediate and capital goods imports affected the functioning of the economy mainly through their direct effects on costs of production and the levels of living of consumers.

Thirdly, the terms of trade, or the ratio of export to import prices, also became an important transmission channel. In general what did occur was that the prices of exported commodities tended to fall, as the global economic recession reduced global demand. Similarly, despite the food and fuel price inflation of 2007-2008, these price increases were somewhat abated, as with reduced demand occasioned by the economic recession, import price rises were either contained or reduced. As a rule however the prices of exports tended to fall more than the comparable fall in import prices. The terms of trade did not favour us. While as a net food exporter Guyana would have gained, as a net fuel importer Guyana would not have benefited.

Fourthly, although Guyana practises a fixed exchange rate regime linked to the United States dollar, the global crisis led to significant exchange rate variations between the United States dollar and other currencies important to our trade. These include the euro, pound sterling, Japanese yen, Chinese yuan, and Canadian dollar. In practice, therefore, we can fairly say these changes to the exchange rate relations with other currencies did not reflect changes in either Guyana’s macro economy or its preferred import/export trade strategy. Indeed they reflected solely the status of the United States dollar on world financial markets.

Fifthly, the financial crisis and credit squeeze have posed considerable difficulties for those larger exporting firms that depended on off-shore financial operations. In addition, wealthy individuals with holdings in external financial markets as well as locally-based and owned financial firms were also negatively impacted by the overseas financial turmoil.

Sixthly, the global crisis has also produced severe budgetary pressures in the rich nations and institutions from which we receive most of our official development assistance (ODA). This has led to a re-prioritization of their development assistance as well as overall reductions in its size, thereby affecting official external financial capital flows to Guyana. In an effort to cope with reductions in their budgetary support (because of diversion of funds to their stimulus packages) governments of the rich nations have pushed for more private investment flows and the re-capitalisation of crucial financial institutions like the IMF, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in order to assist poor developing countries like Guyana.

Seventh, another important transmission channel has been “worker remittances” sent back by Guyanese living abroad to their families and friends living in Guyana. Previously, these remittances had averaged about 20-25 per cent of Guyana’s GDP during the five years (2003-2007) immediately preceding the eruption of the global crisis in 2008. IDB and IMF data suggest a decline in this ratio in 2009 as well as a decline in the absolute value of worker remittances.
Eighth, a relatively underappreciated transmission mechanism has been the impact of the global crisis on the temporary movement of Guyanese workers who travel informally to find short-term employment in neighbouring countries, particularly, Barbados, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago. From anecdotal accounts these temporary migrant workers have found it harder to find work as the receiving countries fell on hard times.

Next week I shall wrap up this discussion of the main transmission channels of the global crisis to Guyana by illustrating the two remaining ones, namely, financial contagion and the irregular or underground economy, before proceeding to look at where the global crisis stands today.

Walter Rodney looms large at UWI
Sunday | November 6, 2011
Robyn Miller
(Jamaica Observer)

More than 40 years after his shocking expulsion from the institution where many of his ideals were shaped and 31 years after his death, Walter Rodney packed the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona campus.

The controversial Guyana-born political activist and lecturer of history drew a roomful of academics, members of civil society and students at the 13th annual lecture series held in his honour recently.

Lecturer in the Department of Government, Faculty of Social Sciences at UWI, Horace Levy, who delivered 'Democracy and a New Paradigm of Authority', summed up the life of the man who dared to venture beyond the walls of UWI to connect with the people of Trench Town and other communities across the country.

Borrowing a quote from an earlier lecture by the late Professor Barry Chevannes, Levy said, "Rodney was a man whose image matched his conviction," as he recalled the heady days of the 1960s.

"I took part in the march against the government's decision to bar him from re-entering the country," he told the gathering.

That decision was the Hugh Shearer-led government's designation of Rodney as persona non grata and refusing to allow him re-entry into the island on October 15, 1968, on his return from a Black Writers' Conference in Toronto. This, it is said, was due to his alleged involvement in "destructive, anti-Jamaican" activities in sections of the island.
Tempers flaring

The move sent tempers flaring as students and faculty took to the streets in a protest that spilled over into city-wide vandalism squaring off with the police, climaxing with the suspension of classes on the campus for two weeks.

Rodney returned to Guyana, where he was assassinated two years later, at age 38, by a car bomb in the capital.

Levy, the head of the Peace Management Unit (PMI), was quick to point out that he was "not seeking to castigate those who have offended Rodney", but said the "disparity and inequality in the society then was very blatant".

Decrying the deterioration in the society, he asked, "Is it any wonder that this country has moved like a quadruplet against our people? We've had three decades of runaway murder rate. Discrimination and a failure to open the channels of governance have not helped either".

His concerns about governance did not stop there as he bemoaned the protracted agenda for local government reform, the need for which "dates as far back as 1974". Commissioned in the 1990s, the reform "only came into being this year".

"Constitutional change is still not with us" he said, as he signalled the threat to democracy and chided the politicians who "have largely kept power to themselves".

politics breeding violence

Levy, who saw the May 2010 incursion into Tivoli Gardens as the beginning of the dismantling of garrison politics, said, "There's no place for a Dudus. Tivoli has shaken up all garrisons; the garrisons are dying after Tivoli. Violence became embedded by politics."

He added: "With community policing and the social intervention of the PMI and GraceKennedy and staff, [in downtown Kingston], murders have come down, but we have seen a resurfacing (of murders) because of the blindness of our leaders".

Levy believes civil society is the antidote for a Jamaica teetering on the brink of self-destruction and with its own unique brand of tribal politics.

"Civil society has a vital role to play in governance. Civil society is the agent of change, but it requires the collective contribution of all Jamaicans. Civil society has a task on its hands," he declared.

Commending the Government earlier in the evening, for its "resurrection" of local government, he said it had died under the previous Jamaica Labour Party government after its establishment by the People's National Party, under Prime Minister Michael Manley.
Latin America unites in new bloc, US not invited

04 December, 2011,

Ecuador's President Rafael Correa, Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos, Bolivia's President Evo Morales, Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, Argentina's President Cristina Kirchner, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and Cuban President Raul Castro (From Lto R, first row) pose for the family picture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) summit on December 2, 2011 in Caracas (AFP Photo / LEO RAMIREZ)

Thirty-three Latin American leaders have come together and formed a new regional bloc, pledging closer economic and political ties. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) pointedly excludes the US and Canada.

On the second day of a summit in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, all Latin American leaders, both right and left, officially signed into effect the formation of the CELAC bloc. The foundation of the bloc has been praised as the realization of the two-centuries-old idea of Latin American “independence” envisioned by Simon Bolivar.

Analysts view CELAC as an alternative to the Washington-based Organization of American States (OAS) and as an attempt by Latin American countries to reduce US influence in the region.
“As the years go by, CELAC is going to leave behind the old and worn-out OAS,” Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said at the inauguration of the bloc on Friday.

“It's the death sentence for the Monroe Doctrine,” said Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega said.

However Washington does not see CELAC as a replacement to OAS. US Department of State spokesman Mark Toner said the US will continue “to work through the OAS as the pre-eminent multilateral organization, speaking for the hemisphere.”

Political analyst Omar Jose Hassan Farinas told RT’s Spanish channel the US views CELAC as a potential threat to its hegemony in the region.

Chavez also read out statement opposing the US trade embargo on Cuba. Havana, which is not a member of the OAS, has joined the new regional bloc.

“No more interference. Enough is enough! We have to take shape as a center of the world power and demand respect for all of us as community and for each one of our countries,” Venezuelan leader said.

The 33 leaders pledged to withstand the financial crisis that has struck Europe and other developed countries.

Brazil’s Dilma Rousseff stressed that the Latin American countries would need to rely more on their neighbors amid the global economic turmoil.

“The economic, financial crisis should be at the center of our concerns,” Rousseff said Friday night. She said Latin America should “realize that to guarantee its current cycle of development despite the international economic turbulence, it means that every politician must be aware that each one needs the others.”

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, who assumed the initial rotating presidency at CELAC, expressed hopes that the bloc would help build regional cooperation despite the differences between some of the 33 member states.

The leaders also discussed cooperation in the field of drug trafficking and climate change.

CELAC should be a “political union to build a large power center of the 21st century,” the Venezuelan president said, stressing strong regional growth as many countries in the region develop closer ties with Asia or Europe and reduce their traditional reliance on the US.

The formation of CELAC was warmly welcomed by rising global power, China. Chavez read aloud a letter from Chinese President Hu Jintao congratulating the leaders on forming the new bloc.
Hu pledged to deepen cooperation with the CELAC and underlined that in the 21st century the relations between China and Latin America have seen all-round and fast development with expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation, according to Xinhua news agency.

The countries of CELAC have a combined population of nearly 600 million people, and a combined GDP of about US$6 trillion – about a third of the combined output of the US and Canada.
ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN THE USA: A COMPARISON

Ex-Mortgage CEO Sentenced to Prison for $3B Fraud

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Published: June 21, 2011 at 7:04 PM ET

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — The CEO of what had been one of the nation's largest privately held mortgage lenders was sentenced Tuesday to more than three years in prison for his role in a $3 billion scheme that officials called one of the biggest corporate frauds in U.S. history.

The 40-month sentence for Paul R. Allen, 55, of Oakton, Va., is slightly less than the six-year term sought by federal prosecutors.

Homeless man gets 15 years for stealing $100

A homeless man robbed a Louisiana bank and took a $100 bill. After feeling remorseful, he surrendered to police the next day. The judge sentenced him to 15 years in prison.

Roy Brown, 54, robbed the Capital One bank in Shreveport, Louisiana in December 2007. He approached the teller with one of his hands under his jacket and told her that it was a robbery.

The teller handed Brown three stacks of bill but he only took a single $100 bill and returned the remaining money back to her. He said that he was homeless and hungry and left the bank.

The next day he surrendered to the police voluntarily and told them that his mother didn't raise him that way.

Brown told the police he needed the money to stay at the detox center and had no other place to stay and was hungry.

In Caddo District Court, he pleaded guilty. The judge sentenced him to 15 years in prison for first degree robbery.
WEBSITES ON CARIBBEAN AND GUYANA EDITED BY DAVID HINDS (USA) & ROBERT LALLJIE, (UK)

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