



Personal safety and business security in the Caribbean

By PATRICK ESTEBE

For Caribbean Week

Security is a primary concern for most people in the world, it is dramatically important in the islands, where the parameters of security are greatly modified both in a positive and a negative way by the insularity.

Politicians, who often had a sheltered life and a privileged education -whilst possessing only an academic concept of what crime is about- are able to entertain us on the sources of crime for hours. As security people working in the field will go straight to the heart of the problem and tell you that "the mother of crime is frustration".

Frustration develops faster in the islands for several reasons:

1-The gap between "haves" and "have-nots" remains great. People with many different ways of life share the same small space. Although islanders know very well how to live without attracting attention, the growth of frustration is tangible in many, many places. These differences will continue to

increase as jobs qualifications become ever more sophisticated - making it more difficult for the unskilled, to find a decent job.

2- The difference between those who "know" and those who "don't know". The difference between the computer and internet-educated versus traditional entrepreneurs, is a new factor which will aggravate the situation. Even the "haves" are not all going to belong to the "Knows". This frustration may lead to crimes, in many instances crimes against the "haves" and "knows".

3- Population density has reached such levels that many places are practically ungovernable. Not only do we not have the necessary experience to manage large populations, but the density itself lowers each individual's degree of patience, further aggravating frustration, and raising the spectre of frustrated crowds.

4- Food scarcity is a major concern. The Caribbean islands, so



much dependant on imports will be severely affected by the rising price of basic the foodstuffs.

To Have and to be

Clearly, these factors do not make for peace of mind. On the contrary, they insure that security remains a primary concern - especially to those countries committed to attracting tourists and foreign investment.

Before discussing possible solutions, let's consider security and its evasive nature. The first thing people must do is improve their understanding of the word "security".

People often use the verb "to have" when they should use the verb "to be".

Talking about security, the same happens, since it is much more comfortable to have a security system or staff than it is to be security minded.

Indeed some security systems salespersons advertise by stating: ' You don't have to think of it'

However, if you give someone the Boeing 747 checklists, operating manuals, procedures and charts, and ask him to fly the bird to NY, it may not work if he is not a pilot, although, he will have everything he needs.

Security is a state of mind.

The power of the weapon you can have is no match to the power of the weapon you can be. Emphasizing on the gear or the defense system is not the right way to think. What if the bad guys succeed to get behind your defense line?

France learned that lesson the hard way.

They built the strongest, unbreakable, invulnerable rampart that was called "la ligne Maginot". The enemy had to be killed one hundred times before going through.

But the German warriors simply got around it through Belgium.... and behind that big, heavy and stupid security system, they founded a weak, inefficient, not motivated French army and a fearful population; an easy target: The whole country was swallowed.

You cannot buy your security, just like you cannot buy your health... Hopefully, you can do something about it.

A second important paradigm shift concerns the solution for the security. Many people coming to us with a security crisis, ask us once they saw we actually efficiently solved the crisis, " So what is the solution for the future?" Since the truth is the best answer, they are surprised and disappointed to hear: "There is none."

Indeed if one good reliable solution was existing, would US



President Reagan had been shot after the Kennedy experience, and we are talking of the world best security.

No standard solution

There is no standard solution. There is no certainty. Any system, any pattern is wrong by nature, since there are no two identical situations, and there are no two identical adversaries. Any measure give birth to its counter measure.

Attitude, mind-set and method, that is all we got, but that is also all we need.

The third paradigm shift necessary, especially in the islands, is to change the usual concept of taking ideas and trying to make them work locally. It works on most businesses but not for security. In most cases which Affairaction has solved in the Caribbean the culprit was an insider, often very close to the principal. In some instances, the security chief of staff may not have the same agenda as his boss. In one extreme example, the security chief "lost" the only tape recording the bad guy's voice, ruining an entire investigation so that he could continue to bill the principal for additional, on-going vague defence services.

It is a well-established fact that foreigners are more reliable in security crises. Most European kings, for example, recruited

foreigners as their personal guards. The vatican is still protected by a Swiss regiment. It is well known that the Gurkhas greatly helped greatly the British army, just as the French Foreign Legion spearheaded French Army actions.

A foreign team without local ties is less likely to become entangled in the complex ties and knots with which every islander deals on a daily basis.

It is a fact that treason comes only from your friends. As a prime example, the recent assassination of Prime minister Yitzak Rabin of Israel is casting long shadows on the people assigned to protect him.

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