

The Independent

Reformer

for the People

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SAVE BELIZE says VIP:

Belmopan party takes their campaign nationwide

Saying its time for a changing of the guard and an end to flip flop elections with the People's United Party and the United Democratic Party appearing to be the only viable choices, Vision Inspired by the People, the VIP, has launched their national election strategy.

During a press conference at the Belize Institute of Management, BIM, on January 17th in Belize City, VIP leaders addressed the Belizean people via live radio on KREM and LOVE FM and fielded questions from the print and television media on everything from campaign financing to political reform.

Dressed in their signature yellow t-shirts, the members introduced representatives from all over Belize including Max Sho of Punta Gorda who spoke in Maya to his people, "From Corozal to Benque to Punta Gorda," and Mateo Polanco who gave his address in Spanish, aiming particularly to communicate with immigrant groups in Belize. Among those at the head table were Patrick Rogers, who ran as in independent candidate in Lake

Independence in Belize City in the 2003 General Election. Although he is a leader of the Commoners group, he says he is now also fully aligned with VIP and prepared to run in any division they require his presence.

Chairman Paul Morgan and Public Relations Officer Bobby Lopez say they are also prepared to run, wherever they can best serve. Both men are well known to the communities surrounding Belmopan, having done well in two successive Belmopan City races. In the municipal election of 2006, the VIP garnered some 20% of the vote in the municipal elections.

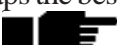
Now the Party believes the time is right to take their movement countrywide. They say while they are preparing for elections in 2008 if the General is called earlier, they will respond and run with the candidates they already have, even if it's only five distributed over key constituencies.

Morgan put out a call for volunteers to help VIP give the PUP and the UDP a run for their money: "We want all of you listening out there who would like to input,



Paul Morgan , Chairman VIP (photo William Ysaguirre)

even run, to contact us. We have not finalized our entire slate of candidates. We are looking for the best people out there.

Until we do put out our final slate, we are still of the opinion that perhaps the best (Please Turn To Page 13) 

How stupid can we be?

The real story behind the \$565 Million bond issue

Cornelius Dueck - National Reform Party
from www.nationalreformparty.com
Part I.

Our current administration and the Prime Minister, Area Representative of our people, and we, the Belizeans must rank among the stupidest people in the World!

Why is this a fact? Why are we stupid? Well, imagine you borrow \$10,000 from a friend and he is charging you 2% interest. You are to pay him back over a 30-year period, with monthly payments of only \$37 a month.

You borrowed the money from your friend to build a small business which will certainly make you more money, overtime, and you can easily afford the payments.

However, somehow you didn't invest the money as promised because while you were getting ready, it turned out that it was easy to enjoy it with new friends and to use the funds for other things.

Meanwhile, you were paying the loan




Cornelius Dueck, Leader, National Reform Party

back with the same money you were supposed to invest.

At the turn of a few short years, you ran out of money and ended up with no business that could produce revenues to pay the loan and provide you and your family with a prosperous life.

Then, you went to another friend to borrow more money in order to pay your first loan, and to have a little more to maintain your new lifestyle. Pretending to invest in a more lucrative venture that would produce yet more money, this time you borrowed \$20,000 at 6% interest, for 20 years. You would pay off the first loan and keep the rest (about \$10,000) to invest.

While the payments for the new loan would be only \$144 a month, you figured that it would be better to keep making the payments for the first loan, and keep the full \$20,000 to invest. Now the payments are \$37 for the first loan, plus another \$144 for the second loan... Only \$181/month... and now you have \$20,000 in your pocket. But wait! All the new friends you made with the money from the first loan, now have plans for you and have figured out what you should do with the money from the second loan... And pretty soon you will be going for another loan (Please Turn To Page 13) 

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Letter to the Editor

Leave Belize alone

Dear Editor,

Sometimes a do-nothing government is the best government. I would vote for a third party that pledges to do nothing.

Seriously, the manifesto of an ideal third party for Belize should read as follows: Our solemn pledge, should you vote us into of-fice, is to do nothing for the next five years. We won't tax you, we won't hire you, we won't pursue any fanciful schemes to achieve faster economic growth.

We will leave the economic development of Belize in the hands of entrepreneurs and the business community, and we won't interfere by putting up impossible hurdles and offering certain individuals and entities that qualify an exemption from those hurdles. Every industry in Belize is a national priority industry. If you insist we do some work, we pledge to carry out only the very basic functions of government limited to the following areas: public education (up to high school); public health (primary and emergency care facilities only); public infrastructure and environment (roads, bridges, and environmental

protection); safety and security (police and courts).

This way, corruption will be starved, perhaps not completely to death, but at least to some reasonable extent. The savings achieved by cutting the national government to these basic functions will be passed down to District Councils, Towns, and Villages for local folks to administer without the interference from national government.

Maybe that's a little too extreme, but it would be a refreshing change. I remain optimistic about the future of Belize. Despite the disappointing performance of our political leaders, the people of Belize, for the most part, take things as they come with a good sense of humor and continue on in their daily struggle to put food on their tables and make ends meet. Belizeans are by no means workaholics, so we'll never be able to compete with China and India, where the political situation, population levels and competition to survive drive masses of people to toil under harsh conditions down to the very bone.

Belize shouldn't strive to compete against these nations. We need to accept who we are, what we have, and set an example for the world that there is enough for everyone to go around so long as we set limits on the greediest few and feed the hungriest poor. I know that smacks of socialism, but I prefer to think of it as capitalism tempered by a social conscience. To me, that is the true role of government - not to stifle nor direct free enterprise, but to stand watchfully aside, for the most part, and skim off the profits generated by the economic engine only in a sufficient amount to take care of some basic public goods and compensate for public costs of private production that the free enterprise system is not particularly suited to address.

It is a delicate and difficult balance to achieve, but if ever there were an environment where it might be achieved, Belize is the place. It is comparatively rich in resources for its small size and has a very manageable population and geography.

Signed: Mario Lara



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Vision Inspired by the People, VIP

Statement by Paul Morgan, Chairman

January 17, 2007 Belize Institute of Management, Belize City

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, special guests and Belizeans listening to us across our beautiful jewel and abroad, on behalf of the Vision Inspired by the People and with deepest sincerity I say to you this morning, Thank you for your attention.

OH Belize, there is so much we would like to share with you today, but in this press conference, time is of the essence. So, it is with humility and respect, shrouded in fearless strength that I now, with the permission of my team, share with you, the reason why my party has embarked on this political campaign. I am also assigned to tell you about the qualities of this, our political direction that makes it the only viable option for our national prosperity at this critical time in our history. And finally, I will initiate discussion with you, focusing on what we as a people can do together to escape this terrible forecast that stares our unborn generations directly in the womb.

Brothers and sisters, there was a time in our nation's humble past, when most Belizeans had a generally positive outlook, living and rearing children here in Belize. That was not so long ago! Today, only 25 years after independence, that positive outlook which allowed us to be a happy people has all but totally disappeared, leaving us the majority, God loving Belizeans, broken in spirit,

Yes, we know when we are broken because we are an intelligent people. And deep in our sub-conscious minds, each of us know exactly what plagues us. We know that although nature has blessed us with wealth untold, miss-education, poverty, crime and disease subdue us under a solid choke hold". And oh what a painful choke this one is.

Some of us blame it on "Political Victimization"; where our politicians have

caused suffering on ordinary citizens just because of their differing political preferences. Some say it is because of "Political Patronage"; where once again, our politicians, give to a few citizens more of our nation's resources than they deserve or even need.

But we have of late observed with total admiration for the wisdom of the Belizean people, that the problem has been skillfully narrowed down to an all encompassing word: CORRUPTION. At the same time, we have also observed, with heightened alert, that our mainstream politicians have been skillfully hammering into our heads, how they would

two political parties have ever administered our national interests. It is not our aim to negate the good things that these administrations have accomplished. But hindsight now allows our nation to see the net effect of these two regimes on our present conditions and on our future. And what we undeniably see is an overall failure; both regimes being equally responsible. This is evident from the way we Belizean voters have switched regimes at almost every chance we get to vote.

Please allow me now to bring this all into perspective by chronicling our voting history,

"In the new social order there shall be room and a positive role for all Belizeans; PUP, UDP or VIP, Catholic, Protestant or Muslim, Asian, African or Caucasian."

like us to define CORRUPTION. And you know what; they have been able to convince some of our brethren that corruption is all about stealing money!

But if you look in any common dictionary, you will find that the term corruption literally means "to destroy". Corruption in politics brothers and sisters, speaks to the destruction of our political system by the abuse of political power. It is a behavior that opposes and disregards basic morality which is based on God's laws. Corruption opposes tradition, law and civic order. Oh yes! Belizeans are indeed wise when they say that our problem is political corruption. It is only when we begin to understand this term that we will be empowered to evaluate the differences among politicians who come knocking on our doors, seeking our vote.

Now if you look back at our 25 years of independence you will find that two and only


and then together we will see how we as a people, arrived at this corrupt/destroyed political system.

In 1984, only three years after achieving independence, the blue machine was kicked out of office for the offence of PRIDE; for disrespecting the base roots that brought it to power. The red machine was by default, thrust into power. But only 5 years thereafter, in 1989 the red was booted out for adopting blue pride and for initiating its own trick; ARROGANCE; refusal to be checked or held accountable. And so by default Belize once again turned to the blue regime hoping that its favorite party had learnt a lesson. Unfortunately not! The blue kept its old pride, adopted their twin's arrogance and introduced its own new scourge called GREED. These were the days of the bloated contracts. So once again in 1993, elections were called and the people swung decisively

their rod of correction but again had no other option but red. And was the red machine reformed? No! The corruption escalated into INSENSITIVITY which did set the environment for that Great Christmas Retrenchment. To no surprise, that red machine was once again booted out in 1998, making way for the dreaded blue machine. Despite the obvious faults of the blue machine, Belizean voters saw no viable option in 2003 and simply left that regime in place, hoping for their change of conscience. And we all now know the result of that gamble.

Well, such is the endeavor and faith of this humble but determined VIP team. Let us be clear on the VIP's mission. This party shall not setup another color oligarchy in Belize. Our mission is to rebuild the integrity of our government and return control to the rightful owners, the people. In the new social order there shall be room and a positive role for all Belizeans; PUP, UDP or VIP, Catholic, Protestant or Muslim, Asian, African or Caucasian.

Our leadership understands this mission well. Though we are a party, we aim to reduce the dominance of political parties over our governance, thereby arresting the real source of corruption. This will take much sacrifice from good patriotic Belizeans. Vision Inspired by the people is able, willing and ready to answer this call.

I say to you my fellow Belizeans, though at this time we see little hope of us getting out of this terrible political mess, obey your conscience and like Moses in the desert, "strike the rock, and water shall come out of it that the people may drink". After all, we are the ones who make the final decision as to whether we continue this old, red-blue sea-saw politics or we move in a new, positive direction. What say you my brothers and sisters? Will you languish in this mess for (Please Turn To Page 15) 

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We need An ACT of GOD

By: Trevor Vernon



Everyone seems to be waiting for the next General Election as if somehow its going to change everything, solve everything, get us out of the mess we are in. But Belize doesn't need free & fair elections; what we need is an act of God! Nothing less, it seems, can dismantle the mafia running this country and derail the D6 tractor-like political duo in government.

Despite the rumblings in certain quarters, I don't think the Carter Center, the International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES) or the Organization of American States (OAS/OEA) can help us. All their hands are tied too. They can only monitor elections in democratic countries and ours stopped being a democracy ages ago. Our political drama is but a farce, the players manic-depressive leaders who alternate between a frenzy of activity and total stupor, bi-partisan and bi-polar at the same time.

Sometimes it seems our national leaders are leading some other nation, so steeped are they in sophist traditions or driven by

phallic Middle Eastern politics that they don't see how far removed they are from Belize's reality.


But Mr. PM, Belize's Middle East conflict is being played out between the gangs and drug dealers, our Gaza strip, our border with Guatemala. You seem to forget our boundaries were surveyed and authenticated, with time honored

Why isn't there any true representation in the Guatemalan negotiations of the people who settled that Eurocentric political line long before Columbus learned to sail? Why is there no Maya representation in those negotiations, Sir? Are you are now a Rios Montt convert, too? With a handful of exceptions it seems our Maya leaders have all been silenced

trawlers from foreign lands are raping our southern waters and that's perfectly okay with both D6 drivers. Drag those nets, drag those chains, and pull up some stray way shrimp and some more tax money from the poor while you can...

Is this how we treat our Barrier Reef, our gift from God to the people of this land? What will be left of it when the commercial fishermen, driven from Honduras and Guatemala, get through with it and the cruise ship visitors' break it all off as they stroll along?

Belizeans are fed up but seemingly can do nothing to stop the chain gang, hold back the tidal wave of excessive taxes, the sneaking in of new unpublicized laws over religious 'holidaze', confiscation of private property for public purpose, the misrepresentation of the wishes of the people of Belize internationally, and heavy handed intimidation tactics locally.

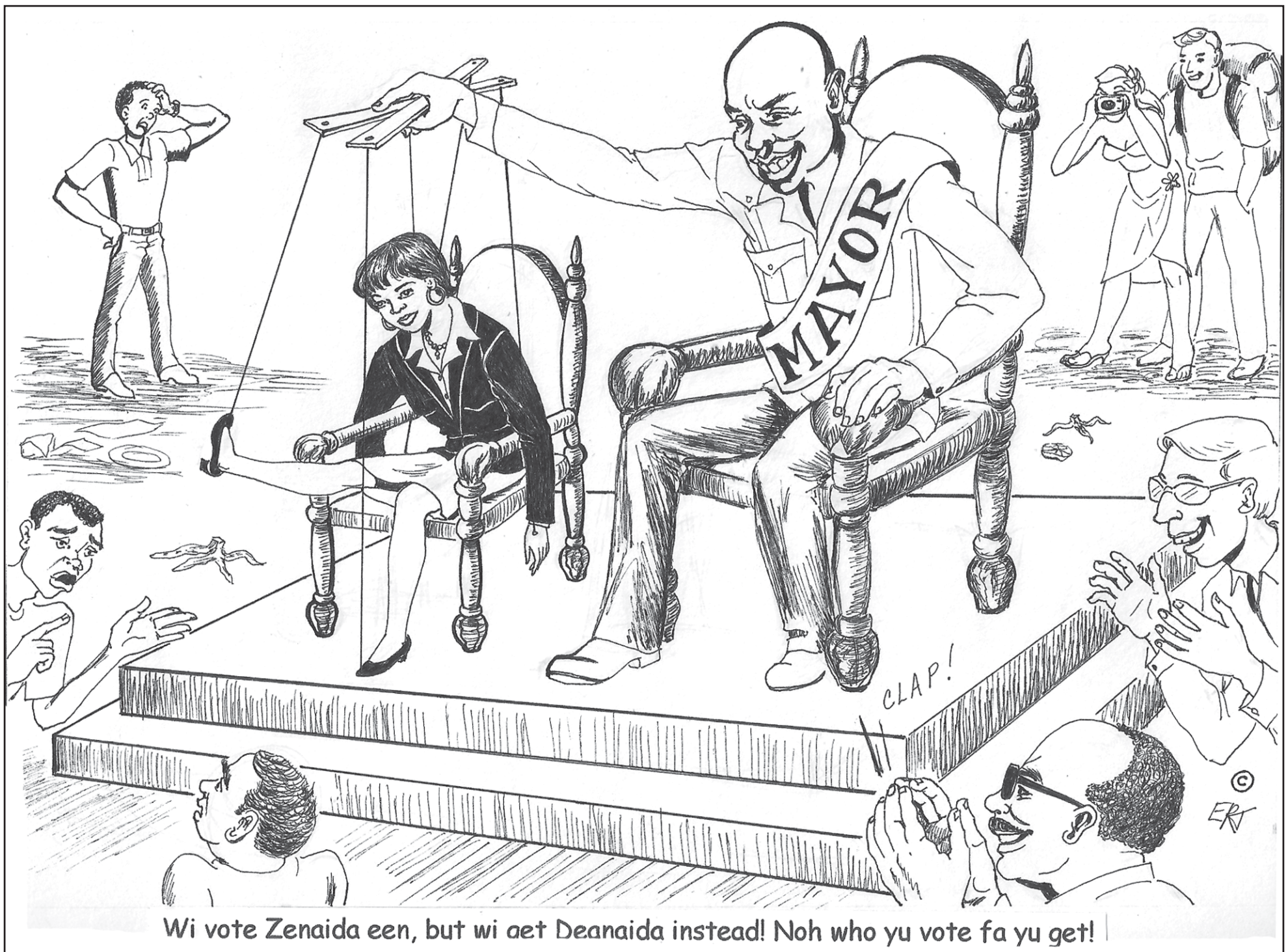
But perhaps God has not forsaken us entirely. Perhaps he is whispering in our ears, if we would just shut up and listen. I was fortunate this week to have been at the leading Third Party's launch of their campaign. The VIP Party laid out its positions as it relates to the local issues. They are on record and for the first time I was reading a de facto political manifesto that wasn't the euphemistic "sweet (Please Turn To Page 15) 

“Belizeans are fed up but seemingly can do nothing to stop the chain gang.”

technology, by giants among us and before us: Messrs. Gibson, Waight, Fairweather, Longworth, Flowers, et. al. This area is not any damn buffer zone or adjacency zone. Your partner in the D6's drag acquiesces to your creative conundrums because we know he is fully briefed and has finger-picked representation at all levels of this charade. His excuse is "the British made me do it." Not acceptable!

like Julian Cho. Those hyphenated Maya who were part of the failed negotiations would rather identify with their European bloodline, however imaginary. "My ancestors came from Spain... Greece..." Did they now? Or was it Italy? Hard to keep the story straight.

Meso-America is such another jumble. Almost as messed up as the Meso-American reef, formerly the Belize Barrier Reef. Now we hear no less than 60



Wi vote Zenaida een, but wi aet Deanaida instead! Noh who yu vote fa yu get!

Head hunters

Karla Heusner Vernon

First the ship Farley Mowat gets stripped of its Belize registry as it attempts to stop Japanese whaling; now Belize City Mayor Moya has her own blockade torpedoed.

By the leadership of her own political party no less.

I just don't get it, isn't it time the Belize City Council took some serious action to try and get some of the revenue generated by cruise ship visitors? Doesn't the City take the brunt of the wear and tear from the buses and supposedly get the benefits of trickle-down tourism?

Taking the wind out of her sails might have seemed to be good sportsmanship in terms of keeping relations with GOB and the BTB cordial. Promises to introduce legislation in the House to more equitably share the pie might sound promising. But they might also be pie in the sky. Something that never happens, or if it does, is blocked by the ruling party.

I do believe City residents would have supported a street blockade to stop the buses; I think everyone is fed up enough with the potholes, if nothing else. Yes, some

taxi drivers and others would have lost a day's sales, but they indicated they were willing to make the sacrifice if it meant more money for their town down the line.

Perhaps its time for a little drama, even confrontation, in this town. How much abuse does local government have to take from central government? From private

“Belize’s leaders just continue placing their bets. Regarding cruise ships as little more than floating casinos, making off like one armed bandits every time a ship docks on our shores.”

developers and investors who make their profits on the back of our municipalities and put almost nothing back into them. The cruise lines are all complaining how terrible Belize City is, yet they continue to profit terribly from kickbacks on their own head tax. Someone needs to kick them in the head. Or at least the shins.

The Belize Tourism Industry

Association, BTIA has tried. Their application for judicial review of the contract which allows \$4 of tax to go back to the cruise company and ports is languishing in the court system with almost no hope of it getting a hearing. And what if they do get it? Will the judgment be just like that of the Print Belize contract? “Sorry, it is wrong, but it would adversely affect government business to change it now?” Come on. . . .

The municipal mayor and her council have tried, over and over, to negotiate a better deal by appealing to common sense,

Bank and the Carnival terminal on the Southside seem poised to commence, which only means one thing: millions more dollars per year diverted away from a country its own politicians describe as “poor” when they are soliciting development funds abroad, trying to stop environmentalists from stopping pork belly projects and self enrichment schemes for members of government.

While the British Prime Minister Tony Blair invites regional leaders to a Caribbean Investment conference and tells them tourism is the region's best bet for development, Belize's leaders just continue placing their bets. Regarding cruise ships as little more than floating casinos, making off like one armed bandits every time a ship docks on our shores.

Logwood and mahogany are no longer extracted in the Bay, but the head hunters sure know how to extract head taxes.

As one major player told a major US newspaper, cruise tourism in Belize is like a gold rush and who no ready fi cash in, wen just lose. When the Mayor of Belize City cannot even get the support of her own party as she tries to support her municipality, it makes you wonder just who's been panning for gold behind her back. And who is the latest player to hit the mother lode.

civic pride as well as social obligation and justice. But it seems these values are foreign concepts to our national leaders and the foreigners who bring their ships here.

Thus an illegal contract continues to cause hardship for members of the industry and the destination itself, and there seems to be nothing anyone can do about it.

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The manner of selecting school books and the frequent changes of required books has resulted in excessive costs putting the cost of education beyond the ability of the poorer families and straining the purses of others.

Although Belizeans have been aware of this situation for the past 30 years, for some reason there has been no solution forthcoming.

The most serious effect is on the students who would wish to attend high school; it persists from the first thru fourth forms. The costs of textbooks books is often the greatest single expenses for students and their families. It is so exorbitant it prohibits many hundreds of children from obtaining an adequate education and imposes great economic hardship on others.

Most of Belize's children from disadvantaged families who have been able to obtain the limited assistance available from charitable sources have excelled in school, and a number have become valedictorians of their classes.

But their struggle is great and we can only wonder at the others who did not get help and had to drop out, perhaps before they even enrolled. Belize is losing the potential of some of the finest young minds in the country. Minds that could productively assist in the future development of the nation.

We say, over and over, that Belize's greatest asset is our children. It is necessary that they be fully educated and become employable or this asset is lost.

The major problem results from the failure to standardize the required books. Different schools require different books, even though they are all teaching the same subjects. The required texts are also frequently changed. So much so that sometimes a text book is good for only one semester and a new or different text or edition is required for the next. The student having purchased a book that was usable for only one semester cannot trade or otherwise profitably dispose of it.

Education has basically been left to the churches, which is exactly what they want for the classes provide them with the opportunity to teach their religion. Unfortunately, in attempting to do so, some of them contribute to other social problems.

The Belize Council of Churches has had conferences on issues respecting crime increase and corruption. Those who attended apparently did not realize the obvious, which is, that their church is part of the problem. Without an adequate education a child may not be employable in an occupation where he or she can obtain the necessities of life. As he or she grows older, the young person will not just sit around and starve. He or she will seek those necessities—and luxury goods—elsewhere. Such actions might involved thefts, burglaries, robberies, or other illegal activities such as the selling of narcotics, or drugs.



The amazing aspect of the book problem is that the President of the Belize Council of Churches, the Reverend Canon Flowers, has brought the school book problem and its severity to the attention of both the public and the churches. There has been no meaningful response. His efforts have either fallen on deaf ears, or there are those who profit from the problem and do not want to see it done away with. To so profit at the expense of the children and to the detriment of the country of Belize, though not criminal, is immoral and a form of greed that has disastrous results.

Why are the ears so deaf? Is it because the different denominations each feel that they are superior to the others and insist on their own decisions as to books and will not adjust to the will of others? Is it lack of concern? Or just plain ignorance of the problems that have been created?

There are many serious problems resulting from the failure to standardize. Aside from the excessive costs, is the frequent lack of availability.

If the text books were standardized throughout the school system there would be more of the chosen books printed. This would drive down price due to the increased volume. These books could be utilized for years to come without reprint or replacement. They could also be owned by the schools and rented to the children at a nominal fee or used on a contract basis. Or, if the students had to own the books they could resell them to a student of the next class at the end of the semester, as the books would still be valid editions.

There is no advantage to the present situation—it is **entirely** detrimental. The current costs of books is so high poorer families simply cannot afford them. When annual tests are given countrywide it is difficult to propound questions and answers that are absolutely fair to all as students taking the tests. Some students have been subject to different approaches to the issues for they have been taught from different books that approach the subject in a different manner.

The failure to standardize and retain also increases the burden on teachers and can hamper their effectiveness. Continually changing texts for a subject requires constant refreshing and changes in approach.

Mothers are also the victims of the failure to standardize. Many have to come to Belize City from as far away

as Cayo, and Toledo in an attempt to obtain the required books for their children. Often the women have to shop in three or four different stores in an attempt to obtain all the books. There are times when all of the books cannot be purchased, as they

are not available.

Students who cannot obtain books, whether it is from lack of funds or that the books are unavailable, are on occasion precluded from taking the class. On one occasion a young student was sent to the Principals office for discipline as she had not completed her homework. She explained to the Principal that she could not complete the work as she did not understand some of the words as she did not have a dictionary. The discipline was that she was sent home with instructions not to return to school until she had acquired a dictionary! Unfortunately her family did not have the funds for such a purchase.

Another frequent complaint is that students are sometimes required to spend a considerable sum for a book that is never used in the course studies. Is this a way of getting rid of excessive or out dated books? Or are teachers simply unable to keep up with the amount of texts required?

Three years ago the Bishop of Los Angeles, confirmed the apparent fact that a primary reason people are on earth is to help each other. If the people have such an obligation, then it follows that the Churches have a greater obligation to help God's poor children. It is difficult to believe that some of the matters that have transpired in Belize's education system occur in the name of Christianity.

Other countries have advanced their level of education by standardizing books. They have improved their children's education and reduced the book costs to where they are loaned free to students who return the books at the end of each semester. Why hasn't Belize, after 30 years of the same problem, standardized

books? Is it a church or political decision? Is there a profit in what is being done that leads to greed?

The political parties both appear to ignore the fact that the poor are being denied an adequate education. Not all politicians are tarred by the same brush. There are some who have helped education. The Honorable Mike Espat is one that the country can be proud of. He helped to usher in solar lighting for villages that were without electricity, increasing the opportunity for home study. He has provided computers to villages to provide a means of study where students had to be bused back to their village at such an early hour that they could not engage in computer practice at school.

If the Honorable Mike Espat can help educate the poor, why can't the other ministers join in and remove the problems? The correction of the problem is crucial to a country where 30% of the population lives below the poverty level. Leaders of all political persuasions, at both the national and local level, should get together and resolve the problem. If they do nothing, it should indicate to the electors they have no leadership skills and should be removed from office.

If there is some impediment to lowering the cost of school books such an impediment should be removed immediately.

Action, not promises and posturing is what is needed, now not later. The educational future of our children is at risk, our greatest asset being lost. Stop the greed before it impoverishes us all.

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City deserves its share

By **Meb Cutlack**

There is no doubt at all that the Belize City Council, and the city itself , needs and deserves a share of the cruise ship passenger revenue. The city is expected to bear the burden of thousands of visitors every week and does not have the funds to improve the city’s image or even to keep abreast of maintenance needs.

The crux of the problem is that although there is A head tax of \$7 per visitor (which incidentally is the lowest in the region) more than half of which goes straight back to Carnival Cruise ships – because of an arrangement made when they bought the tourism village from Mr. Feinstein. This was not envisaged when the original deal was made because ‘Belize’ as a whole was supposed to benefit, not the cruise ship company.

This money, by the Feinstein deal, has been hijacked from Belize and the city. The City council, due to politics and personality clashes, is not given enough funds to even keep the city clean.

Again and again it is the same story of the Government selling out to it’s cronies and denying the citizens of Belize any share of the spoils of their exploitation of Belizean resources.

Now, when the Government cries that it will hurt Belize City dwellers if the

Council undertakes a protest and blocks the streets, what they are really saying is that it will hurt their special relationship with their favourites. Almost without exception most Belizean will support a ‘strike’ - if it brings finance and better days to the city.

“This money, by the Feinstein deal, has been hijacked from Belize and the city. The City council, due to politics and personality clashes, is not given enough funds to even keep the city clean.”

The real question is not about giving Belize City \$1 towards the expense of thousands of visitors traipsing through the town and littering and needing toilets etc., it is about the dollars which go back to the cruise ship line.

According to Channel 5 Mayor Zenaida Moya said: “This Belize City Council is an elected body. We do not feel that we should be receiving a portion of what the BTB feels they should give us. We already informed that the whole reason they got a U.S. one dollar and sixty cents in the first place for 2005 onwards

was to pay off a three million dollar loan. They have paid that off from last year, so what gives them the right to dictate how much money this elected body should receive? They have received other money clearly from the cruise tourism industry and from other areas. We know as it pertains to the hotel tax, they received over nine

million dollars in 2005 and in other tour guide operating licences and in other another onemillion dollars. So we are showing you how easily the government—in the case of the BTB they have already paid for the commitment that they said this U.S. one dollar and sixty cents was earmarked for. I need to state categorically that we will not refrain from taking any action that is necessary to secure these funds for the City of Belize.”

She told channel 7 viewers: “The Belize City Council has no other

recourse than to call on the residents of this city to join us as we undertake whatever actions we must undertake to pressure the government into releasing those funds. We will not refrain from taking any action that is necessary to secure these funds for the city of Belize.”

She added: “We have authority to do certain things in our power to show this government that we are serious about getting that US\$1. Rest assured, the repercussions that may be had from such an uprising may leave the central government hoping that they had in fact given this UDP Belize City Council that measly US\$1.”

And: “We will ask the residents of Belize City to note that there may be some inconveniences..... that for them to be aware and to acknowledge that Everything and anything that will be done, is being done on their behalf to secure a US\$1 Of US\$7 head tax.”

From a legal point of view the Mayor has every right to take any action she pleases right down to blocking the streets and therefore not allowing the buses to pick up the cruise ship visitors.

She could also, no doubt, go directly at the core of the problem, pass a local council act, and simply announce that as from a certain date all cruise ship visitors entering Belize City must pay a head tax of \$1 to the council. She can do these things, but will she?

A third of Guatemalans would back Colom

January 15, 2007

Álvaro Colom is the most popular contender in the early stages of Guatemala’s presidential race, according to a poll by Borge y Asociados published in *El Periódico*. 34.6 per cent of respondents would support the leftist National Union of Hope (UNE) member in this year’s election.

Otto Pérez Molina of the Patriot Party (PP) is second with 15.6 per cent. Support is lower for Fritz García Gallont of the Unionist Party (PU), Luis Flores Asturias of the National Advancement Party (PAN), former head of state Efraín Ríos Montt of the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú, and Francisco Arredondo of the Grand National Alliance (GANA).

GANa candidate Óscar Berger won the 2003 presidential election in a run-off, defeating Colom with 54.13 per cent of all cast ballots. Berger is constitutionally barred from seeking a new term in office.

On Jan. 4, Giammatei—the director of Guatemala’s prison system—was announced as GANA’s presidential nominee. Giammatei vowed to enact tougher regulations to deal with crime, declaring, “Guatemala is caught in a battle between the good and the bad, and we need to generate leadership to ensure that the good people participate because there

are more of us.”

The presidential election is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 9. If no candidate garners more than 50 per cent of all cast ballots, a run-off would take place on Nov. 4.

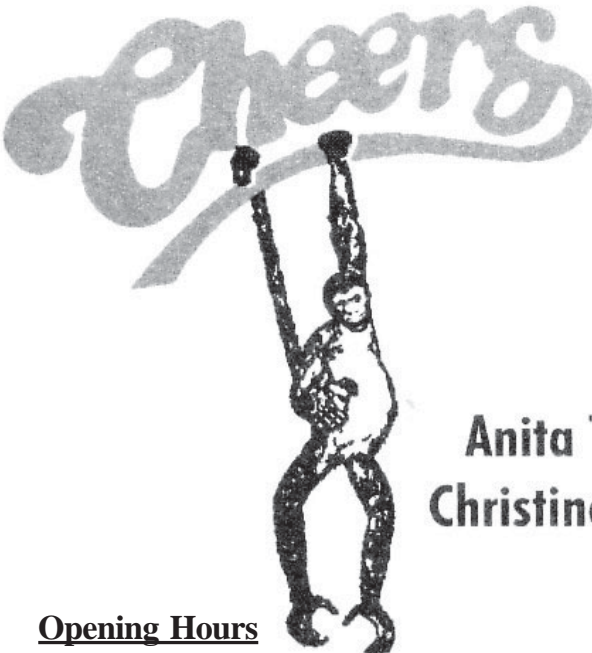
Polling Data	
Who would you vote for in the presidential election?	
Álvaro Colom (UNE)	34.6%
Otto Pérez Molina (PP)	15.6%
Fritz García Gallont (PU)	2.7%
Luis Flores Asturias (PAN)	2.5%

Efraín Ríos Montt (FGR)	1.8%
Rigoberta Menchú	1.4%
Francisco Arredondo (GANa)	1.1%
Dionisio Gutiérrez	0.8%
Harold Caballeros	0.7%
Nineth Montenegro (EPG)	0.5%
Mario Estrada	0.4%
Alejandro Giammatei	0.2%

Source: *Borge y Asociados / El Periódico*
Methodology: Interviews to 1,008 Guatemalan adults, conducted from Dec. 26, 2006, to Jan. 7, 2007. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.

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TOPICAL TIDBITS

Of course ‘global warming’ doesn’t exist!



But..the storm which has swept the USA is looking like a lot of the other weather extremes afflicting the world. Storm Highlights

- Ice as thick as four inches in parts of Oklahoma
 - California’s citrus crop devastated by cold weather
 - Death toll rises to 46 from Texas to Maine
 - Missourians might not have power until late Wednesday.
- Oh well, carry on Mr.Bush! The world is your toy!

Will Musa now slice oil prices?

The price of crude oil has plunged to just over \$50 a barrel - more than 16 percent drop. And that is just since the beginning of the year.

This drop should translate into a reduction in oil prices for Belizeans of up to 1.60 cents and therefore bring the price for gas in Belize down to about 8.30 a gallon.

Will it happen? The last time oil prices dropped Mr. Musa actually put the price up!

Southern highway to be completed?

A local web page reports that, “The last 9 miles of the Southern Highway will be paved this year (the bids are being prepared). It was held up due to a dispute with the OPEC fund which was finally resolved.

“The Central American Development Bank (CABI) will fund the building of a link from Dump, on the Southern Highway to Jalacte on the Guatemalan border to complete Belize becoming a part of the Pan-American Highway system and to fulfill our agreements with Plan Puebla and Mundo Maya.”

Our information was that this project was stopped In the first place by \$100,000 going missing!

Oil Games

A friend of the oil company informs us: “ ..activists are playing games with Belize’s future economic prosperity by the oil industry. This is happening from all sides. It is unbelievable how much was made out of a 3-5 GALLON oil release recently. And of course no one knows about the 600 gallon spill the Mennonites released into the Belize river that BNE cleaned up for them.

“Reading the World Watch bit—you have Greg Choc writing about Dynamite explosions (incorrect) and petroleum exploration in very misleading terms.

“Responsibly conducted, oil

exploration had the potential to create thousands of jobs, and to provide sufficient income to the country to eliminate taxes on fuel, and pay for the foreign debt. Yet very little activity is actually taking place in Belize thanks to the political grandstanding of politicians, sensationalism of the press and obstructionism of some regulatory authorities.”

Belize reef endangered!

For years warmer waters off the Australian coast have been destroying coral reefs by ‘bleaching’. Now is hitting the Caribbean and Belize with unprecedented bleaching which followed record warm water temperatures last year.

According to National Geographic News, coral reefs in the Caribbean experienced more heat stress in 2005 than the past 20 years combined.

Projects such as Ara Macao with

massive sand shift and pollution will only add to the woes of Belize’s precious reef. The powers that be don’t care and just want the dollar in their hand no matter how dirty that dollar is.

Belize National Reform Party speaks up

It’s a long assessment by the NRP about the “real”story behind the \$565-million bond the Government of Belize is issuing.

They state: “For the first time, the entire Offering Memorandum, only available to “friendly” bond holders is revealed to the world for analysis and to discover the level of corruption of the administration of Belize Prime Minister Said W. Musa and his “friends” in power.

Bear Stearns is the brains behind this bond issue. If you are a bondholder... watch out! Belize will be again in default before the elections in 2008. All Belize creditors will be left holding the bag.”

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Guatemalan leader refuses to read speech

Mon Jan 15, 1:58 AM ET

GUATEMALA CITY - Guatemala’s president declined to read his state-of-the nation speech to Congress, instead sending a written version to lawmakers after violent clashes erupted between protesting teachers and police outside the legislative building.

President Oscar Berger’s action on Sunday drew criticism from opposition politicians including Guatemalan Republican Front Rep. Aristides Crespo, who called it “a lack of respect.”

“To say that he was not coming for safety reasons only demonstrates that they haven’t been able to make the country a secure place,” Crespo said.

Hundreds of members of the nation’s teachers union and other labor groups that oppose Berger’s administration came to blows with police outside the Congress after the protesters tried to break through a police cordon.

Four police and five demonstrators were slightly injured in the clashes, in which protesters hurled rocks and club-wielding police fired rubber bullets.

The demonstrators wanted to reach the Congress to denounce what they say is Berger’s failure to fulfill his promises.

In broadcast messages to the nation,

Berger outlined achievements including economic growth, social programs for the poor and the recovery from the damages caused in 2005 by Hurricane Stan.

Berger’s term ends in January of next year. Presidential elections to replace him are scheduled for September.

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Main & Church Streets, walk down
hill 75 yards to Guesthouse.

Caricom is once again the predicted failure in 2008 deadline!

By Ray Auxillou

There are still a lot of Ph.d’s and other academic intelligentsia in the different civil services throughout the Caribbean island countries, that envisage and struggle to form a new nation out of distant isolated small island governments. The old arguments of “through group cooperation we would be stronger” is quite true. But it will never work with CARICOM and any self educated fisherman can tell you why.

The major problem is distance, small scattered markets and lack of transportation. If these educated gentlemen would take time to study the many old Mediterranean civilizations of antiquity, they perhaps might get a true feel for the transportation and logistics problems with their utopian dream.

Distance and small markets are the large part of the CARICOM concept. The CARICOM governments are nationalists. The larger countries for instance, each waste hundreds of millions of tax revenue dollars a year subsidizing their own airline, in competition with other CARICOM national airlines. We in Belize are a rim state, on the periphery of the region with two thousand miles of water to cross in order to connect ourselves to other Caribbean countries. From the viewpoint of any Belizean civil servant, or business

person, the idea and expense of having to dog leg over a thousand miles on each leg to Miami, Florida and then back to the Caribbean, just makes any idea of doing business financially impractical.

If I could fly one way for \$50 from Belize, to Jamaica, or Cayman Islands, it would be different. Integration is but a pipe dream when you cannot fly direct at cheaper rates. A Belizean, or a Guyanese, would have to be able to fly internally within CARICOM as easily as he, or she, can fly within their own country, without having to resort to entering third party countries like the USA, or Cuba. This current need is a serious security violation for internal political cooperation.

What made the USA so vibrant a country was partially the interstate freeway system. But in CARICOM our only available transportation routes are by water, or through the air. I’m sure that if all the money lost by CARICOM country airlines attempting to be the chosen subsidized air carrier could be put into one serviceable airline, a common country might be workable. This is unlikely, not from practical considerations, but because of politics, expense and greed. Each nation wants to be the CARICOM national airline. Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica are the heavy players in this marriage of convenience. At the moment it is unlikely they will stop competing with

each other for control of CARICOM or a CARICOM future airline.

The CARICOM intellectuals are not calculating on human psychology. What looks good as a Federation on paper, runs into a brick wall when you are up against nationalistic aspiring politicians who want to control everything. Especially when any CARICOM national airline would of necessity have to be subsidized. Who would pay? Currently the major players are losing hundreds of millions of tax revenues on existing competing airlines. Smaller island countries do not have the numbers of business and civil service traffic, or the GDP to subsidize such a CARICOM airline carrier. Connecting through Miami is impractical financially, if not politically, from a security point of view, as is the current case. Before you can talk about free movement of labor, you have to have free movement—connect the different island countries of CARICOM by ONE airline. As a fisherman, we would say you are standing on the deck of your sailboat urinating upwind from a practical sense.

My forecast is that the federated idea of CARICOM will die it’s slow death once more, as it has often, over the past forty or fifty years as Creole Royalists in the larger Caribbean countries of Jamaica, Trinidad and

Barbados try to float their dominance intellectual concepts against the trade wind. Like building a house, you must have the foundation first well set.

Limited CARICOM connections as we now have, particularly in the political and international realms has something to offer all countries whatever their size though. Telecommunications is relatively cheap and that continues to work. But a larger country? No way Jose!

In the meantime in Belize here, new roads are being paved and extended by our Central American neighbors to the West, South and North along the Caribbean coast and Mexico to our North is still a dynamic trade partner. Trade with Salvador and Guatemala is increasing incrementally. With the end of civil wars and the exit of Central American generals into the organized Mafia criminal organization games of our neighbors and real peaceful governments working in Guatemala and Salvador on infra-structure and indigenous participation in politics, our future lies with Central America. Not CARICOM!

Population demographics indicate that Belize is steadily turning into a white and Mestizo- Maya majority country. The Creole ties to the Caribbean are becoming weaker and weaker as our Creoles migrate to the bright lights of other northern hemisphere countries.

Sir Ronald Sanders disagrees...

Mr Auxillou makes a number of important points but none of them would justify Belize abandoning regional integration with the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM).

Belize’s future ought not to be a choice between Central America or the Caribbean . Belize has an important place in both groups.

Dealing first with his point about the inadequacy of regional air and sea transportation to cater for the participating countries in the Caribbean Single Market (CSM), he is absolutely right.

Insufficient attention has been paid to the vital importance of transportation for the movement of goods, services and people within all of CARICOM. In particular, the remoteness of Belize and the Bahamas from the rest of the CARICOM countries is especially problematical. But, the absence of ships dedicated to moving goods between CARICOM countries is a problem for all of them, and a constitutes a considerable restraint on trade. There is a vital need for a policy by CARICOM governments that gives incentives to a shipping industry in the region.

However, the inadequacy of transportation did not stop Belize from enjoying a positive balance of trade with the rest of CARICOM of

US\$3.11 million in 2003, and US\$10.8 million in 2004 (CARICOM Secretariat figures). Indeed, apart from Trinidad and Tobago, Belize was the only CARICOM country to enjoy a balance of trade surplus in those two years with its other CARICOM states.

One can therefore imagine how much better Belize would have done, in trade terms, if regional transportation were better.

Belize also benefited from cross-border financial services from within CARICOM. Financial institutions, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, made investments and loans to both the Belize government and the private sector amounting to millions of dollars in the last ten years for infrastructural and other development. Holders of Belize bonds came not only from Trinidad and Tobago, but from several of the smaller Eastern Caribbean countries. These investments were made precisely because Belize is a member of CARICOM and CARICOM investors were satisfied that Belize plays by the same rules as their country of origin.

Incidentally, even when Belize floats bonds through US financial institutions, a significant amount of the paper is taken up by institutions in CARICOM countries, again because Belize is regarded as a partner

country.

On the matter of the changing face of the population. A similar phenomenon is occurring in other CARICOM countries, and of course in Guyana, Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago , more than half the populations are not what has been described as “creoles”. Ethnicity has never been a consideration in the integration of CARICOM.

It should also be recalled that in the fight for the protection of Belize’s territorial integrity, CARICOM countries have been at Belize’s side at every international forum. Further, in the cause of its sugar and banana industries, CARICOM has

stood with Belize in challenges from Central American and South American territories.

But, at the bottom line, nothing prohibits Belize from developing practical and beneficial co-operation relationships with its Central American neighbours while maintaining its membership of CARICOM. Indeed, in these days where the interests of small countries are shunted aside by international agencies and bigger countries, there is need for an alliance of interests between Central America and the Caribbean , and Belize is well placed to act as a bridge between the two groups.

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Venezuelan plan shakes investors

- excerpts from *The New York Times*

CARACAS, Venezuela, Jan. 9 — President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, has threatened to nationalize the country's main telephone and electricity companies.

Investors reacted with alarm here and in markets in the United States and throughout Latin America on Tuesday as they measured the impact of the plan by Mr. Chávez to nationalize crucial areas of the economy. Memories of past nationalizations during another turbulent era, in places like Cuba and Chile, helped drive down the Caracas stock exchange's main index by almost 19 percent.

Markets across Latin America declined Tuesday, but the drop was modest in most other countries, with the Bovespa index in Brazil and the Bolsa index of Mexico each falling 1.9 percent. The measured reaction appears to reflect the belief of investors that Mr. Chávez, in spite of his words, has limited influence on the economic policies of other governments in the region.

"It has not turned into a widespread contagion," said David Riedel, president of the Riedel Research Group, who follows emerging market stocks. Compared with the 1990s, "you have a more sophisticated base of investors that understand that Mexico is different from Venezuela."

Still, investors sold shares in American, Argentine and Mexican companies vulnerable to the move by Mr. Chávez to take control over entities that had been privatized by previous administrations.

Owners of Venezuelan steel, banking, cement and hotel companies — even the cable car operator that takes tourists to the top of the Ávila mountain here — could be affected by the push toward nationalization, analysts said.

"Chávez is deepening his revolution, but in doing so will he follow the law and compensate the companies whose assets will be nationalized?" said Miguel Octavio, executive director of BBO Servicios Financieros, a brokerage firm, who calculated the costs of taking over companies in the telecommunications, electricity and oil industries, as well as assuming their debts, at more than \$15 billion.

"It doesn't seem like the government has thought this project out yet," Mr. Octavio said. Tony Snow, a White House spokesman, said on Tuesday, "Nationalization has a long and inglorious history of failure around the world. We support the Venezuelan people and think this is an unhappy day for them."

Mr. Chávez further intensified worries with his request for vastly enhanced presidential authority from his Congress. If successful, those new powers would



Venezuelans President, Hugo Chávez

allow him to decree measures into law for one year, bypassing any debate in the legislature, where in any case all 167 deputies are his supporters. On top of that, he made a request to abolish the autonomy of Venezuela's central bank. The Venezuelan government did not immediately contact the American companies, which declined to discuss details.

"There are many ways in which the Venezuelan government could proceed," said Peter Thonis, a spokesman for Verizon. "Since they have not discussed specific plans, it would be premature for us to comment now."

In April, Verizon agreed to sell its 28.5 percent stake in Compañía Anónima Nacional Teléfonos de Venezuela, or CANTV, to América Móvil and Teléfonos de Mexico, for \$676 million; the deal has not closed, so Verizon still owns the stake, and it was unclear how much the Chávez government would be willing to pay to take control. Neither América Móvil or Teléfonos de Mexico would comment.

Since taking power eight years ago, President Chávez has imposed stronger political control over the state oil company and has ordered the government to exert greater authority over several ventures with foreign oil firms.

Stopping short of Mexico's nationalization of foreign oil companies in the 1930s, the Venezuelan government has aimed to reach partnership agreements with foreign oil companies while raising its tax rates and royalties on foreign oil companies.

At the very least President Chávez's pledges Monday to nationalize companies in the telecommunications and electricity industries represented another retreat of the trend toward more private control of national economies

and free market policies that swept Latin America in the 1990s.

Mr. Chávez has led that reversal, which has taken hold to one extent or another in Argentina and Ecuador, as well as Bolivia.

"We have said for a while that if you are operating a domestic business in Venezuela, you are chronically at risk for something like this happening," said Thierry A. Wizman, a managing director and global emerging market strategist at Bear Stearns in New York. "This is not the first time he has changed the rules for domestic businesses."

"Still, Mr. Wizman notes Mr. Chávez cannot afford to seize assets brazenly without compensating corporate owners, because Venezuela owns assets in the United States like Citgo, the energy company, that could be frozen by United States courts.

"He is unlikely to give a fair price, but it won't be outright seizure without compensation," Mr. Wizman said. "He doesn't want to offend everybody simultaneously."

Not all investors are as sanguine, and two American companies, Verizon and the AES Corporation of Arlington, Va., suddenly face the potential of hundreds of millions of dollars of losses. AES declined to comment Tuesday.

The abrupt policy and market jolt in Caracas came amid surging interest in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe by investors around the world. Last year, investors in the United States poured \$20.3 billion into emerging market funds, up 47 percent from 2005 and accounting for 15 percent of all the money invested in stock-based funds, according to AMG Data Services.

Mr. Chávez's pronouncements prompted expressions of awe and

surprise among many of his new cabinet members at their swearing-in ceremony on Monday, suggesting that even they were taken aback. Mr. Chávez also lectured Venezuela's clergy, which has been critical of his plan to refuse a broadcast license to an outspoken television network. He recommended that they read the works of Marx and Lenin, as well as the Bible, "to learn what socialism means."

Mr. Chávez has suddenly moved forward with a revolution that seemed to unfold in slow motion in previous years. He pushed for socialist-inspired economic policies like price controls to slow inflation and the assembly of alliances with Latin American nations with leftist leaders that now include Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua.

Since his re-election to the presidency in December with a 23-point margin, Mr. Chávez has quickly accelerated his efforts to remake Venezuelan society. He has dismissed moderate cabinet ministers and his vice president. He also has begun speaking of the need to reform the nation's public schools to focus more on socialist ideals, and of guiding the Venezuelan consumer away from "luxurious consumption" of imported goods.

With 80 billion barrels of conventional crude oil, or about 7 percent of the world's reserves, Venezuela remains the fourth-largest oil supplier of the United States. Much of Mr. Chávez's ambitious project to move Venezuela toward socialism will depend on petroleum revenue, with oil by far the country's leading export. It was no small surprise that even as Mr. Chávez announced his startling assortment of economic policies this week, his oil minister, Rafael Ramírez, was calling on OPEC to hold a special meeting to discuss falling oil prices. On Tuesday, oil traded near an 18-month low at \$55.64 a barrel in New York, down nearly 9 percent since the start of the year.

Simon Romero reported from Caracas, Venezuela, and Clifford Krauss reported from Houston. Vikas Bajaj, in New York, and Elisabeth Malkin, in Mexico City.

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BIRDS THE WORD! THE JABIRU STORK

- by Sharon Matola, Director of the Belize Zoo and
Dr. Gil Boese, Foundation for Wildlife Conservation

The majestic jabiru stork!! We all know the jabiru, and love that the tallest flying bird in all of the Americas calls Belize its home. But are we aware of the current profile of our resident jabirus?

Methodical population surveys, carried out by Omar Figueroa, who is currently at the University of Florida, and known in Belize as one of the foremost authorities on jabiru stork ecology, have shown that **no more than 200 jabiru storks remain in our country!**

At one time, our jabirus would nest here, and then fly off to Mexico, spending their summers lazing about in wetlands. But a large amount of their favourite Mexican wetlands habitat has been altered, and as a result, our jabiru storks are now year 'round Belize residents.

A major development project has impacted greatly upon our jabiru stork populations: FreshCatch Belize, Ltd., a thriving tilapia farm located off the coastal road in the Belize District. And what a unique situation!! For we humans, FreshCatch Belize, Ltd, under the direction of Mr. Joe Mena, provides tilapia for both the local and foreign markets. Farm-reared tilapia is noted as being an "eco-friendly" fish to eat, and is a popular item on many restaurant menus, here in Belize and worldwide.

But for a jabiru stork, FreshCatch Belize, Ltd is an "all you can eat" stork cafe. During certain times of the year, this fish farm becomes a critical stop-in for many jabiru storks. From December until way into April and beyond, jabiru storks are nesting and raising their young. Keeping fit and full is important, and so is feeding their storklets!

FreshCatch Belize, Ltd, in conservation partnership with the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, FWC, Birds Without Borders, BWB, and The Belize Zoo, understands that protecting the jabiru stork populations of Belize is an important mission.

Rather than being vexed at the giant birds for tilapia-snatching, FreshCatch Belize, Ltd, allows them to enjoy their tilapia treats, and takes caution to ensure that the jabirus are not molested for their thieving!



Due to the kind understanding of Mr. Joe Mena and his crew at FreshCatch Belize, Ltd, the diligent monitoring of stork populations in Belize by FWC and BWB, we are certainly positioned to look towards a future where the elegant jabiru stork will always be present here in our nation.

Stay tuned for more updates as we follow the jabiru actions in this area of Belize. And a big "thumbs up" to FreshCatch Belize, Ltd, FWC, BWB and The Belize Zoo for their conservation partnership on behalf of the jabiru storks of Belize.

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“Chalet d’ Eve”



Beautiful 2900 sq foot home on ¼ acre property in **highly secure** neighborhood, 10-12 feet above sea level with on site hurricane shelter

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SAVE BELIZE says VIP...

☞ (Continued From Page 1)

person is out there to take this struggle on. This is a people’s struggle.” (for the full text of his speech see page 3 this issue.)

VIP Secretary General Hubert Enriquez, widely known for his union activism as well as from previous VIP campaigns, says a weak labor movement makes for a weak nation democracy. “It is abundantly clear that the solutions to our problems are not necessarily going to come from our political leaders. The solution will only come through a process of workers’ employment by education, democratic representation, and unionization. We require strong and democratic unions to invigorate our democracy. The VIP pledges to facilitate this process of unionization as a central component of its reform agenda to bring social justice and equity for all.”

In terms of financial support, the members claim they will not be influenced by big money interests. Bobby Lopez says donations of all sizes, or even contributions of time and labor, are most welcome, but any and all financial backing must come no-strings-attached. Particularly from high rollers, “We are not

How stupid can we be?...

☞ (Continued From Page 1)

—at higher interest rate every time—to make the payments for the first and for the second loan, and for the third loan also. And then another, and another. . . a vicious cycle.

Every time you get a new loan, the interest rate is higher. After a few short years, the new loans are just for paying the previous loans, and there is no money left for making that investment that would have made you a better and happier person. . . You just got stupid!

Unfortunately, after just a few loan cycles, you’re no longer dealing with friends who would gladly lend you money at cheap interest rates so that you can prosper.

You are now dealing with sharks telling you exactly what they want you to do and what to sign, and they make you sign deals and make promises, and take actions that will go even against your own family, kids, property, and even against your own God and against your own health. . . Yes, against your own health!

. . . They own your soul and you now realize that the only way out is to pass on the responsibility to your children, or to the next in line. . .

This is certainly the case of our country. As Musa knows, the money he is borrowing, he will no longer be responsible for the payments. He is serving Belize on a silver platter to the loan sharks of the world.

The UDP is no different than the current administration, they just need a chance to get us deeper in the slaughter hole. Belize will never become prosperous if you keep voting for the same parties that are nothing but elected inept, ignorant and greedy individuals.

The US \$565 Million loan being promoted by Musa is being criminally negotiated. Its terms and conditions blatantly disregard the

opposed to anyone who wants to give us \$10 million but rest assured they already know from our policy which we produced in the municipal election that there is no political patronage here. Don’t come knocking at VIP’s doors expecting any compensation and we have to dance to the tune as other parties have done.”

But Lopez says they envision a campaign that is low key and low cost, “There ain’t going to be no love fests, there ain’t going to be no free beers or dollar beers, there ain’t going to be no t-shirts. We have already made a decision that if you can afford t-shirt in your constituency fine but it is not the t-shirt that wins an election. Thousands of dollars are spent on t-shirts and we are not going that route. So rest assured you are looking at prudent spending from campaign onwards.”

The members of the VIP said they do not want to diminish the good done by any of the major parties but that a new way of thinking is required if Belize is to move forward. Among their slogans is “VIP will stop the rip-off and return control to the people” and “Clean the system now! Vote VIP! Save Belize!” (see page 16 for their full manifesto.)

interests of our country.

The UDP has washed its hands from this deal by voicing softly their objections, just to be contrarian to the ruling party, they keep clear of their responsibility at this time and have no certain idea of what’s to come to all of us. The UDP fails to analyze, or even to become fully informed of the facts and figures of what the PUP is getting us into, the UDP lacks the knowledge and financial experience to understand it.

The UDP offers no single fact or figure to explain us what’s going on, and why we are headed at full speed into a brick wall. The UDP has no brains, no analysts, is unable to comprehend the depth of the reality of the Belizeans. It has no heart to care about us, just like the PUP. Their greed is even worse than the greed of the PUP.

Forget about corruption, this is even worse! It is evident that Musa and his team, and the UDP for that matter, actually work for the bankers as exclusive agents to rape our country, and this constitutes treason of the highest order! Yes, TREASON! Try this thought for a change and Musa and his team can be prosecuted and very easily found guilty. The UDP and its people are equally traitors. The UDP has enough weight to stop the PUP, but lack the brains.

Will the UDP, let alone the PUP, ever come out of their closets and provide you with full disclosure and analysis of a deal like the one we are facing right now? No, they haven’t and will never disclose anything with certainty or clarity to any of us. It is not in their best interest. They seek power for their own personal benefit.

*Continued next week...
or go to www.nationreformparty.com for the full article and financial charts.*



Public Statement on Universal Health Services ‘Mess’ Association of Concerned Belizeans, January 17, 2007

The Trustees of the Association of Concerned Belizeans (ACB) join the Belize Medical and Dental Union and the general public to reject the contradictory positions coming from the Cabinet of Belize and pen of Minister Godfrey Smith, in respect of the \$44 million dollar debt which Universal Health Services (UHS) was left free to rack up at tax payers expense.

Firstly, here is another flagrant example of this Government’s ineptitude in managing public finances and treating the national treasury as the private domain of Cabinet ministers. In normal business arrangements shareholders are asked to give their personal guarantee when their company receives a loan. In the case of UHS the Government appears to have taken over this responsibility from the shareholders and substituted a public guarantee of this private debt. It seems to ACB that the Belize Bank, on the strength of the Government’s guarantee, allowed UHS to rack up more and more debt and must have known that at the end of the day, the Belizean people would have to pay.

The Government of Belize should not have guaranteed the debt of UHS, and this wrongful act should not be swept under the carpet, as Minister Smith would want.

Secondly, to give an open-ended guarantee supported by public monies where UHS was left unchecked and permitted to draw down at The Belize Bank without limit, is nothing less than misfeasance in public office by the Cabinet. Government had a duty to monitor UHS’ expenditure and performance and the owners/managers of UHS, having accepted a public guarantee, had a fiduciary duty to taxpayers to manage the utilization of such a publicly guaranteed facility with extreme care and financial prudence.

The ministers in Cabinet who made this decision should all be held accountable and the owners of UHS should be made to surrender their full equity in this failed company.

Thirdly, having already lost \$32 million of public monies to the Belize Bank, it is sheer financial madness for the Government to borrow through UHS another \$14 million from the Belize Bank in order to pay off other UHS debts, and for the DFC to write off \$8 million (tax payers money again!). The ACB regards this as a convoluted and irrational scheme from the Government; throwing good money after bad.

Thus, there is major public resentment against the Government, UHS and the bank because of this guarantee, compounded by the giving away of thousands of acres of land at North Ambergris Caye to satisfy a ‘crony’ debt; and for now preparing to take up more debt from the Belize Bank, while the failed owners and managers of UHS walk away untouched.

The ACB is of the opinion that this whole sordid scheme requires a thorough independent forensic audit. Further, the country and people of Belize would be best served if Government cuts its losses at UHS, pursues the defaulting owners and managers and directs public funds towards improving the existing facilities and services of the national public health sector, especially the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital. We therefore call on all Belizeans to join in the rejection of this scandalous Government scheme.



ARIES
(Mar. 21- April 20)
Your charisma will no doubt attract a lot of attention. Quarrels will erupt if you get into philosophical debates with friends. Try to keep your opinions to yourself. Involvement in groups will be favorable. Business partnerships will prove lucrative.

TAURUS
(Apr. 21- may 21)
Added knowledge will give you the edge when dealing with peers. Someone you care about may let you down or criticize your methods. Get involved in activities that will bring you knowledge about foreign land, philosophies, or cultures. You have to believe in yourself and your talents.

GEMINI
(May 22-June 21)
Mingle with those who can further your goals. Look into joining groups that can give you hands-on advice about business. New romantic ties can be made; however, you must make sure that your motives are not selfish before you make your move. It's time to reevaluate your own motives and make changes to yourself first.

CANCER
(June 22-June 22)
You should feel a little more stable about your position; however, don't be surprised if a job offer comes your way. You will need to work diligently in order to accomplish even the smallest amount. You can make new friends by taking part in social events involving colleagues. You will be able to close any deals successfully.

LEO
(July 23-Aug 22)
You'll have amazing ideas, but superiors may try to block your attempts at implementing them. Don't try to hide your true feelings from your mate. You will be able to get along well with colleagues. Be sure to take time for old friends or relatives you don't get to see that often.

VIRGO
(Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)
Put your efforts into making constructive

improvements to your environment and to your state of mind. Be aware of any deception on the part of those you deal with. You can pick up valuable information if you listen to those with more experience. You will do well if you mingle with the brass this week.

LIBRA
(Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)
Don't trust others with private in formation that could

be used against you. You will be best suited to doing things around the house or inviting friends over for a visit. Your intellectual wit will bring greater popularity with your peers. Pleasure trips will be favorable and bring about possible romance.

SCORPIO
(Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You will be emotional about family matters. Those close to your heart may be difficult to reason with. Go after your goals and don't be afraid to ask for assistance. Spend time with friends or family.

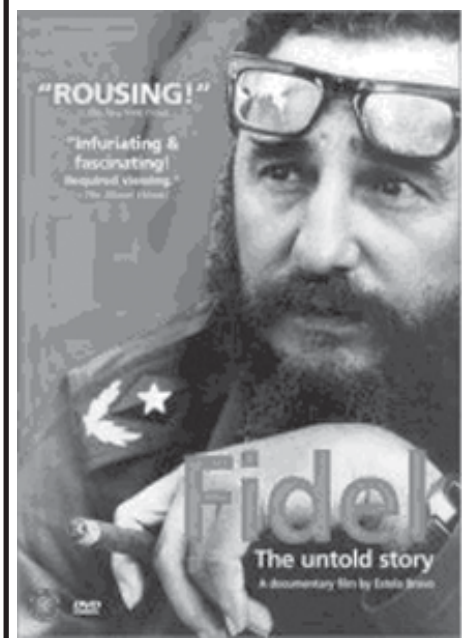
TARIUS
(Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)
Be precise in your communications to avoid any misunderstandings and arguments. Your efforts will be rewarded handsomely. You could come into extra cash. Some of your new friends may not be that trustworthy.

CAPRICORN
(Dec 22.- Jan. 20)

Take a look at yourself and prepare to make those changes you've been contemplating. If you work in conjunction with someone else you may find they're trying to steal your thunder. Creative pursuits should payoff. Clear up domestic chores that have remained undone for some time.

AQUARIUS
(Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)
Your mate may be distressed if you refuse to make a commitment. Later in the week your boss will pat you on the back for a job well done. Things aren't as they appear. It's doubtful anyone will try to stand in your way or cut you off at the pass this week

PISCES
(Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
Your involvement with children will be most rewarding. Go out with close friends who understand your situation and your needs. Unexpected events may be upsetting. Help an older member with a problem that faces them.



To be shown at Cayo CET (Center for Employment Training)
Wednesday, January 24, at 7:00 pm
Admission Price: an open mind

Fidel Castro is one of the most influential and controversial figures of our time.

“Fidel” offers a unique opportunity to view the man through exclusive interviews with Castro himself, along with historians, public figures, close friends, and well known people like Alice Walker, Harry Belafonte, Nelson Mandela, Angela Davis, Ramsey Clark and a former CIA agent Philip Agee, with footage from the Cuban State archives.

Family members and close friends, including Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, offer a window into the personal life of Fidel.

“Fidel” tells a previously untold story and presents a new view of this powerful and compelling figure along with a history of the Cuban revolution and the fight to survive the post-Soviet period.

If you have any questions, contact geocanbz@gmail.com.

Hunt for good food

With Anthony Hunt



Dario's Meat Pies

33 Hyde's Lane (Tel: 203-5197)

While not technically a restaurant, this Belizean institution deserves to be reviewed. As Pollo Campero is to El Salvador, Dario is to Belize. His meat pies are always hot and belly filling. They are world famous, and the number one request from those we go to visit all over the world (Dukunu probably comes in 2nd). In fact, the local Paparrazzi has been dodging the Prime Minister for his mugshot at Darios. He often has his “tree dalla pie attack” on Saturday mornings, where he can be spotted in casual gear. Now, where else in the world can you stand in line with the Prime Minister behind you, ordering through “wan lee hole?” Say what you want for politics, but at Dario's everyone is equal. Just be forewarned, if you get there late, you might not get any, and yes, contrary to what some believe, there is a method to eating them without the gravy spilling on your shirt...ask the P.M. Open Daily. 75¢ each, BRUK UP pies available at discount.

Fly Tropic Air - Fly Tropic Air - Fly Tropic Air
“The Airline Of Belize”

Vision Inspired by the People, VIP...

☞☛ (Continued From Page 3)
the rest of your lives or will you make the change now?

So brothers and sisters, this new generation of politicians bid our nation to move in a direction that blends the good things of the past with new concepts of governance. A direction that will reform our destroyed, our corrupted political system. This direction begs our people to stand up and begin the work to entrench 5 pillars of nation building that for the past 25 years our people have been flatly denied.

In pursuing this new direction, we Belizeans will build for ourselves a sense of National Unity, that will keep our spirits high as we suffer together in the process of nation building. It will be that same sense of National Unity that will set the stage for our rejoicing together as we enjoy our earned rights and freedoms. In pursuing this new direction, we Belizeans will have the opportunity to establish for ourselves a Culture of Productivity, in which our people will innovate to improve the nation, while government maintains the environment and motivate the people.

This New direction will establish for our people a Family Life Environment in which our children are recognized as the precious lifeline of our nation and their families, supported in providing for their needs. Happy families will rear happy children. Happy children will become productive citizens and productive citizens will build us a strong nation. Pursuing this new direction will bring us real Social Justice where the personal dignity of every citizen is respected and the poor ensured their civil rights to survival and progress; Social Justice is only possible when as a society we recognize that like a chain, we are only as strong as our weakest link.

And finally the pursuit of this new direction will set the stage for fair representation in governmental affairs, where the composition

of government reflects the wishes of all the people. The people will have the power to recall elected leaders who betray their trust while our brothers and sisters who live abroad shall be encouraged to participate more significantly in our national development.

Brothers and sisters, this new direction is moderate and it is visionary. It strikes at the heart of corruption and aims to return political power to you the people. It seeks no retribution but demands accountability and fair compensation where necessary.

Even now, we are engaged in consultations with quality Belizean professionals who stand ready to support this direction with their expertise. We invite your participation. Please feel free to contact us if you wish to lend a hand. Today we present you with our direction. This document exposes the principles and concepts that the VIP upholds. In the next 2 months, we shall be consulting with you to hear your views on the issues. From this consultation will emerge a National Agenda which will form the basis of our party's manifesto for elections 2008.

We maintain and I will state very frankly, that this task cannot be done without your financial support. Our bank account is now open for donations. You may contact our headquarters at #1 Cardinal Street in Belmopan, Tel: 802-2926, or email us at info@vip.org.bz. Our Webb page is: <http://www.vip.org.bz>. Your contribution will be acknowledged and handled with proper financial practices.

Finally brothers and sisters, though it is a common adage that money talks, we think that your personal input is even more critical because money does not vote, people do. Most importantly, we ask for your continued prayers. Pray for Belize that our Creator will bless us on this journey into nationhood.

Thank you for your attention and we are now open for questions.

We need An ACT...

☞☛ (Continued From Page 4)
nothings'' we are used to hearing in hushed tones. For the first time, the nation was treated to a realistic, practical roadmap to get us out of this mess the D6's have gotten us in. And, all their gatherings start with a prayer. This is a good sign. We need prayers.

The people of Belize have had enough of meaningless rhetoric, premeditated broken promises. Only the select few live the life of the rich and famous while the rest struggle to stay above the poverty line. We know where the other D6's bread is buttered; he boasts about it on TV interviews; but, Mr. Musa has said his only Lord is to "follow the money". When will they file their assets declaration form as the law requires? As lawyers, they must know they are breaking the law Mr Esquivel had written. Naturally, there will be no "witch hunt" we are assured by the "mass party" PM in waiting. No accounting on the day of reckoning.

But the countless marginal families are counting, are they not? Dependent on you like US Welfare recipient families.

Strapped. Both D6's have mentally enslaved a significant number of families in their divisions through weekly handouts to guarantee their seat in the House of Representatives. Is this legal? Apparently so. Apparently, these families and poor people all over Belize cannot see that while they may receive little gifts in one hand under the table, they are jacked every time they go to the shop (and gas stations) with massive consumption taxes that hit their socio-economic bracket the hardest.

No, this country is in such a mess no election can get us out of it. No international observers will see the slight-of-hand tricks that will take place on election day; and they won't stay around long enough to see the chains—held tight by the leader of the government and the leader of the opposition—dragged over us again for another three to five years. Nope, what we need is something really drastic to set things right.

Nothing short of an act of God. So pray Belize, pray. Pray someone sees the light before all the lights go out and they move to Miami or Houston.

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New Distributors are being added every week so look out for increased availability. You can also join our mailing list, see page 2 for details.

THE VIP DIFFERENCE

VIP will STOP THE RIP-OFF and
RETURN CONTROL TO THE PEOPLE

1. Reduce the power of that "all mighty CABINET" by removing from its financial control; the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Auditor General, the Contractor General and the Elections and Boundaries office.
2. Create a State Department under the office of the Governor General to oversee the fore-mentioned offices.
3. Amend the Referendum Act to allow the people to vote directly on local and national issues.
4. Introduce a Recall Referendum to end the term of elected leaders who have lost the public trust.
5. Introduce Proportional Representation for General Elections.
6. Facilitate the strengthening of trade unions as partners in the democratic process, to combat political victimization, patronage and social injustice.
7. Facilitate discussion on the issue of allowing Public Officers unpaid leave to participate in electoral politics.
8. Facilitate born Belizeans who reside abroad in the exercise of their birthright, to vote in general elections, subject to referendum.
9. Amend the Constitution to give Belize an elected mixed member, proportional representation Senate with half the members elected at mid-term.
10. Amend the constitution to allow the Prime Minister to choose his Cabinet from the public at large.
11. Amend the Constitution to limit the size of Cabinet to a maximum of 9 ministers and place a consecutive 2 terms limit on the office of the Prime Minister.
12. Enact stiff campaign finance laws to regulate the financing of political campaigns.
13. Amend the Freedom of Information Act to expedite access to government information.
14. Reinforce the autonomy of the police in fighting crime.
15. Enforce UN and OAS anti-corruption laws.

Clean the System Now!
Vote VIP! Save Belize!

A New Direction

All Must Benefit!

Join **VIP**



A New Generation

Vision Inspired by the People

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DIRECTION

Contact: #1 Cardinal Street, Belmopan
Tel: 802-2926
e-mail: info@vip.org.bz
<http://www.vip.org.bz>

Belizean Brothers and Sisters:

During our first 25 years of independence, both mainstream political parties have, each in their terms of office, postponed Belize's national development by their failure to establish for our people, five required pillars of nationhood:

1. a sense of National Unity
2. a Culture of Productivity
3. a Family Life environment
4. social Justice
5. fair Representation in governmental affairs

Because of this failure, we ordinary Belizeans must now endure a substandard quality of life. Though nature has blessed us with wealth untold, mis-education, poverty, crime and disease subdue us under a solid choke hold. Our people live in fear of political victimization that has damaged their self esteem and broken their confidence.

In response to the tears and fears of our people, the VIP invites you and all Belizeans at home and abroad, to join in our struggle for real national development. Together we must shed the fear that has for decades enslaved our minds. Institutions and systems that continue to fail us, we must abandon. Let us instead work to build new, positive and progressive national institutions that will fill our people's needs and satisfy our common desires. It is time to re-educate ourselves to eradicate poverty, crime and preventable disease from our everyday lives. Our land is rich, our population small and our capabilities high. United with purpose, we will make Belize a better home!

With this spirit, the VIP declares its commitment to return control of our country to you, the people. In so doing we shall cement the fore-mentioned pillars of nationhood into the fabric of our governance. The VIP party offers competent leadership in this direction. Our leadership is humble but determined, receptive but focused, open but decisive. We ask only for the opportunity to work with you for our common good and that of our next generation.

Your financial support is needed in this process. Even more necessary are your ideas and your involvement. Please contact our office to make your offer. Finally, we ask for your prayers, that our Creator will bless Belize on this our journey into nationhood.

Yours in service

Paul M. Morgan Sr., Chairman



VIP PROMOTES NATIONAL UNITY

A people become a nation only when they struggle together upholding their responsibilities and rejoice together enjoying their rights.

- Belize's Territorial Integrity and the right of Belizeans to Self Determination must never be compromised.
- Belize's natural resources and environment are entrusted to each generation for future generations. Any use thereof must be in accordance with sound policies of conservation and sustainability
- All Belizeans must benefit equitably from the use of Belize's natural resources.
- Communities must take primary responsibility and authority within their own environs.
- Citizenship records, healthcare, education, legal representation and other government services must be afforded to all Belizeans regardless of economic means.
- Belize's national symbols must represent the consciousness of all our cultures.
- Belize demands from every Belizean, good citizenship and full personal effort to develop our nation.
- Belize demand responsible accountability from all who serve the public.
- Belize demands social responsibility from all private sector operators.
- To achieve sustainable national development, the government of Belize must pursue a common Belizean AGENDA that sets out national development targets.

VIP PROMOTES A CULTURE OF PRODUCTIVITY

With appropriate education the people will innovate to improve the environment while Government must motivate and maintain the environment.

- Human capital development must become the key strategy in Belize's move towards productivity.
- Belize must move first to produce what we consume.
- Government must ensure that Belize's resources and services are directed toward the production of quality goods and services for local and foreign markets.
- Government must invest in production and business research.
- The productive capacity of Belizeans living abroad must be harnessed and directed towards Belize's National Development.
- Government must treat producer as partners in business and not merely as tax beasts of burden.



VIP PROMOTES FAMILY LIFE

Our children are the lifeline of our nation. The family unit provides protection for their survival and development.

- Belize's sustainable development demands that we rear children to their best possible physical, mental and spiritual health. The family institution must be supported in doing so.
- A parenting initiative emphasizing fatherhood must be started.
- A National Family Safety Net must be established to ensure that no child falls victim to parental misfortune, delinquency or abuse.
- The right to food, safety, healthcare, housing, and education for children must be prominent focal points in formulating government's national development policies.

VIP PROMOTES SOCIAL JUSTICE

Economic prosperity and political power are meaningless if not accompanied by personal dignity.

- Belizeans must have equal rights and treatment in accessing national services and resources.
- Protection and empowerment of the most vulnerable; THE POOR of society, must be a priority in the distribution of our nation's wealth.
- Political victimization and patronage must be vigorously combated.
- Campaign fairness laws must be passed and strictly enforced to bring equity to our political system.
- The INTEGRITY of the Public Service must be restored to make government effective and efficient.



VIP PROMOTES FAIR REPRESENTATION

Government must reflect the People's will.

- Voting to elect our government is a Belizean birthright.
- Representatives of the people must be accountable to the electorate or lose their mandate.
- Proportional Representation must replace the current "first past the post" election system.
- The people must be facilitated to vote directly on national issues by way of Referendum.
- Belize's governance must be intensely studied at every level of Belize's formal education.
- The right of the Press to government information and to responsibly inform the public must be upheld.

