

## The State of the St. Martin Nation

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**NATION *talk*** –special edition

Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Thank you very much for that kind introduction, Mr. Christopher EMMANUEL, host of **NATION *talk***.

Listeners on our island of St. Martin/St. Maarten, as well as listeners around the world listening to this program by means of the internet.

Today, it is Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas-eve, 2008.

I am Leopold JAMES, executive-producer of **NATION *talk*** and also president of the St. Martin Nation Building Foundation & the Association L' Esprit de Concordia.

It certainly is a privilege for me, on behalf of my fellow board-members, to address you on the occasion of this special installment of **NATION *talk***.

This installment will be dedicated to the 'State of the St. Martin Nation' whereby we will look back at the year 2008, and look ahead at the New Year 2009 as well .

In this particular address, we will evaluate some of the main issues that have been left un-resolved in 2008, as well as a number of encouraging developments as they relate to the people of this island.

In addition, we also will mention a few recommendations for the New Year 2009.

But first of all listeners, at this point in time, it certainly is in place to thank our Heavenly Maker, for sparing our lives.

Also we remember those, who departed from this earthly world, and we do hope that wherever they are, it is a place well-deserved.

Looking back at the year 2008, we observe that, even more than at the end of last Year 2007, as a people and as a community, we find ourselves at a very complex and critical combination of cross-roads.

The issues- and concerns as a result of the island's rampant over-development-, based on short-sightedness, lack of vision and of genuinely responsible political leadership, are too many to be mentioned here.

Therefore, we will suffice with a few examples of challenges to the island's future to substantiate our concerns.

Without any doubt, the massive- and uncontrolled immigration situation, as well as its many complicated, socio-economic implications, remains concern number one for any sustainable and balanced development on the island, as well as for our safety- and security.

This rampant influx of un-documented individuals, is increasingly contributing towards a 'sub-culture' of lawlessness on the island.

Examples of this trend of lawlessness, are for instance, the creation of illegal businesses such as gipsy-busses & taxis, setting up of vending stalls all over the island, driving-schools, and many other type of 'business-activities'.

Collectively, these illegal commercial activities create an 'underground-economy' controlled by mainly immigrants, which does not contribute to the coffers of this island.

Consequently, this mentality is posing a very unfair competition and de-motivation for those who choose to follow the legal avenues and pay their taxes.

Another example of the imported 'culture of lawlessness', is the increasing phenomenon of trespassing and squatting on people's land.

As if this is not disrespectful enough, some illegal residents have the audacity to physically threaten native land-owners, who try to reclaim their inherited land.

The systematic abuse of the social-welfare system, as a way of life, especially on the Northern-side of the island, is still a major concern denying those really deserving of help, the possibility to make use of this service, the way it was intended for in the first place.

Asocial behavior, and extremely brazen and violent crime by a growing number of young people is also on the increase.

The mushrooming of gangs and the many graffiti paintings are an ominous sign of what is yet to come.

Many attribute the asocial behavior of many young people to a large extent to the fact that many of them are the offspring from immigrant mothers, who systematically gave birth to children, not out of love, but simply in order to benefit from the very attractive French welfare system.

This system allows for them not to have to 'hit a stroke of work' and still qualify for hundreds of Euros allowance per child per month, free medical care, free apartments, and to buy the largest SUV's available.

Needless to emphasize, that this creates a culture of laziness and an over-dependence on social welfare system as a 'life-style', that is passed on to successive generations.

Worse yet, it allows for people to actually give birth to a new generation of 'Good Friday eggs', lacking every possible sense of responsibility and other social skills.

This is now the generation that is 'haunting society' and who terrorize neighborhoods in various ways.

With certain individuals apparently 'getting away' with in fact breaking the laws of the land, many law-abiding citizens are now wondering what sense it makes to continue abiding by the law, if that means having to 'pay the price', while 'others' are being 'rewarded' for bad behavior.

This phenomenon, clearly signals the beginning of anarchy, street-terror and a state of total lawlessness in this overseas part of the Dutch Kingdom.

The birth-rate, among especially the Haitian immigrant-community remains exorbitantly high-, thereby creating a most dangerous population in-balance.

The end-result of this process will render the native-indigenous St. Martiners people a numerical minority in their own-and only land.

Another point of grave concern for us as a law-abiding native-indigenous St. Martin people, is the growing disregard of the Executive-Council of St. Maarten, for good governance and disrespect for democracy in general.

Incidents such as the disgraceful situation surrounding Commissioners BUNCAMPER-MOLANUS and LAVEIST, the secretly removing of documents and possible evidence from the Administration-building, have in fact contributed to a virtually irreconcilable lack of confidence especially in the sitting Government, despite efforts to control the damage done.

We have also taken notice of the ridiculous situation, where a native, St. Martin medical-specialist is forced to go through so much of bureaucracy, and un-necessary frustration, that once again a total wrong message is conveyed to other professional St. Martiners studying and working abroad and who would like to return.

In this situation, Government bears the ultimate responsibility and has completely failed again to show leadership.

As a matter of fact, many of the above-mentioned problems become very difficult to resolve, with a Government, whose 'modus-operandi' is to 'blur' its functioning and to completely disregard the rules of good Governance.

Such a Government, which clearly lacks ethics, perhaps directly and certainly indirectly in fact creates an atmosphere, very conducive for illegality at large, by 'setting the tone' for how things are done on the 'Friendly-island'.

Therefore no amount of money, number of police-cars etc. can effectively fight crime, since our main problem is NOT about money and police-cares, but about a 'mindset' in the first place, including a role-model behavior of the political leadership of the island.

In general, we are very concerned about the fact, that there is an overall import of 'foreign poverty' in the country, that brings in no added value, but is contributing to the image of a very run-down third world image.

At the same time, we are neglecting our own elderly- and retired citizens, who have made great sacrifices in building the foundation of this island.

This we consider a shame and a betrayal of the principle that 'Charity starts at home'.

In addition, while focusing on new constitutional changes on both sides of the island, native-indigenous St. Martiners are being marginalized and becoming even less regarded and recognized than before.

This too makes absolutely no-sense for the natives of this island.

Fortunately, we are also happy to mention a number of encouraging developments which took place in 2008.

One such case, certainly is the repeatedly mentioning in an Island-council meeting, the term 'native-indigenous' St. Martiners by a number of Island-council members.

It took quite a while to recognize the existence of this group of people and it could not have been done in a more appropriate setting, which is in the Legislative-Hall of the Government-administration building.

That such was done to justify a 'project' for one of the Commissioner's own 'buddies' matters not.

What does matter, is that it is now 'on the records' that native-indigenous St. Martiners DO exist.

The introduction of a new work-permit policy is also a very big step in the right direction of bringing about balance and 'sanity' in the development of the 'Friendly island'.

However, in comparison with our concept of the 'MARSHALL PLAN', or 'Law on Equal Opportunity' it might prove to be a 'knee-jerk response', that does not take the entire development of the island into consideration.

We are very concerned also that the actions against this new policy, might evoke some very aggressive response on the part of locals, because many simply are fed up with the overdevelopment of the island at their expense.

Success will depend heavily on a balanced approach as formulated by our 'Law on equal Opportunity'

Also we commend the Island-government for requiring a 'pledge of allegiance', albeit too 'colonial', as part of the naturalization process, something we have long promoted and implemented in our own organizations as well.

The Collectivity on the Northern-side of the island must also be commended for establishing the community-councils; this offers a tremendous possibility to the people of St. Martin to have an input in the development of their districts and by extension their country.

With the publication of its new website point COM, both in the French and English language, the Collectivity has made vitally important move.

We say this, because too long, many of our own non-French speaking native-indigenous St. Martiners have been excluded from very important information, while at the same time other 'Francophone' immigrants have been able to capitalize on access to important information for their own benefit.

We must also thank and commend highly Minister of Justice, David DICK for his determined efforts to bring control in the immigration situation of the island.

On an international level, we must reflect as well on the election of Senator Barack OBAMA as the new President of the USA.

In our opinion, President-elect, Barack OBAMA embodies hope and unity and can therefore bring a great measure of peace and hope to the world and will inspire many people to bring positive changes in their part of the world.

We therefore pray for his health and safety and for a new global leadership based on moral considerations and universal justice.

Our thanks at this point also goes out to those who signed on to our i-Petition endorsing Senator OBAMA as president; it was a historical event and signifies the importance of using the 'web' to promote various causes.

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We would at this point in time, as well like to share a number of recommendations with Government and the people of this island.

One such recommendation is to allow for input in the final version of the constitution of the following chapters and points; a preamble defining our history, our emancipation, our ancestral-heritage, a 'Marshall plan' or 'Law on Equal Opportunity' and more.

We also hereby urgently appeal to the Island-government to allow for a substantial portion of the debt-relief by the Netherlands to 'trickle down' in a 'socio-economic package' to the native people of this island as a symbolic gesture of our reparation of our enslaved ancestors.

Allowing for such, would most definitely give the natives and Antilleans living on the island a reason to celebrate and consequently strongly support the new status.

After all, unlike people in the region, the natives of this island have never been granted the opportunity, as laid down by the UN to have their rights of self-determination honored.

In general, once more we urge the political leaders of both sides of the island, to have the courage and pride, to recognize the native-indigenous St. Martin People as the host population of this island and to respect and champion their ancestral rights, without having to trample on the genuine human-rights of others.

It should be very clear to the powers that be, that there will never be any form of stability or sustainable constitutional- and/or other development, without the natives being able to establish the most stable foundation, which can effectively enable others to be included in the process as well.

As far as this program **NATION talk** is concerned, we are very saddened to have to inform you that this installment is expected to be our last on this radio-station.

We would have liked to be able to continue expanding our relationship with you via this station.

However, forces beyond our control are the reasons we can no longer intend to make use of this forum without compromising our commitment to the native-indigenous People of this island.

Nevertheless, we are determined to continue promoting the cause of the St. Martin nation building- and unification process along 'other means' and we therefore invite you to stay in touch with us via our website; [www.stmartinnation.org](http://www.stmartinnation.org)

To my fellow-board members, associates, Diane, Jesse, Jerry, Larissa, Mary, Baige, Etique, Noreen, Mary, Chris, my wife, the management of this radio-station, Mr. & Mrs. Wilson, I say thank you for the opportunity granted to me to have made **NATION talk** possible.

Without your loyal contributions, the achievements made in bringing about awareness of the nation building and unification process would not have been possible.

In ending listeners, on behalf of our complete board and associates, allow me to wish each and everyone of you a Merry Christmas 2008 and a very happy, safe and peaceful 2009.

May God bless the St. Martin people, the St. Martiners-at-heart, and all others.  
Thank you for listening.