

**STATEMENT BY WINSTON DOOKERAN
POLITICAL LEADER, CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE
AT A PUBLIC MEETING IN CARONI EAST
28 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Highlights:

- *Dookeran declares November 5th 2007 'Freedom Day' for Trinidad and Tobago.*
- *Calls on Manning to publicly declare and explain his role in the 1990 coup*
- *Will reveal more on the coup next Tuesday in Debe*
- *Tells supporters Manning 'quivered' as he pathetically ended the Parliamentary term*
- *Country today has never been more divided*
- *A COP Government will make T&T safe and secure again*
- *Tells Manning to declare his stand on the Executive Presidency before the general elections*
- *Reveals COP policies - 'The Congress of the People's Directions for the Future'*
- *Before leaving Parliament, shook hands with the Prime Minister and said 'I am sorry, goodbye Mr Manning'.*
- *Assured him he would be included in the COP's national pension plan*
- *Calls on members of the PNM and UNC to forsake their failed parties and unite with the COP*

Thank you very much my friends. You have heard the firepower of the 'corpse'. I did not realise that Mr Manning listens to his seerwoman so much, but the day I said jumbie, he ran and called an election for the people of Trinidad and Tobago!

My friends, I see it in your faces. I look in your eyes here tonight, in your thousands in Cunupia. I hear it in your voices and I feel it in your heart. November 5th 2007 is FREEDOM DAY for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Finally we are seeing the end of the tunnel. Finally, the sacrifices that we have been making, we are beginning to see signs of the rewards. Finally, all the people of Trinidad and Tobago who came to keep this party alive and celebrated its first anniversary in Woodford Square, I say to you all – THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

You the people have created the dream that all of us always hoped for. You the people from all parts of our country have created the great expectations that we felt at one time would never come our way. You the people here in Cunupia gave birth to the movement in Chaguanas when I was first elected your Member of Parliament and I now return to take you into Government.

I want to say thanks to all those who came together and worked in the dark of night with all their venom, when everyone said it was not possible, when everyone said that the journey that we were embarking upon was an impossible one, tonight you have made a statement that this journey is about to end in victory.

November 5th 2007 is Freedom Day for Trinidad and Tobago .

But let me start by paying tribute to some of our councillors in County Caroni – Manohar Gosine, Sahadeo Boondoo, Narsingh Rambaran and Paras Ramoutar – you have been the pillars of the victory that we are about to bring home. I say to you all, thank you!

I must also pay tribute to the Chairman of Caroni East, Chandreka Sahadeo and the Chairman of Chaguanas East, Roy Lawrence, for keeping faith and building this movement in Trinidad and Tobago.

So the day is upon us, the Prime Minister has finally found he has no pockets anymore and it is now in your pockets to decide who shall win the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The time for this glorious day of change is now. The time to change our politics is upon us. The time to change our Prime Minister is before us. And the time to change the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is now in our hands.

The entire world is watching. All the capitals of the world which have an interest in our country are looking on. From London, to Washington, to Caracas, to Toronto...thousands of our fellow citizens who are living in these countries are looking on to see if we can do it here in Trinidad and Tobago .

Our sisters and brothers in the Caribbean are looking on with eager anticipation. Our friends in St Lucia who did it; our friends in the Bahamas and our friends in Jamaica are looking on to see if we can do it in Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to ask you here tonight – can we do it in Trinidad and Tobago?

Can you do it in Trinidad and Tobago?

**Can the Congress of the People record this Brian Lara moment in politics and bring the Government down on November 5th 2007?
Can we?**

Well my friends, it is all now in your hands. It's in the hands of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It's in the hands of those who have been suffocating under the PNM and those who have been cremated under the UNC.

My friends, we will bring them all together because this is a moment not only for the COP, this is a moment for Trinidad and Tobago .

We must start with the punches because now we are in the season of missiles. The PNM and Patrick Manning in particular and his cohorts have been threatening to throw missiles. So far the missiles have backfired, and the one that has backfired most is when Patrick Manning had the audacity to claim that I was involved in treason by supporting the Muslimeen in 1990.

Imagine that! Imagine a Prime Minister, the Chairman of the National Security Council, would fire that kind of missile!

So tonight, I make this statement – it is time that we throw the punches and it is time that we call on Mr Manning to declare and explain his role in the 1990 coup and to do so in front of the television and I shall join him on stage to answer whatever he has to say !

If he wants to have the confidence of the people for the next five years, he must do so on the basis of truth!

Let him reveal his role. We have been calling for the proper method to do so, but he chose an election period to castigate me in a role which all of Trinidad and Tobago and the world know have never been in my purview at all!

So my friends, this is not the first missile. But for every missile, we shall have a stronger punch from now on! And tonight they are in St Augustine.

I want to tell him that on Tuesday, we shall be in Debe. The missile they are likely to throw might not come over the Caroni Bridge, but the one we throw in Debe will go straight to Whitehall and the PNM .

You know that I have never been afraid. You know that I have always had the courage. You know that I have never been stronger than I am today

and you know that I shall always be brave about rescuing Trinidad and Tobago and to take us to the new horizon.

But that is so not because of me, that is so not because of who I am, it is so because of you the people of Trinidad and Tobago . It is you who have given us the strength, courage and bravery to move on regardless of the obstacles in our way.

We have been moving for one year now and we shall move for the next 36 days until victory comes to your hands.

It is easy to understand why the people now have never been more ready. Today when we had our last sitting of Parliament, it was the most pathetic end of a Parliamentary term that I have ever witnessed.

Almost quivering, standing up, the Prime Minister says in the lowest of voices, that now I am going to dissolve Parliament and call an election . The most anti-climatic ending of a Parliamentary term, a few words were said by our Chief Whip.

And then the Speaker said that the greatest contribution that he has made in the five years he was in Parliament was that he now has the Parliamentary Channel to cover the proceedings. Imagine, that is the sum total of the contribution of the six years of Parliament.

The Minister of Works was defeated on a motion by the Opposition today in Parliament. For the first time, you had a Minister of Government's opportunity to speak defeated by the Opposition. They have the majority in Parliament, but our numbers were larger than their's!

This is because half of the Government has already abandoned them and the other half is ready to be abandoned by the people of our country.

The failure of this Parliamentary term which was presided over by Mr Manning is there in the records. Our country today has never been more divided. Everyone is running for his own safety because the collective responsibility of the Government has faltered .

Our poor Andy Thomas is only the latest example of what we have grown accustomed to as our fate in Trinidad and Tobago. And each one of us would have had children, or friends, or colleagues who have had to go through that turmoil.

And presiding over that state of anarchy, that state of lawlessness, that state of human suffering by the thousands murdered, kidnapped, robbed and who have had to face the might of those who cannot be controlled by the laws was Patrick Manning.

In any other country, with that record, he would not be able to make even one political statement for his re-election!

And I want to assure you here tonight that we on this platform understand fully well, as we confront the problems of our nation, that our number one priority will be to make Trinidad and Tobago safe and secure again !

I want you to follow what will happen in the next few weeks as we unleash in greater detail how this will be done. But the most important reason why it will happen is because we believe that the top in any country influences how the country behaves. And if the top violates the law, and blames the people, and tries to cover up corruption in their own party, and hides from the truth, then the country will behave in the same way.

So if you want to change your fate, you have to change the man on top so that we can start again and we can walk the streets in safety !

Our institutions have now broken down. Our Justice system is exhibiting a spectacle that makes all of us bend our heads in shame. All of this under the chairmanship of the head of the Cabinet and his consistent personal vendetta. Even if he has to break down the separation of powers between the executive and judiciary, his personal vendetta comes before the public interest.

That is why I want to warn all of Trinidad and Tobago that when he talks about making himself the Executive President, be aware! He has already built the presidential palace and now he wants to be the Executive President.

He said it in no uncertain terms and he said he is going to the country to give him the constitutional majority so that he can become the Executive President.

Are you going to allow that to take place? Are you going to give up your rights as citizens of our democratic country to the powers of Mr Manning as an Executive President?

I say here tonight that I call on Mr Manning to declare his stand on the Executive Presidency in Trinidad and Tobago before the elections.

I call on him to declare it clearly – don't leave it in fuzziness, don't talk about innuendo. If we have an election, declare your position and I want to tell him that shall be the second debate we shall have in front of the cameras of Trinidad and Tobago !

My friends, there is only one way to go. That is the way of the COP! Because this is the only way that we can get into Government in Trinidad and Tobago.

All those who profess to wanting to deny Patrick Manning another term, I say to them all to come with us in the Congress of the People and let us do it together, let us do it firmly and let us do it for the future of the people of our country!

Do not give the people false hope. Do not do as Mr Manning and try to lure them with false promises. Our party does not believe in either offering false hope or in luring you with false promises.

I have said it more than once. We are here not to blame others. We are here not to complain about the incompetence of Mr Manning and his regime alone. We are here to construct a new Trinidad and Tobago for everyone!

And tonight, I can only announce it, but you will hear it from our spokespersons over the next few weeks. We have been doing our work, quietly, but surely!

You know I am a man who does not speak unless I am required to speak. And now is the time for me to speak and speak with you and the people of Trinidad and Tobago and to take on anything in our path.

So you see it here – 'The Congress of the People's Directions for the Future' . Pages and pages of work that we have put together, not on our own, but through the conversations we have had with the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

And you will hear from now on what these directions for the future are going to be. While Mr Manning and his cohorts try to bring down me, we shall leave them to die their natural deaths.

I must say that I have known Mr Manning for many years. I knew him when he was a young Minister, as the Minister of Energy. At that time I was the Member of Parliament for Chaguanas and I was the Economics Spokesperson for the United Labour Front. So I have known him for many years.

And to some extent, I have grown to respect him as a person. And it was really a sad moment for me when I walked to him after Parliament, shook his hand and said 'I am sorry, goodbye Mr Manning' .

And then I uttered – 'The national pension plan which I am planning for the country, you shall be eligible to benefit from it'.

We shook hands and I left. I left the Parliament with a similar sense of dismay as when I left in 1990 when this country was under violent attack against our democracy by men who committed treason.

I walked with a similar sense as I walked because I knew not where I was going then and now, I walked not know where I was going.

But what I do know, as I knew in 1990, wherever I am going will be for the benefit of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago . Today I say to you again, wherever I am going will be for the benefit of all the people of Trinidad and Tobago!

We have to join the new civilization in the world that has abandoned the littleness of the politics of Trinidad and Tobago ; that has abandoned the parochialism that has kept us in political imprisonment; that has rejected Political Leaders who seek political careers on the basis of division.

They use power not for the purposes of the objectives of power, but for the purposes of enrichment of those around them and for the accumulation of power!

So the time has come now in Trinidad and Tobago that we must have some marching orders. This is day one. Every day will come from now until November 5th 2007.

This is the day of Freedom for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

All of Trinidad and Tobago is now called upon to grasp the freedom, to get out of the insecurity that Mr Manning has placed us in – physical insecurity, economic insecurity, insecurity of the poor, insecurity of democracy. That is what he has left us in.

My friends, we must now stand up. We must open our eyes. I make a special appeal once more to all the loyal citizens of our country – you have been dreaming that one day something will emerge on the political platform that will take you out of the prison you found yourself.

You were dreaming one day that young men and women will join with the experienced ones and offer themselves for political life.

You were dreaming of the day when there would be a new perspective in charting the course for our future and our children's future.

You were all dreaming of this and some of you were dreaming for so long that when it came, you still thought that you were dreaming.

But you know now – IT IS FOR REAL!

We are here and we shall take the Government! We have grasped this dream as we have never done before. Because the price of not doing that is too high for our nation, our people, our society and the next generation.

So I make this appeal – don't complain about Mr Manning if you are in the PNM, leave him there and come to the Congress of the People!

Don't lament if you are in the UNC, with their leader – or leaders as the case may be – leave them there and come with us in the Congress of the People!

We are the only way, we are the surest way and we are the only opportunity that this country will have.

The panic that was created in Woodford Square was replicated in Diego Martin and today it is happening here. All those who were afraid of showing their hands because of the fear of victimization, knowing that the man on top had the full call of victimization at his disposal – the first thing he does when a proposal comes to him is not to ask whether it will benefit the country, but who in his party will benefit from it.

And we know he has victimized people. The Privy Council has been full of such cases. So I understood why so many people were afraid to show their hands. But now it is only 36 more days for them.

The countdown has started. There can be no victimization anymore. Come out my people, come out from where you are and show this country that you are now ready to stand up and take on this fight, you are ready to put Mr Manning where he belongs .

So I told my party today, when I walked out of Parliament and I realised that I have the greatest duty to perform for my nation and people, I know the burden is on me and my team. I know the road ahead is not going to be as easy as I would like. I know that we will face major challenges.

But what I also know is that if I don't stand up with you to take on those challenges then this country will go over a precipice and all of us shall go down into a precipice of despair and into the valleys. Valleys today are fighting to be screened!

I could not imagine that a Deputy Leader who has had 25 years in Parliament would have to fight his Leader to be screened.

And in our party...I said it a few nights ago, and I see in our audience here Nicole Dyer...like so many of our candidates – they have been screened by the people of Trinidad and Tobago. So has Manohar Ramsaran who has stood up in the time of difficulty not knowing where he would go against the barrage of insults and attacks.

Now I say to Manohar, thank you my friend, we are here together again to fight the next stage of our battle!

And to young Nirad Tewarie – young Tewarie is a statement of this party! He is a statement to the young people of our nation – those who have come out of the fear, who have come out to be counted here today.

And I want to tell you that these two members that I have identified will not be your only members for Chaguanas in Parliament. I will never forget that I started my political life in this country right here in Chaguanas.

Then we heard from that powerhouse from Sangre Grande! This is the powerhouse that will devour the PNM as they have never been devoured before – Dr Lena Brereton Wolffe.

She is perhaps the best example of a solid, loyal citizen of this country who has gotten up to make her mark in this nation.

Ashvani Mahabir – I've said it more than once and every time I hear him speak, I wonder what would he do when he becomes a member of the next Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

And then someone who has stood at all times for stability, for Parliamentary democracy and who during his time stood as a Speaker of the Commonwealth!

The fact that he is here today bringing all his credentials to bear here and to ask you to come with us as the only way, I thank Nizam Mohammed for his inspiration.

He needn't have done it. When we spoke, he said he has played his part and he could go home and rest. But then he said to himself that when justice is not being done, the time to use your fingers to make it happen is your duty!

So my friends, the marching orders I now give to the party is that if anyone of us was looking to take leave, all leave is cancelled in the Congress of the People !

All our supporters in the constituencies, if you have not yet added your hands to efforts to rescue our nation, from now on all hands must be on deck !

And for those who still think that they can wait and think, I want to ask them for us to bring our heads together. We may never have this opportunity again for many years. We may never have this chance.

Could you imagine five more years as Patrick Manning as your Prime Minister? For that thought alone, you must get up off your beds and start working in the villages, the towns, your homes to make sure that you do not get up on November 6th and have Patrick Manning as your Prime Minister.

Because my friends, no one would even attempt to change it then! And we may have to end up like what is happening in Burma today where the police are playing havoc with rioters.

Listen to me! I may be a Politician, but I have studied political and economic systems. That is why I could have outfoxed the fox and anyone else they brought before me! Because I understood how political systems work !

But I say tonight, if we do not use this opportunity on November 5th to regain and capture our freedom, we will have to fight against an Executive President who will have no compunction about keeping power by repression. I say that now and that is why I have asked him to declare his position on 1990 and on the Executive Presidency.

As we go on, it is our duty to defend our democracy, to defend our civil rights and to defend our own trust in Government.

So my friends, I want to ask you here in Cunupia – are you now ready to take on this fight?

Are you ready? Are you ready? Raise your fingers, that is where the power is! The power is in your hands. The ball is in your court. The people will now decide. We are here to work with you.

Thank you very much!