

▼ T&T branded as ISIS supplier...

# UWI expert: 'Over the top' statement

▼ Kim Boodram

"OVER the top" was how Prof Andy Knight, director of The University of the West Indies' (UWI) Institute of International Relations, has described claims last Saturday by United States counter-terrorism expert, Malcolm Nance.

According to Nance, Trinidad and Tobago holds more terrorists than seven countries whose nationals are now banned from entering the US for 90 days.

Knight said yesterday the ban, imposed by executive order from US President Donald Trump on predominantly Muslim countries, was "poorly thought out and implemented" and also warned Trump could conceivably steer the world towards instability.

Speaking to the *Express* via telephone, Knight said it was true T&T has produced more foreign fighters for the extremist group, ISIS, than many countries, given the size of its population, "but to say that it harbours more terrorists than

the countries placed on the banned list by Trump is not borne out empirically.

"What I can say, though, is that none of the countries on the banned list has had anyone commit an act of terrorism on US soil. So the list doesn't make any sense in terms of trying to make America safe."

## Benign neglect

The Trump administration has barred citizens from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen from entering the US for the next 90 days.

The move has generated extensive protests in the US but has been defended by that government as part of its plan to protect Americans from terrorism on home soil.

Knight said yesterday, however, T&T will likely see "benign neglect" from the Trump administration and he does not see this country being much of a concern to it.

It must be noted, though, that T&T is geographically placed to be

of value to groups like ISIS who will look for ways, including through the energy resource angle, to get at the US, he added.

The Trump effect may not, however, be an overall benign one.

"I feel that we are living in a very dangerous period, in which we are seeing the outlines of a fascist state being created by the Trump administration," said Knight.

"I use that word deliberately and advisedly because fascism can be demonstrated by some of the things we are seeing, example the intimidation of the press and the attempt to peddle falsehoods and lies," he said.

Other acts, such as the targeting of non-whites in the American population and the Trump administration's deepening ties with fascist organisations in Europe, are also indicators of the climate being created.

Knight said concerns being expressed that the world may see another world war are not unfounded and while he might not see the occurrence of a war of the previous scales, he does believe there is a legitimate concern "about the possibility of global instability".

## Drums of war

Knight said the "drums of war" have already begun to beat in China over Trump's conduct so far and anxiety is being experienced in countries like Iran and North Korea.

"I don't think it's just people's imagination, it's purely realistic," said Knight about the possibility of a global scramble.

He added: "Bear in mind that the two major wars were started more or less by accident—small events triggered World

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