

**STATEMENT BY WINSTON DOOKERAN
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AT A PUBLIC MEETING IN DEBE
02 OCTOBER 2007**

Highlights:

- *COP the only one legitimate, national, political party*
- *Prime Minister must clear the air on his involvement in the 1990 coup!*
- *Dookeran challenges Manning, " **if that is so, then I call on him to lock me up and therefore prove his point***
- *Dismisses 'foolish unity talk' from those who are the chief architects of disunity*
- *Reveals he spoke with the Leader of the Opposition last Friday to encourage her to join the COP*
- *Next election a two-party fight between the COP and the PNM.*
- *COP Government will increase the role of denominational boards.*
- *Described the PNM - Lies! Misrepresentation! Threats! Accusations! Condemning their political opponents, charging them with treason*
- *Manning now on the run from the COP*

Thank you very much.

My friends, this is a solemn beginning. As I listened to my friend of 40 years, come to this platform in his hometown of Debe and give the testimonial that he did, I say to Trevor Sudama, thank you very much.

An honest man who has travailed the political life of our country and who has never forgotten the people of Oropouche. Tonight, his vote of confidence in the new direction of Trinidad and Tobago shall be the inspiration for all of us here in Oropouche and Debe and in Trinidad and Tobago.

It is an inspiration that expressed itself not too long ago as a political explosion in Woodford Square, Port of Spain.

It is an explosion that shattered all the political agendas that there is in this country because there and then, **the people realised that there is only one**

legitimate, national, political party in Trinidad and Tobago and that is the Congress of the People.

And then, shortly thereafter, this major political explosion that captured the imagination of all the politics in the Caribbean moved into Diego Martin at Diamond Vale.

We had the pleasure of hearing someone who spoke with you here tonight – Nicole Dyer – who was endorsed by the people.

It was the wave of people power as thousands came out. That was just 10 days ago.

And after listening to the quivering voice of the Prime Minister in Parliament, standing up to announce that elections were now upon us, we were in Cunupia and thousands of people came and I said then that November 5th, 2007 is the day of freedom for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Here we are today in this part of our little nation where I have spent many years in my early life. Here we are today in Debe which shall be the final winds that will blow away Mr Manning and his Government from Trinidad and Tobago for all times.

Your presence here today in your thousands is but the best indication that the winds of change that blew in Jamaica, in St Lucia and in the Bahamas is now blowing here in Debe in Trinidad and Tobago and it shall end up in Whitehall when we take control in under 35 days.

So my friends, I want to say thanks. But this did not happen without the individual efforts of a number of you and I must pay tribute to the Chairpersons of our two Oropouche constituencies, Philip Sookdeo and Mr Rambharat and Mr Sahadeo for the foundation work they have done.

Last week I attended the opening of the Oropouche East constituency headquarters and I see many of you here today and thousands who are here today, who came to listen to the new beginning here in Oropouche.

And next Sunday, we shall have another opening in Oropouche West. While the rest of the country is now in darkness, Debe and Oropouche will now show the light to a new politics in Trinidad and Tobago.

That darkness, we know about it. I believe it is Kevin Ratiram who gave tonight, I am sure you would agree, one of the most dynamic speeches I have heard on the platform in Trinidad and Tobago.

One of the things he spoke about was the events of 1990. I want to put it on record for yet another time – the Prime Minister of this country, the head of

the National Security Council of this country, charged me in aiding and abetting and being an agent for treason in this country.

That is what he did! Whether he is a liar or not, is not the issue. He holds a position as Prime Minister and as chairman of the National Security Council and comes to a public platform to charge his political opponent with treason!

My friends, I know that time! I have since asked him and I will not let the issue fall; I ask once more, Mr Manning, let us know what your role was in the events of 1990! Clear the air!

He once said that people have forgotten, but he seems to remember conveniently. I say it again because I will not allow him to get away with that.

You cannot live in a country that you call a democracy when a Prime Minister charges the leader of an Opposition party for treason. **If that is so, then I call on him to lock me up and therefore prove his point !**

My friends, you cannot run a country with men like him at the top, but he has been doing it for a long time. He has been doing it for a long time. So many of our citizens had to go to the Privy Council to get basic democratic rights preserved.

I make that point again. And I know one of his National Security Advisors is Herbert Atwell, who at one time was Chairman of the NAR...

For now, I say no more; I await his response and I will take up this head on with Mr Manning until we clear the air !

More recently, in St Augustine, I heard or at least according to press reports, Mr Manning said 'let us stop this dotish talk about race'.

Imagine that! Mr Manning is talking about stopping 'this dotish talk about race'!

He is trying reverse psychology on the people of Trinidad and Tobago. But he kept the election date in his front pocket, in his back pocket, until he ran out of pockets.

Now you have it in your hands to do something about it! Because you know that the only party in Trinidad and Tobago that can look people in the eyes and say 'we stand for all the people' is the Congress of the People. You know that!

And it is because of this new direction we are offering to the nation, that we are capturing this new political emotion and we are generating this new political energy. That is why you are all here today. Because you felt it was

not possible and now you know that the dream we had for uniting this country is now before us to become a reality!

All this foolish talk about unity, particularly among people who have been the architects of disunity in Trinidad and Tobago . All this fuss about unity from those who have been dead politically and want to rise once more on this wave that the people have created for a life of their own?

Let us now in 35 days...we shall be making the decision. **WE ARE THE PARTY OF UNITY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO !**

We are the only platform that can watch people in their eyes and can say to all that we are the party of unity and we shall bring the people of Trinidad and Tobago together in order to confront our political, economic and social issues.

So let us put that aside. Those who fail to join will forever be condemned to the dustbins of political history of Trinidad and Tobago because it is here that the new stars are being born. It is on this platform the new stars are now emerging.

Up to last Friday, I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition and invited her to create political history in Trinidad and Tobago and to join me in the Congress of the People to bring about a new Government. I say no more at this stage; I just want to let you know that if there is someone who would like to unite this country more than me, tell me! Because we have reached a point that that is the fundamental pillar of our philosophy !

But I cannot wait until Manning wins the election to have unity. We want unity now and it must be demonstrated in the coming elections.

And let me dissuade you; this is not going to be a three party race. The people have decided that this is a two party race between the Congress of the People and the PNM.

Let it be known that that is what the people are telling me everywhere that this is a two party race and **WE ARE AHEAD !**

So don't allow people to confuse you, there is no need for confusion. We have a job to do and in 35 days from now, we shall be installing a new Government and the only party that can do so is the Congress of the People.

There is a lot that we shall be speaking about. I just want to raise two issues very briefly.

One has to do with our approach to education. You know Mr and Mrs Manning have been trying to erode the powers of the denominational boards

in the governance of education. They have been carrying on a fight with them for a long time.

They tried to reduce them to being accounting officers of the Ministry. But you know that it is the denominational boards that have managed with excellence the school system in Trinidad and Tobago.

And you know that today, when our country is facing this sense of permissiveness for lawlessness, it is moral values that will save us. It is getting back to the morality of life itself – the introduction of values in our society must start in the schools.

So when this country is facing a new episode of lawlessness and permissiveness which is the source cause of the problems of Trinidad and Tobago, instead of creating more support for the role of the churches, the mandirs and mosques in the education of our children, they want to reduce them to being accounting officers.

I want to tell you here today that we in the Congress of the People have had a team working on this which was headed by Dr Rawatee Maharaj-Sharma. Included in that team is Brother Michael Samuel and a number of other professionals.

And I want to make it clear here today, we will not roll back the denominational boards from playing a role in education, we shall increase it and have more involvement .

We shall go so far as to look at our State schools and ensure we bring back to the curriculum, the whole question of values, religious thought and thinking.

You cannot talk today about people not caring for each other's lives and everyday we hear it when our own citizens have lost the value of life itself.

You know the situation! Right here in Debe, I visited the home of someone who wanted to be a witness and was brutally murdered instead. You know of the problems in some many places over the years and your Government today, instead of bolstering you with a new moral code and a moral objective is saying they want to remove the denominational board from playing an important part in your children's education?

They are the ones we must encourage and we stand firm on building a new governance in the education sector that will give those the religious bodies a deeper and stronger role.

The only other issue I want to raise tonight, and I say this because you know your party which has blossomed the way it has, we are not here to condemn

those in the past. They have done their job and they stand condemned for what they have not done or what they have done wrong.

And we are not here to complain about what is wrong in the nation. We know what is wrong – we feel it in our hospitals and everywhere.

All that Mr Manning does is to condemn that people for the problems in the country and all the Opposition does is complain about Mr Manning.

I have decided now that I shall neither condemn Mr Manning nor complain about him; I shall change him and put a new Government in place.

That is what we are about and that is why we come up with solutions. And you know for some time, some may remember, I have been calling for a certain report referred to as the poverty report that was done on your behalf by the European Commission and I asked the Government to lay it in Parliament.

We were interested in designing a plan to get our people out of poverty and we wanted to have the benefit of what the report might have said.

Mr Manning refused to do so. We said it inside and outside of Parliament. But he was running a Government on the basis of secrecy. That secrecy led to what happened in the Home Mortgage Bank, when he said that his final statement after \$300 million of people's funds, he will bring legislation to Parliament. We know it was a trap, and he dissolved Parliament without even bringing it up.

So there is the Prime Minister denying people information, making false presentations to people, admitting when that matter was raised by Ganga Singh that he misrepresented the facts. In any democracy, if a Prime Minister misrepresents the facts and does nothing to correct it, he shall be out of office by the following day.

But there are so many people in our country listening and watching and hoping that we will succeed.

Just like Ganga Singh, somebody put the report in my mailbox !

I had written to the European Commission for it and they replied by saying the will have to get the permission of the Government. I didn't bother then.

But my friends, I say that to demonstration two things – could you run a democracy when a Government is hiding facts from the people? Ask yourself that question.

When the Government is hiding the fact as to the price of gas...**this week my entire energy team and I met with bpTT to ask them certain questions.**

They conceded to the meeting and I came out with the full understanding that as far as they are concerned, there is no gas for that aluminium smelter!

Here is the Prime Minister perpetuating false promises to the nation! We know the problem and we know we don't want that; we know it is the wrong use of gas. But now there isn't even the gas of which we are saying it is the wrong use.

Lies! Misrepresentation! Threats! Accusations! Condemning their political opponents, charging them with treason ...that is what Mr Manning has been doing and it is time to stop him and you the people are called upon now to stop him so we can put this country right!

Let us get our politics right!

So tonight as we stand here in Debe; as we stand here in the new winds of change in southern Trinidad and Tobago, your voices must now be heard loud and clear. You must not remain here and expect that to be your fate. You too must get into the act of belonging to and reclaiming our country.

So I urge all, let us not lose this opportunity. As a political person who has studied and understood political systems for very long, that is why **we have Mr Manning on the run!** And the reason he don't want people to call him 'doc' because he got a doctorate is because he is afraid they will call him 'duck and run'.

So I want to tell you that I was born in rural Trinidad in a little village called Rio Claro. I grew up thinking Rio Claro was the world. And I tell you that because this world belongs to you as it belongs to everyone else in Trinidad and Tobago.

We must therefore understand that if we do not use this chance that has come our way to restore our democratic rights, our real commitments to development. Unless we blow them away, we will be forever saying that we failed the next generation.

My friends don't let those detractors, those new found friends of unity, those people confuse your minds. There is only one way to go and that is the COP way to change the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. I thank you!