

DEFENCE BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FROM: SECRETARY TO THE DEFENCE BOARD, DR. R. LUNCHEON

DATE: JULY 21ST 2005

SUBJECT: **DEFENCE BOARD REPORT PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 50/2004, DATED 2004-10-21, OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF GDF TROOPS OVERSEAS ON A HUMANITARIAN MISSION IN GRENADA**

This Defence Board Memorandum details all the interventions that were undertaken by the Government of Guyana pursuant to the resolution of the National Assembly that authorised the deployment of troops overseas in a humanitarian mission to Grenada in the wake of the hurricane that devastated the island in 2004.

BACKGROUND

1. Following the passage of Hurricane Ivan on September 7, 2004, the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM held an emergency meeting in Trinidad and Tobago on September 15, 2004 to determine the response to the regional disasters that were wreaked on some countries. In determining what assistance to provide Grenada, a menu of measures was proposed. The provision of military assistance was one such measure. In pursuance of that, the Meeting mandated the Chiefs of Staff and other security chiefs in the Region to meet and, among other issues, establish a force that had a unified command with clear lines of authority.
2. The CARICOM Military Chiefs met in an emergency conference in Trinidad and Tobago on September 23, 2004 and agreed on a unified command structure and force size for all CARICOM forces that were to be involved in the Grenada relief operation. The deployment strategy envisioned a four (4) phased operation that would have commenced October 4, 2004 and concluded March 31, 2005. Guyana would have commanded the force in Phase 1.
3. On October 21, 2004 a Parliamentary resolution was adopted that authorised the deployment of the GDF to Grenada. Consequent to Government's directive to assist the Grenadian people, the military operational plan codenamed, OPERATION PHOENIX, was formulated with the mission to, "Assist the Grenadian Government in their efforts at restoring normalcy to the island." The Operation was meant to be of six months duration.

AIM

4. This report seeks to detail the conduct of OPERATION PHOENIX.

MOBILISATION AND DEPLOYMENT

5. Mobilisation commenced September 16, 2004 and involved troops of the Regular and Reserve forces. Two weeks were spent at Base Camp Seweyo on the Linden Highway where troops were engaged in several preparatory activities that included receiving vaccinations and doing documentation. Troops were then moved to Base Camp Ayanganna and engaged in a Mission Rehearsal Exercise where they erected a camp to simulate living conditions in Grenada and continued their preparatory activities such as collection of kit and equipment. The 100-man contingent of four officers and 96 Other Ranks comprised the headquarters staff, an engineering element, and a security element. A complete breakdown is reflected hereunder:

a.	Headquarters	3 & 14
b.	Security	1 & 28
c.	Carpenters	14
d.	Masons	14
e.	Electricians	06
f.	Linesmen	06
g.	Plumbers	05
h.	Caterers	05
i.	Power Saw Operators	02
j.	Steel Bender	01
k.	Weilder	01

6. The Contingent was deployed to Grenada in three waves. On October 17, 2004 the Contingent Commander and a party of six deployed via a GDF aircraft; on October 18, 2004 the advance party of 22 arrived on the island via the Coast Guard vessel GDFS Essequibo; and on October 25, 2004 the main body arrived via a chartered BWIA aircraft. The Contingent's strength was 11 Officers and 124 Other Ranks for the first six weeks of the Operation as this strength included 35 Ranks from the Coast Guard vessel. The vessel, apart from transporting all stores and equipment for the Contingent, was used as an alternate command and control platform since it was anticipated that the Contingent would have been operating in an immature environment. The vessel departed the island some 46 days after its arrival.

7. An important aspect of the activities engaged in by the Contingent in the early days of deployment to Grenada was liaising with the relevant Government officials on a range of issues, which included the identification of building projects and the sourcing of the materials for the rebuilding effort. This liaison resulted in the signing of the Status of Forces Agreement, (SOFA) which legitimised the presence of the GDF in Grenada and authenticated the rights, privileges and responsibilities of both the Grenadian and Guyanese Governments in relation to the operation of the GDF in Grenada. That Agreement was signed some 12 days after the arrival of the first GDF troops on the island.

8. During the mission there was one rotation of troops and that occurred on February 28 when one Officer and 36 Other Ranks arrived on the island and one Officer and 29 Other Ranks departed for Guyana. The rotation was scheduled for early January but had to be shifted due to the flood situation in Guyana.

CARICOM SECURITY RESPONSE

9. The unified CARICOM force as envisioned by the Chiefs of Staff never fructified for reasons that could only be speculated upon. Thus, the CARICOM military response involved both military and police forces that had separate command structures. Apart from the GDF, there were contingents from the Defence Forces from Trinidad and Tobago (TTDF), Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and St Kitts and Nevis, with the latter three being part of the Regional Security System (RSS) forces. The police forces of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines were also under the command of the RSS. The Trinidadian force strength at its peak was some 217 strong while the RSS forces, at peak, were 149 in strength. Both forces were deployed to Grenada within one week after the hurricane and were redeployed to their respective home territories in December before Christmas.

10. Given the length of stay of the other CARICOM security forces and that the situation had not fully stabilised before their departure, they did not engage in any major construction activities. Their engineering assistance, in the main, was confined to the provision of temporary tarpaulin roofs on schools and other government buildings. The police component of the RSS conducted patrols to enforce the curfew that was imposed, and in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane the defence forces also assisted in stabilising the security situation by engaging in patrolling duties, distribution of relief supplies and, for the TTDF, the provision of security for several banks.

11. Command of the TTDF and the RSS forces devolved on a Colonel and a Lieutenant Colonel respectively. The TTDF then changed command to a Lieutenant Colonel while the RSS changed to a Major then finally a Superintendent.

12. Apart from CARICOM forces, the Venezuelan Armed Forces had also deployed a contingent to assist in the reconstruction efforts. That force was involved in clean up activities in the early stages of their deployment and then transitioned to the construction of a 130 odd housing complex in an area that is meant to be renamed the Simon Bolivar village. Commanded by a Naval Captain, the equivalent of a Colonel, the approximately 120 strong contingents is expected to complete construction of the housing complex in August 2005.

GDF ACTIVITIES

13. The GDF assistance to Grenada in execution of OPERATION PHOENIX's mission embraced six sectors: security, health, housing, education, water, and electricity. That assistance could be broadly grouped under the categories of: construction, security and non-construction.

14. Fifteen construction projects were completed. The scope of the construction projects ranged from the complete construction of three houses for single-parent families in the vulnerable category to renovation works that included re-roofing, electrical and plumbing. These renovation works were effected to police stations and other buildings, the main prison building and the prison's concrete fences, schools, and health facilities. A sectoral breakdown of these construction projects is reflected below:

SERIAL	PROJECT	SECTOR	SCOPE
(a)	(b)	(d)	(e)
01	PRISON FENCES	SECURITY	Erect two new fences and expand two
02	CENTRAL POLICE STATION AND TRAFFIC BUILDINGS	SECURITY	Re-roofing, electrical and plumbing
03	ST. PAUL'S POLICE STATION	SECURITY	Partial re-roofing
04	SPECIAL SERVICES UNIT MESS COMPLEX	SECURITY	Re-roofing
05	MAIN PRISON ROOF	SECURITY	Re-roofing and electrical
06	COMMISSIONER OF POLICE OFFICE	SECURITY	Re-roofing and electrical
07	TWO BEDROOM HOUSE	HOUSING	Complete rebuild
08	TWO BEDROOM HOUSE	HOUSING	Complete rebuild
09	ONE BEDROOM HOUSE	HOUSING	Complete rebuild
10	FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HOUSE	HOUSING	Re-roofing
11	RICHMOND HOME FOR AGED	HEALTH	Re-roofing, electrical and plumbing
12	ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE BRIGADE	HEALTH	Re-roofing
13	HOSPITAL LAUNDRY	HEALTH	Re-roofing and electrical
14	GRAND ROY GOV'T SCHOOL	EDUCATION	Re-roofing, electrical and plumbing
15	HAPPY HILL SECONDARY SCHOOL	EDUCATION	Re-roofing

15. When the GDF arrived in Grenada the security situation had stabilised to a level that did not necessitate the employment of the Contingent to deal with any situation. The security component of the contingent was primarily utilised for our own force protection duties at the base camp. However, the security platoon did engage in one combined operation in the capital city of St. George's with the Royal Grenadian Police Force (RGPF). This operation became necessary during the Christmas season after the withdrawal of the TTDF and RSS forces had created a perception among the populace that the level of security had decreased. The operation was therefore mounted to provide reassurance to the populace that the security environment was secure and stable, and the GDF was in support of the RGPF in providing a highly visible presence so as to deter criminal activities.

16. In the execution of its mission the Contingent also provided assistance in other areas that also impacted on other sectors, and that is shown below:

- a. In the electricity sector six linesmen were deployed to the electrical utility company and provided assistance for some two weeks.
- b. In the water sector four plumbers were attached to the water utility company for some five months and assisted in the maintenance and repair works around the island.
- c. In the health sector the Contingent executed an Organisation of American States/National Development Foundation (a local NGO) island-wide initiative to distribute food to the aged, schools and homes.
- d. In the housing sector the Contingent provided masonry and labour force assistance to an international NGO, the Samaritan Purse, that was engaged in building temporary one-bedroom houses around the island. The nature of the work was to assist in transporting prefabricated house frames to building sites and, in a few instances, building the concrete foundations. Approximately 175 houses were built.

Additionally, in the incipient stage of the deployment when the challenge of acquiring building materials was very acute, the Contingent executed several "band aid" projects. These projects involved the provision of temporary tarpaulin roofs for a number of institutions such as hospitals, schools, and police stations. Assistance was also rendered to several government agencies in providing engineer estimates for various construction projects.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF OPERATION PHOENIX

17. By any objective assessment it cannot be gainsaid that the impact of OPERATION PHOENIX reaches far and beyond whatever financial benefits would have accrued to the Grenadian Government. In adducing evidence to support that contention one can hearken to the many acts of gratitude rendered the Contingent by the Grenadian populace as they provided succor and support to the GDF. That gratitude was demonstrated in many ways; from the unsolicited "thank you for coming" by the ordinary man in the streets, to the overwhelming support for the many flood relief fundraising efforts that were held there for persons affected by

the flood in Guyana. Indeed the separate fundraising efforts organized by Guyana's Honorary Consul, a group of Guyanese professionals resident in Grenada, and a Grenada Rotary telethon, all realized EC \$20,000; EC \$42,000; and US \$50,000 respectively. Additionally, there were other fundraising efforts in schools and some institutions such as the Port Authority. The prevailing sentiment by many supporting these activities was an expressed admiration for the professionalism displayed by the Contingent in the face of the flood situation in Guyana.

18. Support for fundraising activities apart, there was implemented in Grenada an aggressive recruitment drive for Guyanese construction workers at the Governmental, the private sector, and the individual levels that have resulted in several Guyanese construction workers playing an active role in the reconstruction efforts in Grenada. Anecdotally, one Government Minister ascribed this recruitment drive to the excellent work ethic of the Contingent.

19. A central plank in the Contingent's approach to executing its mission was to engage in a community relations programme designed to have its members identify with the Grenadian people. That occasioned participation in a number of national activities to increase the Contingent's public profile. The Contingent therefore participated in a National Thanksgiving Service, the Remembrance Day Parade, and the National Half Marathon and Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Half Marathon, with ranks giving credible performances in the latter two events. One resultant effect of the Contingent's positive image was to increase the self esteem of many a Guyanese resident in Grenada and they therefore sought to identify with the Contingent at every available opportunity.

FINANCES

20. The total cost for the mission was G\$104,821,040 and the various cost centres are shown:

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>AMOUNT EXPENDED</i>
Drugs & Medical Supplies	-
Field Material & Supplies	8,105,194
Office Materials & Supplies	26,585
Print & Non-Print Materials	-
Fuel & Lubricants	6,413,854
Maintenance of Buildings	-
Janitorial & Cleaning Supplies	-
Other Transport, Travel & Postage	18,017,287
Dietary	19,713,394
Other	6,766,092
Temporary Employees	3,093,432
Training	1,434,200
Training (Out-of-Pocket Allowance)	41,251,002
	TOTAL 104,821,040