

## Organization Attributes Sheet: Trafficking through Cheddi Jagan International Airport

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<b>A. When the organization was formed + brief history</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cheddi Jagan International Airport located in Timehri, Guyana is Guyana's primary international airport. It has been plagued with poor security, and has become a major point where drugs are smuggled out of Guyana to other countries in North America, the Caribbean and Europe. A number of drug rings have been caught operating out of the airport, and it has become a focal point for Guyana's anti-narcotics initiative. However in 2010 it was estimated by the aviation minister Robeson Benn that only 10% of cocaine leaving Guyana is detected before it leaves the country.<sup>1</sup> This profile is on the larger issue of drug trafficking through Cheddi Jagan International Airport, and is not specific to any particular ring of traffickers, rather the airport as point of interest for drug trafficking through Guyana.</li></ul>
<b>B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,</b>
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Drug Trafficking</li></ul>
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arrest of 22 individuals of a group led by Sharwin Lilly in 2005. The group was arrested when cocaine hidden in boxes of Chow Mein was seized at JFK International Airport from a flight from Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Guyana.<sup>2</sup></li><li>Arrest of Ring in 2004 smuggling 108 pounds of cocaine to JFK International Airport in 60 boxes of Red Snapper. Boxes were addressed to Eye and Eye Produce on Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. This ring is likely linked to Sharwin Lilly.<sup>3</sup></li><li>Other cases of individuals or small groups smuggling drugs (mostly cocaine) through airport security. Most instances were detected in the destination airports.</li></ul>
<b>C. Scope and Size</b>
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Networks vary in size. The largest group that was caught consisted of 27 members who other groups have as few as 3 individuals. However numbers only include those individuals apprehended, and are likely only a portion of the overall network within which they operate.</li></ul>
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, United States Canada, United Kingdom, likely other unidentified countries in the Caribbean and South America.</li></ul>
<b>D. Leader Characteristics</b>
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sharwin Lilly AKA "Nigel Chester" AKA "Huey" of New York was the leader of the trafficking ring that was broken up in April 2005</li><li>Other trafficking leaders are unknown.</li></ul>
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sharwin Lilly was apprehended in April 2005.</li></ul>
c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information Not Found</li></ul>

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

## E. Organizational Structure

- a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)
  - Information Not Found
- b. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?
  - Information Not Found
- c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)
  - Information Not Found

## F. Resources

- a. Financial
  - Information Not Found. Given the amounts of cocaine that were confiscated, and the value of that cocaine, it is likely that many of these networks had/have considerable financial resources available to them.
- b. Human
  - Information Not Found
- c. Logistical
  - i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
    - Information Not Found
  - ii. Key routes
    - Though different rings likely used different routes, the following three seemed most commonly reported.
    - Cheddi Jagan International Airport to JFK International Airport, New York
    - Cheddi Jagan International Airport to Toronto, Canada
    - Cheddi Jagan International Airport to Trinidad and Tobago
- d. Transportation
  - i. Land
    - Information Not Found
  - ii. Sea
    - Information Not Found
  - iii. Air
    - Drugs are smuggled on board commercial flights out of Guyana to various international destinations.
  - iv. Intermodal container
    - Information Not Found

## G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities

- a. Corruption
  - Reports of corruption among employees at Cheddi Jagan International Airport are common.<sup>4</sup>
  - In December 2004 an employee of the Timehri Handling Service (Baggage Handler) was arrested in JFK International Airport in New York with 8 pounds of cocaine after disembarking from a flight from Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Guyana.<sup>5</sup>
- b. Concealment
  - Drugs are concealed in pellets that are swallowed, in suitcase linings, in soup, vegetables, scrap metal, chow mein, and other objects that are either taken on passenger or freight flights departing from Guyana.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

c.	Deception
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs concealed under guise of legitimate travel or shipping to avoid detection.</li> </ul>
d.	Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry points are not avoided, but drugs are concealed to avoid detection by customs officials and airport security.</li> </ul>
<b>H. Prior / Existing Relationships</b>	
a.	Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the different drug trafficking rings are likely connected with larger organizations; however the details of these connections are unknown.</li> <li>• Sharwin Lilly might have had connections with convicted drug trafficker Shaheed “Roger” Khan.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
b.	Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is believed that there are corrupt members of law enforcement working with, or allowing drug traffickers to smuggle drugs through Cheddi Jagan International Airport.</li> </ul>
c.	<i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Not Found</li> </ul>
<b>I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Not Found</li> </ul>
<b>J. Technical Sophistication</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies by individual group.</li> </ul>
<b>K. Penchant for Innovation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Not Found</li> </ul>
<b>L. Activities in United States</b>	
a.	Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug Trafficking</li> </ul>
b.	<i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brought Drugs via luggage or shipped freight through airports in various countries.</li> </ul>
c.	Linkages with US groups
i.	Market/transaction links
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Not Found</li> </ul>
ii.	Stable supplier
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Not Found</li> </ul>
iii.	Franchise arrangement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Not Found, though it is likely that franchise arrangements were used by different groups.</li> </ul>
iv.	HQ and Branch office
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Guyana</li> <li>• JFK International Airport, New York</li> </ul>
<b>M. Evaluations</b>	
a.	Strengths
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guyana’s interior is difficult to patrol, and its border is very porous. This allows drugs to be easily smuggled into the country. Despite efforts by the international community to help Guyana’s security forces become better equipped to address the growing drug problem, they remain inadequate. The security at Cheddi Jagan International Airport is also very out of date, and corruption is common. This</li> </ul>

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combination makes Guyana an ideal transportation hub for drug trafficking out of South America.

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- Increasing the security capacity at Cheddi Jagan International Airport or the frequency of checks at arrival locations would inhibit the trafficking of drugs out of Guyana.

c. Additional insights

- The information available only comes from those rings that were broken up, and those individuals who were apprehended by authorities. It is likely that other groups are operating through the airports that have avoided detection.

**Other Notes**

- It is unclear what percentage of drugs leaving Guyana goes through the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, but available sources give the impression that it is a major hub for transporting drugs out of the country.
- Illegal drug trafficking is estimated to be the equivalent of 20% of Guyana's GDP.<sup>7</sup>
- The poor security at Cheddi Jagan International Airport makes it a concern for the trafficking of other illegal materials, including devices that could be used in a terrorist attack.

<sup>1</sup> "Guyana's airport drug lapses," *BBC Caribbean.com*. July 01, 2010.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/07/100701\\_guydrugs.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/07/100701_guydrugs.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> "Cocaine in chowmein may have put David Clarke on Feds Radar," *Stabroek News*. February 14, 2010.

<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2010/news/stories/02/14/cocaine-in-chowmein-may-have-put-david-clarke-on-feds-radar/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Guyana's airport drug lapses," *BBC Caribbean.com*. July 01, 2010.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/07/100701\\_guydrugs.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/07/100701_guydrugs.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> "Fate of Timehri airport official in JFK drug bust still unknown," *Stabroek News*. December 17, 2004.

<http://www.landofsixpeoples.com/news404/ns412173.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> "Convicted drug dealer's to testify against Roger Khan-lawyer," *Kaieteur News*. March 8, 2007.

<http://www.landofsixpeoples.com/news701/nk0703082.html>.

<sup>7</sup> "Guyana's airport drug lapses," *BBC Caribbean.com*. July 01, 2010.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/07/100701\\_guydrugs.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/caribbean/news/story/2010/07/100701_guydrugs.shtml).