

The Caribbean airlift dilemma

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by Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

The Caribbean region is suffering from a border airlift disorder that produces the most intense chronic agony and distress in those who suffer from this condition

which encompasses the functions of tourism, trade, commerce, and social interaction.

Airlift in the region appears to be in a continuous twilight zone of dreaming and failure fueled by assumptions and imagination. Summits are held and committees are formed and the conclusions of the deliberations have the value of being flat, dull, or trite. The oratory is characterized by ordinary platitudes. The headlines of the media coverage of the meetings are the same as five or ten years ago the current ones indicate that after public exposure fades, things return to inaction and suffering in silence.

The Caribbean should not have an airlift problem. The firmament above the region is the same, and the air that one breathes is the same. Taking to the skies seems to be a different ballgame. For one, there is a people problem. People who create problems and people who stand in the way of solving them. What boosts the problem are the people who don't know the heck what they are talking about, yet, have a decisive voice.

Secondly, the Caribbean is a quagmire of territories, jurisdictions, and controls. Next: try to define the Caribbean. The archipelago from Cuba to Trinidad? What about the coastal areas of Central America? Some add Bermuda and Guyana. Statistics under the generic term 'Caribbean' are best defined as a punchbowl.

The airlift problem is not the air or the sky. It is not even the equipment or the needed skills to take to the sky or navigate in the skies. Let me give you a hint of what constitutes the problem. Former French President Charles de Gaulle once said: "How can you govern a country that has 246 varieties of cheese?"

What is needed to rise above any cliché or dogma and enable the transition to a dimension of sustainable action? It may emphasize aviation but also must embrace the impact on tourism and local economies. It must be characterized by generous amounts of latitude, attitude, and magnitude and having the height of being above the current reference of anything.

A new attitude towards positive development and impact must be accommodated through freedom from narrow restrictions and freedom of action. It may be too much to expect to reach a galactic latitude, however great significance and consequence

are within reach. Create friendly and open skies for air mobility to bloom and flourish.

Where is the leader in the Caribbean who can take on the challenge of creating a mechanism for transformation and redemptive communication aiming for results and solutions and which shall be raised above the level of the current surrounding environment of circumstances? Who can unite and assist in solving air transportation problems of various kinds without having an acute masochist or a serious Messiah complex? Of absolute importance is to be assured of the support of like-minded persons, or businesses, or government authorities. Where oh where are the leaders and the solutions?



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Wear your mask so it covers the bridge of your nose and under your chin. Ensure it fits snug around your face without any gaps.



DON'T
Wear the mask below your nose



DON'T
Leave your chin exposed



DON'T
Wear your mask loosely with gaps on the sides



DON'T
Wear your mask so it covers just the tip of your nose

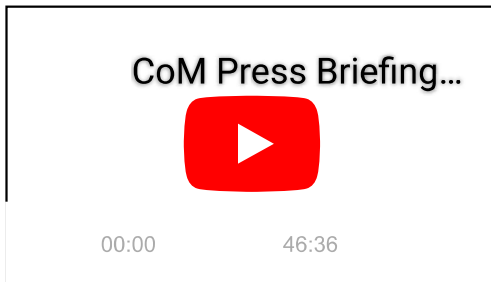


DON'T
Push your mask under your chin to rest on your neck

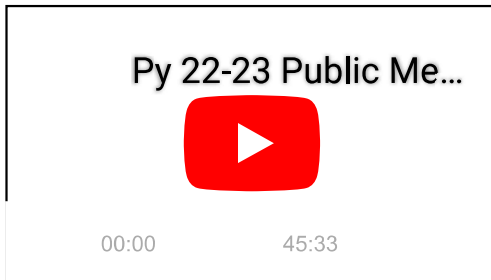
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Always wash your hands before and after wearing a mask.
Use the ties or loops to put your mask on and pull it off.
Don't touch the front of the mask when you take it off.
Wash and dry your cloth mask daily and keep it in a clean, dry place.
Don't have a false sense of security.

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