



## I. Border Problem with Guatemala

- a. Belize was given independence from Great Britain on September 21, 1981
- b. This land given to Belize has been disputed with Guatemala since the 1800s
- c. As a result, Guatemala didn't recognize Belize's sovereignty until September 1991
- d. Guatemala still claims that half of Belize's territory is theirs
- e. Border dispute affects international trade, environmental protection, security, and law enforcement between the two countries
- f. There have been some advances in peace talks over the past few years, with the Organization of American States serving as the mediator between the two countries, but things are still tense
- g. Belize Prime Minister Said Musa is considering going to the International Court to solve the border dispute, having reassurances from international lawyers that he has a good case
- h. However, in September 2004, Musa said that he would conduct a national referendum before going to the International Court to determine if that's what the people want

## II. Mayans Want a Homeland

- a. Mayans believe they have a right to a homeland because their people settled the land first
- b. They are angry that their people have to fight for land grants and that foreign investors come into the country and are quickly given land because they bring big dollars with them
- c. One Mayan community leader said that Mayans are "staying poorer and poorer" as a result of not having their own land
- d. In the Deep South, non-Mayans are angry for being excluded from land west of Punta Gorda
- e. Another Mayan community leader said, "Later on, it will be causing a war. I am serious." Prime Minister Musa has said, "I will not create a homeland just for Mayas... All of Belize belongs to all Belizeans."

## III. Poverty

- a. High unemployment level in the country
- b. 1/3 of the Belizean population is poor
- c. Majority of poor are indigenous Mayan children
- d. These children do not get the basic services needed for survival, including not getting enough food
- e. There are programs to deal with poverty such as the *Social Investment Fund*, which over the next five years, aims to give \$6.8 million for education, water sanitation, road construction, and to initiate training programs so that youth and women have the necessary skills to gain employment

## IV. Increasing Drug Problem

- a. Belize has increasingly become exploited by narcotraffickers
- b. Colombian planes have crash landed into cane fields in Belize, at which time their drugs are emptied out and shipped to Mexico or Guatemala
- c. A small amount of cannabis is also being produced in Belize for the international market

d. The narco-trafficking situation has also increased money laundering in Belize