

much again this year. The economy has expanded for 10 consecutive years on Trinidad and Tobago, a twin-island nation of 1.3 million with an area nearly the size of Delaware.

Trinidad's gas resources has fueled a web of chemical factories, including nine ammonia plants, and iron and steel complex, and two of the largest methanol plants in the world. The conglomeration of factories, largely in Point Lisas, an industrial site and port south of the capital, Port of Spain, exports most of its production to the United States.

"We've become a highly industrialized nation, something that was a pipe dream a few years ago," said Anthony Bryan, former director of the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies on Trinidad.

But some experts here worry that the natural gas boom is taking on the same character as the oil-fueled growth burst of the 1970's, which was followed by a ruinous decade-long bust culminating in a violent coup attempt in 1990 by Muslim militants.

"There's the 'here-we-go-again' phenomenon," said Ronald Ramkissoon, chief economist at Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, the country's largest financial institution. "If we're not wise enough to give away some of the excess money we're getting from this boom, then we stand the risk of getting hit again."

Weighing over everything are fears about what will happen when the energy bounty runs out. Although Trinidad is envied by other energy producers, it has just 0.5 percent of the world's proven gas reserves, far less than big producers like Qatar and Russia. Unless big new discoveries are made, the Inter-American Development Bank says, Trinidad's existing reserves guarantee only 20 years of gas and oil production at current extraction rates.

For now, though, economic opportunities in Trinidad are luring people and money from elsewhere in the hemisphere. A growing number of Spanish-speaking immigrants from Venezuela and Colombia have moved here recently to fill service jobs in restaurants and other work shunned by Trinidadians. Continental Airlines began flying this summer to Port of Spain directly from Houston, ferrying energy executives eager to cash in on the bonanza.

Trinidad owes much of its current good fortune to a plan conceived a decade ago by BP and BG, two of Britain's largest energy companies, together with Repsol of Spain and the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, to build the first of four large liquid natural gas plants. That strategy transformed BG, formerly British Gas, into the largest corporate supplier of L.N.G. to the United States. By 1999, the venture was, ready to start exporting gas.

Trinidad quickly leapt ahead of Venezuela, where domestic political quarreling stalled ambitions to exploit ample natural gas reserves.

"I'm reluctant to talk about Venezuela because they're the sleeping giant next door," said Frank Look Kin, president of the state-controlled National Gas Company. "You could say we're doing O.K. with what we've got."

The importance of natural gas in Trinidad's economy eclipsed that of oil in recent years, with gas output now worth about \$4.8 billion a year compared with \$1.4 billion for oil, according to the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Bush administration has responded by showering attention on Trinidad, amid concern over a prospective shortage of the fuel, which is used to generate electricity, run industrial processes and heat homes and offices.

President Bush surprised Prime Minister Patrick Manning last December when he came to Washington to meet Condoleezza Rice, Mr. Bush's national security adviser. Instead of limiting the visit to her, the White House granted Mr. Manning an impromptu meeting with Mr. Bush to discuss ways of increasing Trinidad's role in resolving problems in other Caribbean countries like Haiti.

Seeking to further strengthen ties, Spencer Abraham, the energy secretary, declared in a visit here in April that Trinidad was "a very effective example of how a country with natural gas resources can enter the international marketplace."

Much noticed here as well was a meeting over the summer between Mr. Manning and Henry A. Kissinger, the former secretary of state. Mr. Kissinger's visit to Trinidad aroused speculation that he might have lobbied the government on behalf of Freeport McMoRan Energy, a New Orleans company that allied itself this year with Trinidad to build a terminal for receiving L.N.G. off Louisiana's coast. Mr. Kissinger is a director emeritus of a mining concern controlled by Freeport McMoRan Energy's parent company.

In responding to questions from local reporters, Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Manning denied that the purpose of their meeting was related to negotiations with the Louisiana company.

Trinidad's aim to cement its position as the leading supplier to the United States fits into its ambition to help guide the policies of large gas-exporting nations. It has held talks with Algeria and Indonesia to interest them in joining the Louisiana terminal venture. And next year, Trinidad is seeking a more active role in the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, a group of more than a dozen nations that also includes Qatar, Iran and Nigeria.

Trinidad, a former British colony that gained independence in 1962, views trade as another priority, with Port of Spain competing against several American cities, including Miami and Atlanta, to be selected as administrative headquarters for the planned Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The government, meanwhile, intends to invest about \$700 million to build a pipeline that would transport gas to seven islands in the eastern Caribbean, including Barbados and Martinique. Trinidadian officials hope to persuade Venezuela to prepare its own gas for export to the United States from Trinidad plants.

Despite all the activity concern persists over the energy industry's influence as memories linger of the painful adjustment Trinidad faced in the 1980's after oil prices plummeted. But that has not prevented natural gas from ascending to the heights of the economy after oil production reached a peak in 1978.

As in many developing countries that are rich in resources, there is a perception that the wealth generated from Trinidad's oil and gas is not widely shared, creating big problems for a nation whose population is largely divided between people of African and Indian descent.

Unemployment remains stubbornly high, at around 10 percent. Crime is also a prominent concern, underlined by a spate of kidnappings of wealthy Trinidadians in the last two years. A pressing issue Trinidad faces is how to wriggle more royalties out of the multinational energy producers active in its territory.

"The issue of who gets what and how from our gas and oil needs to be revisited," said Winston Dookeran, a member of Parliament and former central bank president.

[In the budget released on Oct. 8, the government laid out a plan to channel substan-

tial energy revenue to social programs and public security. Included are an increase in old age pensions of more than 10 percent, lower taxes on brown sugar and funds to hire 744 police officers.]

Despite a gross domestic product of about \$8,000 a person, about a fifth of the population still lives in poverty. On average, Trinidadians are richer than most Caribbean islanders though still poorer than people in nearby Barbados and the Bahamas, where tourism revenue has improved living standards.

Translating its gas reserves into lasting wealth, of course, depends largely on the growth of the liquid natural gas industry in the United States, where more than 30 projects are in planning phases to import the fuel from countries around the world.

"The boom," Mr. Dookeran, the former, central banker, said, "is aligning our interests with those of the U.S. like never before."

THE EXCELLENT WORK OF THE
NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the second anniversary of a very important organization dedicated to fighting prejudice in the United States in a very constructive manner. The National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, founded in November 2002 by Justin Nelson and Chance Mitchell is, to quote from the statement which the NGLCC submitted to our Financial Services Committee hearing on diversity, "the only national not-for profit advocacy organization specifically dedicated to the economic advancements and opportunities of the American LGBT business community."

The NGLCC carries on this work by its formation of a "broad-based coalition, representative of the various interests of American LGBT owned and friendly businesses, professionals, and students of business to increase economic opportunities among membership, corporate interests and federal, state and local governments."

We hear a great deal in our public debate these days about the importance of people working together, being constructive, avoiding divisiveness etc. This can be overdone—democracy requires the honest airing of differences. But it is also important that these differences take place within a context of recognition of shared values, and the NGLCC plays an extremely important role in this. This organization demonstrates that combating prejudice based on sexual orientation and gender identity is not only not inconsistent with an effort to work for greater unity in our country, but is in fact an essential part of that effort, properly understood.

Justin Nelson and Chance Mitchell through their own commitment to advancing our capitalist system, while simultaneously fighting the prejudice which deprives some people of the full chance to participate in that system, play a very important role. To quote further from the statement which they submitted to our Financial Services Committee, "It is the unfortunate experience of millions of LGBT Americans that homophobia and ignorance has

been the silent killer of developing and growing LGBT enterprises and a better quality of life for all LGBT Americans. Too often it is the experience that LGBT Americans feel compelled to remain in the closet to safeguard their personal and professional financial condition . . . That millions of LGBT Americans live half lives in the financial marketplace, and the workplace is simply not in the best interest of a strong, vibrant and competitive American economy.

"It is a universal truth that as human beings, we are at our best when we can represent ourselves as whole and complete individuals, encouraged to contribute with vibrant creative energy the many talents unique to each of us as individuals. That LGBT Americans are shackled by institutionalized discrimination is not only shameful, it is not good business."

It is not easy to start an organization, and it is particularly difficult when the organization being started is one that seeks to bridge significant gaps that divide people in our society. There are a number of organizations that effectively advocate for the rights of LGBT Americans. There are others that are forceful supporters of the legitimate interests of the business community. I know no other at the national level that exists precisely not simply to show that these two goals are not inconsistent, but that, properly understood, they reinforce each other.

I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Nelson on several occasions, and I am impressed by the quality of their work. I make this statement today on the floor to call attention to this excellent example of how people can work truly to better our country in every way.

Mr. Speaker, Members seeking more information on this useful organization can consult the hearing of the Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Financial Services Committee on diversity and financial services, which was conducted on July 15, 2004.

IN HONOR OF OUR UNITED STATES
VETERANS AND HOLLY LANE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF
WESTLAKE, OHIO

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of all veterans of the 10th Congressional District of Ohio—for their service, bravery, and dedication on behalf of our country. Most significantly, we stand in tribute and remembrance of those veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice when they answered the call to duty.

I also stand in honor and recognition of the children and educators of Holly Lane Elementary School. By allowing our students the opportunity to meet and know our veterans, we are presenting them living examples of real heroes. We are giving them a true understanding of the meaning of the words conviction, courage and selflessness. We are offering them the understanding of a vital, living lesson that speaks to our American history and to the preservation of our liberty—the brave men and women who have endured great pain and sacrifice in order to secure

freedom and democracy for us all—our United States Veterans.

Every veteran that stands before us today at Holly Lane Elementary School represents the heart and soul of America and reminds us of our quest for justice and peace here at home, and the struggle of those who seek justice and peace around the world. The staff and students of Holly Lane Elementary School reflect the gratitude and respect for our men and women in the armed forces, sentiments that are shared by all Americans. The students of Holly Lane Elementary School also reflect a vision of hope and faith for our future.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, tribute and gratitude to the men and women of our armed forces, past and present. They reflect the quest and struggle for human rights and freedom from oppression, a basic human element that unifies us all. Let us forever remember and honor their ultimate service, great sacrifice and unwavering sense of commitment to the preservation of our American democracy and our freedoms.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be in Washington, DC yesterday. Two weeks ago, I injured my leg and my physician prefers that I not put it through the stress of an airplane flight from my home in Seattle, WA to Washington, DC. Were I able to attend today's session in the House of Representatives, I would have voted in support of H.J. Res. 110, H. Res. 750, S. 2693, S. 2214, S. 2640, and H. Res. 641.

IN RECOGNITION OF SUNNYSIDE
COMMUNITY SERVICES

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to offer my congratulations to the Sunnyside Community Services Center on its 30th anniversary.

The residents of New York's 12th Congressional District have been enriched by this institution's outstanding example of community cooperation, which provides valuable social, recreational, and educational services to the seniors and families of Western Queens. Thanks to the exemplary board, staff, and volunteer base of the Sunnyside Community Services Center, this once small organization that started in a church basement has blossomed, and has grown to provide an array of integrated activities and programs to over 12,000 residents, annually.

The center offers these services to ensure that members have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of community life, while maintaining their independence and healthy lifestyle. This institution has also become a local economic engine, employing 90 percent of its staff from within the Queens

community. The staff runs caregiver programs for frail elderly and homebound seniors, after school programs and camps for elementary and middle-school children, and a variety of educational, social, and recreational activities for active adults.

Over the past 30 years, Sunnyside Community Services Center has expanded its services even further to help meet the challenges faced by emerging immigrant and youth populations that reside in the area today. Their work has reached a significant number of residents of all backgrounds and ages and has allowed them to enjoy an enhanced and comfortable lifestyle.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 30th anniversary of the Sunnyside Community Services Center, and join with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to recognize the organization's outstanding service and dedication in addressing the needs of the Western Queens community.

TRIBUTE TO LEXINGTON VET-
ERANS ADMINISTRATION MED-
ICAL CENTER

HON. BEN CHANDLER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise here today in honor of Veteran's Day; the day our nation sets aside to honor the sacrifice and service of the millions of Americans who risked their lives to protect our country and promote peace. These brave servicemen and women answered the call to defend freedom and serve our country during its time of greatest need. Now, during the month of November, we should repay our gratitude by honoring our commitment to veterans and their families.

As we stand here today and pledge to work for veterans throughout the nation, I am proud to celebrate a recent victory for the veterans of Central Kentucky. Over the last two years, our local veterans fought to keep the Leestown Drive facilities of our Lexington Veterans Affairs Medical Center open in the face of potential consolidation. Thanks to their commitment, the veterans of Central Kentucky will continue to benefit from the excellent medical services and the unique beauty of this facility.

The Lexington Veterans Affairs Medical Center is a nationally recognized health care center with a number of distinguished awards. Most recently, the facility received a \$500,000 award for "Best Overall Performance" among VA hospitals in the MidSouth Healthcare Network, and received the first-ever John M. Eisenberg award for patient safety co-sponsored by the National Quality Foundation and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. I am proud that this hospital will continue to serve the community and provide our veterans with the quality service they deserve.

Veterans Day is a time to honor our nation's true patriots for their courage and commitment to this country. These men and women have protected our families over the years, and now it is our turn to take care of them. Let us renew our promise to our veterans and military retirees and honor the sacrifices they have made so that we may live free. As our troops