Another model that I think is worth our time is “Community Prosecution”. This is where prosecutors and the community work together along with other civic groups such as the church. These groups work together in problem solving, recognizing the importance of the community in public safety, maintaining good partnership with each civic group.

One of the more serious issues that took center stage in the conference was the security of prosecutors, something I think we in the islands take for granted. Unlike in the Turks & Caicos Islands, prosecutors all over the world are losing their lives in the line of duty. Surprisingly, the host country opened up the conference by having a moment of silence for about 10 prosecutors that were murdered because of their jobs. During one of the small sessions we were shown a short film of an incident that occurred in Honduras where a prosecutor was dismembered and brutally killed because he was the lead prosecutor in a drug matter that involved one of the nastiest gangs in that region. His body parts were thrown all over different areas and his head was placed on the door step of the DPP’s Office. No doubt this callous act totally demoralized the prosecutors and petrified any potential witnesses who were even considering coming forward. In that part of the city conviction rates were at its lowest, witnesses were unlikely to testify, police were bribed, and technology and collection and preservation of evidence was non-existent.

Fortunately a Canadian volunteer group who assist countries such as Honduras stepped in right on time and provided training in the area of DNA, forensics, preservation of evidence etc. Long story short, the leader of the gang was brought to justice along with a number of gang members and between all of them they are serving over 100 years.

Simple but valuable suggestions were given to prosecutors who were not as fortunate to have personal security (which seem to be the case). Some of the suggestions were as follows:

- Vary the times you go into work
- Do not leave the office at the same time if you work late in the evening
- Change your routine
- Drive home on different routes
- Have an alarm system at your home
- Park at different locations

We may take it for granted here in the Turks & Caicos Islands but it only takes one incident to get our attention, like it did in Italy where two magistrates lost their lives. Since that horrendous incident there is now a properly organized system legislatively in place. It was suggested that smaller countries need to partner with bigger countries and harsh penalties need to be in place for persons who participate in such acts of intimidation of witnesses and legal personnel. So it is better to be proactive than reactive.

Finally I found the “Small Islands and Other Small States” sessions very beneficial and rewarding. This session was chaired by Rory Field, DPP of Bermuda. It was at this session that I recognized that our neighbors in the region have the same problems that we experience in the Turks & Caicos Islands. The most prominent problems being, witness protection (a recent problem we experienced), prosecution security, problems with the jury were among the problems listed. One suggestion that I never thought about but was rather thought provoking was a regional jury pool to help alleviate the common problems in big and populous cases when trying to find an impartial jury. It was at that session that I met the DPP of the British Virgin Islands, Mr. Wayne Rajbansee (Franklyn buddy). It was also at this session that I was able to gather the courage to walk to the microphone and make my contribution in a form of a comment and a few suggestions on witness protection, security and jury pooling.