

Week Ending Friday, May 16, 1997

**Remarks at a Reception for  
Caribbean Leaders in Bridgetown,  
Barbados**

*May 9, 1997*

Governor General, Madam, Prime Minister and Mrs. Arthur, leaders of the Caribbean, distinguished guests. First I'd like to thank our hosts for their hospitality and the weather. [Laughter] And I'd like to thank all of you for agreeing to join in this meeting here in beautiful Barbados.

I'm deeply honored to be the first American President to hold a summit with Caribbean heads of government here in the Caribbean. But it is high time—America, after all, is a Caribbean nation. Puerto Rico and the American Virgin Islands lie in the heart of this region. The bonds of commerce among us and the bonds binding our people are strong.

Today, millions of my fellow Americans trace proud roots to the Caribbean. These people have enriched and strengthened the United States. We can all be proud that our leadership as a Caribbean community, supported by nations around the world, along with the determination of the Haitian people, have given Haiti another chance to build a democratic future. And we are delighted to have President Preval with us here tonight.

The last time we met as a group was in the White House 3½ years ago on the eve of Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. This hopeful moment gives us another chance to meet together and work together. It demands that we work together because there are great forces of change sweeping our world and our region. We must harness them to our benefit. We must meet the host of new challenges before us. And frankly, none of us can make the most of the opportunities or deal with the dangers alone.

That's what our meeting tomorrow is all about. We need to ensure that the galloping global economy does not trample small

economies or leave them behind. We must ensure that economic growth and environmental protection go forward hand in hand. We must band together to defeat the criminal syndicates and drug traffickers that prey on open societies and put our children and our very social fabric at risk.

No nation is so strong that it needs no help from its friends, and none is too small to make a real difference. Together we must build a new partnership for prosperity and security in the Caribbean, based on our common values, aimed at our common dreams. I look forward to the work we will do tomorrow and even more to the days of closer and more productive partnership ahead.

Thank you. And thank you for welcoming Hillary and me tonight. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. at the Government House. In his remarks, he referred to Governor General Sir Clifford Husbands and his wife, Lady Husbands; Prime Minister Owen Arthur of Barbados and his wife, Beverley; and President Rene Preval of Haiti. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 7002—National  
Defense Transportation Day and  
National Transportation Week, 1997**

*May 9, 1997*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

The United States has the finest, safest transportation system in the world—superior highways and waterways, railroads, pipelines, and airports. This system unites a diverse Nation, provides economic opportunity, and enhances our quality of life by giving our citizens almost unrestricted mobility.

As we approach the 21st century, we must maintain the strength and reliability of this