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our cooperation to fight drugs and organized crime.

Working as partners, we can help build a future of peace and prosperity for all our children to enjoy. That's what we've committed to do at our summit in Barbados; that's what we'll continue to do as neighbors, friends, and partners.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on May 9 aboard Air Force One for later broadcast by Voice of America to Latin American outlets. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony With Caribbean Leaders in Bridgetown

May 10, 1997

To our host, Prime Minister—if I had known earlier in my life that George Washington came here as a young man, I would have been here before. [*Laughter*] I thank you for the warm welcome that you have given to me and to my wife, to Secretary Albright, and our delegation.

I wanted to make the important point last night, and I would like to make it again, that while we have gathered as a group before in the White House and in Port-au-Prince, this is the first time an American President has actually held a summit with the Caribbean heads of Government in the region itself. But the point I wish to make is that this is not a meeting between Caribbean nations and the United States, but rather a meeting among Caribbean nations including the United States.

Puerto Rico and the American Virgin Islands lie at the heart of this region. We are joined today by the Governor of the Virgin Islands, Governor Roy Schneider; the congressional delegate from Puerto Rico and former Governor, Carlos Romero-Barceló; last night the delegate from the Virgin Islands, Donna Christian-Green, was here with us; and we also have Congresswoman Maxine Waters from California here.

The United States is very much aware that millions of our fellow citizens trace their heritage to these islands and that we have benefited immeasurably from them. More than ever before, we are linked economically and politically. Every nation but one in the Caribbean has chosen free elections and free markets. I am proud that the United States has long been a beacon for freedom in this hemisphere. But I am proud that so many of the other nations represented around this table have also been long beacons for freedom.

And like all the rest of you, we are especially gratified to be joined by the second democratically elected President of Haiti. And President Preval, we're glad you're here and we wish you well and we're with you all the way.

We have a lot of work to do today, and I will try to be brief. We have to work on means to expand the quality of our lives by expanding trade, by helping small economies compete in a global economy, by strengthening the education of our children, and deepening our cooperation against crime and drugs. If we work together, we can bring the benefits of change to our citizens and beat back the darker aspects of it. We can meet the new threats to our security and enhance our prosperity.

I want this summit to be the start of an ongoing and deeper process of Caribbean cooperation. We have worked very hard, all of us have, to make this summit productive. We have a rich and full document to which we are all going to commit ourselves. But still, we must be committed to working over the months and years ahead for our people and our Caribbean community, and that is my commitment to you. This summit should be the beginning, not the end of this process.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. in the North West Plenary Conference Room at the Sherbourne Center.

The President's News Conference With Caribbean Leaders in Bridgetown
May 10, 1997

Prime Minister Arthur. Mr. Chairman, President of the United States of America, fellow Caribbean heads of state and government, Secretary General of CARICOM, distinguished delegates, members of the press. First, I should like to say that my wife and I are pleased that you could find it possible to come to share the residence with us. It is my pleasure to inform you that the just concluded Caribbean-United States summit has been a great success.

The signing of the Bridgetown Declaration of Principles is tangible expression of the new partnership between the Caribbean States and the Government and the people of the United States of America. Equally important is a plan of action which gives concrete expression to the commitment of the Caribbean States and the United States of America to cooperate on trade, development, finance, the environment, as well as on justice and security.

The summit has afforded our region the opportunity to present as one its perspectives on several concerns which we share with the United States of America. History and shared traditions already unite us. As technology and globalization bring us closer together, it is inevitable that meetings of this type will be necessary to share perspectives, coordinate actions, and to find solutions to common problems.

On this historic occasion, we have been able to undertake a detailed review and analysis of critical aspects of the relationship between the Caribbean nations and the United States of America. We have also been able to lay the foundations for future cooperation and consultation.

This summit is but the first step in a process of reaffirming and redefining a partnership between our two societies. We have come a long way in a short time from our first meeting at Sam Lord's castle through the meeting of the working groups and subcommittee in Tobago and St. Lucia, to a just concluded summit at Sherbourne and here at Ilaro Court.

Through these discussions, Mr. President, your Special Envoy, Mr. Richard Clark, has been a valuable and critical advocate in advancing our discussions. The need for an accessible contact between us cannot be overstated. It is my hope that any arrangement of this type will not end with the summit activities but will continue to allow future consultations between the Governments of the Caribbean and United States to prosper.

In the preparatory stages for the summit, the States of the Caribbean have been ably represented by the Foreign Minister Ralph Maraj of Trinidad and Tobago; Foreign Minister, Mr. Rohee of Guyana; Attorney General David Simmons of Barbados; and Ambassador Richard Bernal of Jamaica. I wish to place on record as well our appreciation for the magnificent contribution of the Secretary General of CARICOM and his staff and the advisers.

Barbados is proud and honored to host this summit, the first of its kind between the Caribbean States and the Government of the United States of America. I am confident that history will recall this summit as having forged a new and a lasting bond between the people of our nations and those of the United States of America. It is in this spirit, therefore, that I now have the greatest pleasure in introducing the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Right Honorable P.J. Patterson, Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Governments of the Caribbean Community to address you. I thank you.

Prime Minister Patterson. Presidents of the United States of America, Haiti, Suriname, and Guyana, colleague heads of government, ladies and gentlemen. In the closest of families, difficulties are bound to arise from time to time in their relationships. For those relationships to endure, it is essential that they must have the capacity from time to time to meet within the bosom of the family and to sort out whatever difficulties may have arisen.

Today is one such occasion. And as a result of the family meeting we have had among all the nations that are a part of the Caribbean, including the United States, we have agreed to chart a course that will enable us to move forward and together in the days ahead. We have discussed matters relating to democracy, development, and security, recognizing the considerable interlinkages which necessarily exist between all these important subjects.