

REMARKS BY THE AMBASSADOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF THE BAHAMAS AT THE CELEBRATIONS MARKING
THE 14TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAHAMAS' INDEPENDENCE

INTERNATIONAL CLUB OF WASHINGTON -
FRIDAY, 10TH JULY, 1987

HONOURABLE ELLIOT ABRAMS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION; YOUR EXCELLENCIES,
THE MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS; CONGRESSIONAL
STAFF MEMBERS; DISTINGUISHED GUESTS; MY FELLOW
BAHAMIAN; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN ALL.

I AM SO VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME YOU HERE TO CELEBRATE THE
FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAHAMAS' INDEPENDENCE.

YES, IT WAS ON 10 JULY, FOURTEEN YEARS AGO, THAT THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS OPENED A FIRST CHAPTER IN ITS
HISTORY AS A DEMOCRATIC AND SOVEREIGN STATE. WE HAVE,
SINCE THEN, EXHIBITED A STRONG SENSE OF SELF-DETERMINATION
AND A RESOLUTE COMMITMENT TO THE TASK OF NATION-BUILDING.

THE BAHAMAS, AS I EXPECT YOU ARE ALL AWARE, IS A MAJOR
WORLD TOURIST DESTINATION. TOURISM HAS BEEN A KIND INDUSTRY
TO THE BAHAMAS AFFORDING A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE A LEGITIMATE,
DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING. WE IN THE BAHAMAS ARE PROUD OF
OUR TOURISM PRODUCT AND HOPE THAT WE ARE ABLE TO SHARE THE
BEAUTY OF OUR LAND AND SEA, AS WELL AS THE WARM HOSPITALITY
OF OUR PEOPLE, WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS FOR
MANY YEARS TO COME.

COMPLEMENTARY TO TOURISM, THE BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT IS ACTIVELY
PURSUING DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER IMPORTANT SECTORS OF OUR
ECONOMY - IN AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES FOR EXAMPLE - SO THAT
NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES MAY OPEN UP IN THESE AREAS FOR
THE GROWING NUMBERS OF YOUNG BAHAMIANS.

THE FOREIGN INVESTOR REMAINS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN OUR PLANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAHAMAS AND WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE SO MUCH TO OFFER THE INVESTOR IN RETURN. OUR STRONG, LONG-STANDING TRADITIONS OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY ARE PERHAPS THE MOST OBVIOUS AND AT THE TOP OF THE LIST. PROXIMITY TO THE UNITED STATES AND REGULAR AND RELIABLE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES ARE SIMILARLY IMPORTANT.

CERTAINLY WE BELIEVE OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET TO BE OUR HUMAN RESOURCES - THE BAHAMIAN PEOPLE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE BAHAMAS HAS IN THE PAST, AND CONTINUES TODAY, TO COMMIT AN UNDULY LARGE PROPORTION OF ITS LIMITED FINANCIAL AND MANPOWER RESOURCES TO THE WAR AGAINST THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTIC TRAFFIC. ONE OF THE SERIOUS THREATS TO BAHAMIAN YOUTH TODAY IS DRUG ABUSE AND RELATED CRIME. FOR THIS REASON THE BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT HAS NEGOTIATED A SERIES OF BILATERAL NARCOTIC-RELATED AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE PRINCIPAL MARKET FOR ALL DRUGS TRANSITING THE ARCHIPELAGO OF THE BAHAMAS. WE EXPECT IN THE COMING MONTHS TO UPDATE LONG-STANDING AGREEMENTS AND, WORKING IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH, AND WITH THE CONTINUED ASSISTANCE OF, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL SUCCEED IN STEMMING THE TIDE CREATED BY WHAT WOULD SOMETIMES APPEAR TO BE AN INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEM.

JUST THREE SHORT WEEKS AGO, THE BAHAMAS HELD ITS MOST RECENT PARLIMENTARY ELECTIONS - A TRADITION WHICH PREDATES OUR INDEPENDENCE BY TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY (250) YEARS. THE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS NOW BEEN RETURNED FOR A SIXTH CONSECUTIVE TERM IN OFFICE HAS ENUNCIATED NO CHANGE IN ITS

FOREIGN POLICY - THE BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO ERADICATING THE EVIL SCOURGE OF DRUG TRAFFICKING. SIMILARLY, THE BAHAMAS' COMMITMENT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS AND RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW REMAIN FIRM. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE PRESERVATION, AND INDEED THE FURTHER STRENGTHENING, OF OUR CLOSE TIES AND FRIENDLY LINKS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THIS GREAT CITY AND COUNTRY WHO ARE MY HOST.

IN THIS VEIN, AND ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF MY COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE, MAY I ASK YOU TO LIFT YOUR GLASSES AND JOIN ME IN A TOAST TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND TO OUR AMERICAN FRIENDS.

TO THE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

THANK YOU.