



**REMARKS BY THE
RT. HON. PERRY G. CHRISTIE, M.P.
PRIME MINISTER
OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF THE BAHAMAS
AT THE CEREMONY
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
TO COMMEMORATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON
AUGUST 28th, 2013**

I bring you greetings from the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, your closest neighbour to the south. It is an honour for me and for the Bahamian people, whom I represent here today, to stand here in a city named by you for the champion of your struggle against colonial rule and at a monument built by you to the memory of the man who liberated your nation from Slavery. How much greater it is that our purpose here today is to pay tribute to a man who was raised up to speak a vision of liberty and the language of freedom not only to his fellow Americans but to all the peoples of the world, including my own.

Martin Luther King Jr. holds a very special place in the hearts and minds of Bahamians, not least because he spent time amongst us, both in Nassau and in the tiny island of Bimini where, in 1964, while on a brief vacation, he composed his Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

On a clear night the lights of metropolitan Miami are, in fact, visible from the shores of Bimini, dramatizing the closeness between our two nations. We are, after all, less than 50 miles apart.

But however close that may be in the literal sense, we are, in the geography of the soul, even closer than that. The common ties of history, of ethnicity and culture, of migration, and of a common heritage of struggle bind us together not just as neighbors nor even only as friends but as true brothers and sisters.

The message I bring to you today can be briefly stated. And it is this:

As momentous as this occasion is we do a grave injustice to ourselves and to all humanity if we leave here unresolved to carry on the great and noble struggle for which Martin Luther King Jr. gave his life.

The blood this good man shed in Memphis still cries out across the years; cries out to each and every one of us, wherever we may be, all across the world, to stand up for freedom; to stand up for human dignity; to stand up for equality; to stand up for social

justice; to stand up for right and not for wrong; for peace and not for war; for love and not for hate.

What I would particularly wish to say today, in commemoration of this fiftieth anniversary of the March on Washington, is that for all of us in every part of this fragile globe, the mark of our success in our common struggle for freedom is when we look at our children and see them growing in self-confidence and in the conviction that in their society there is a place for them; a place where they will prosper, meeting the practical needs of their families while still having the time and the means to enjoy their lives; a place where they can live at peace with one another, knowing that they are respected and appreciated. When our children know that they are not deemed to be disposable and expendable because they are differently abled; or because they are female; or because their skins are one colour and not another; or because they speak one language and not another, or heed one religion and not another, or practice one culture and not another, then and only then will freedom ring from the mountaintop that loomed so large in the dreams and vision of the man we honour here today. When each of our children has real opportunity for ownership in his or her economy, and has a real voice in who governs and makes decisions in his or her society, then and only then will we have achieved victory in the struggles for prosperity, for peace, and for justice of which Dr. King spoke so passionately 50 years ago today.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s earthly life may have ended on a Memphis balcony in the sudden, fleeting flash of gunfire but the flame of his Great Dream endures. It burns ever bright, all across the globe.

May the light of that flame continue to guide us as we go forth now, each in his own way, each in his own nation, to continue the work of Dr. King

In that way, and in no other, we keep his dream alive and make it our own.

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