



**CARICOM-US SUMMIT**  
**PRIME MINISTER PERRY CHRISTIE'S**  
**SPEECH**

**Kingston, Jamaica**  
**9 APRIL 2015**



Mr. President, I join my colleague and our host, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, in welcoming you to the Caribbean and this discussion with the Leaders of our Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

This meeting is important because it reinforces the obvious, the symbiotic relationship which exists between the United States and the region: we are joined by history, migration, by commerce and geography. We are interdependent with, and upon the other. In many respects, we are kith and kin. It goes beyond treaties, agreements and trade. It is a real live working relationship.

This meeting is the third of our get-togethers as Caricom leaders with you. It is the first amongst us with you which is for the sole purpose of discussing common problems in a dedicated mission at a dedicated spot in the region. The optics are good; the range of issues is comprehensive; our resolve to build a better world in peace and prosperity is reinforced by this visit and these discussions. This meeting demonstrates to our people that we are in fact concerned together.

Many people in our region and in my country look with pride at your personal accomplishments in the face of your country's own history of struggle for the dignity of man; they glory in your success and admire your leadership. Patterned after your personal success, they look to your country to help reinforce the message of social mobility, the promise of societal growth, economic development, equity and fairness.

Let there be no mistake today. Our mission is as great an opportunity as we can have in our time, to review the important issues of our time. At the core of the mission is that of the development of our people, to make their lives better, free from crime and violence; with incomes that support a good living for themselves and their families and to ensure a bright future for our young people.

I come therefore to speak today for our young people. They are the future of this region. I speak on behalf of us all when I say there is no more compelling mission than we have today than to help to secure their future; to dispel their sense of hopelessness; to fix the joblessness; to ensure that they get a good education; to help them become a part of the formal economies of our countries. We cannot surrender them to the negative forces of crime and war in far flung climes. If this meeting produces anything today, it must be ensure the future of our young people. If we fail in that mission, we do so at our peril.

At the centre then of this mission for us is that of human development. This must be done in a safe and secure environment, with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all.

In this connection, we welcome therefore, the recent development toward the settlement of the Nuclear Framework Agreement with Iran in which the United States played a major role under your leadership. In addition, in our own region the dialogue between Cuba and the United States toward normalization of the relationship is a pleasing and welcome development.

As small states we have long recognised the value of pooling our resources. We have adjusted our priorities to rebound from the crisis of 2008. However, it is clear that the magnitude of the issues often overwhelms the resources which Caricom can collectively bring to bear. We are dedicated to building the competitiveness which would serve to assist us in maintaining the progress we have made in the areas of human and social development while providing much needed jobs, particularly for our youth. That is where our partnership with your country is critical.

My colleagues and I were quite pleased to hear Vice President Biden announce at our meeting in Washington last January, that some action was being taken by your administration in respect of facilitating our access to development financing in areas related to climate change, energy and disaster management.

Mr. President, colleague Heads of Government, the three themes of today's Meeting, Competitiveness, Security and Energy, could not be more relevant.

There is no doubt that crime and security rank high among the principal threats and obstacles to such growth. We therefore value highly the co-operation and the collaboration with the United States in the area of security. We look forward to its continuation. In my own country, as the closest offshore country to the United States, the benefits of security cooperation are obvious to our people; the fight against transnational crime including illegal migration is urgent, the importation of guns from America wreaks havoc and needs to be stopped. That is but one country's example of the sense of urgency we feel on crime and security across the region. More must be done in a practical way to stop the crime. Let us work together to build a zone of peace; to stop crime; to end the violence; promote our young and ensure our common futures.

Mr. President, we met before in Port of Spain and in Cartagena. We agreed in those fora on specific actions. For many, the results in concrete terms did not match the loftiness of the declarations made there. This time, this meeting should mark a new and positive beginning for the Caricom-US relationship, with a mechanism for partnership in place for the progress of our region and its people

The outcome of our discussions today will no doubt strengthen the partnership between us. Let build on these discussions, seeing them as part of a continuing conversation, and leaving here with a concrete set of actions which we mean to accomplish.

I thank you.