



**REMARKS BY THE GOVERNOR
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO
HON. RAFAEL HERNANDEZ COLON
AT THE RECEPTION IN HONOR OF
THE UNITED STATES CHIEF JUSTICES**

JANUARY 31, 1990

LA FORTALEZA

On behalf of the people of Puerto Rico I wish to give you our warmest welcome to our island. We are very honored to be the seat of this Midyear Meeting of the Conference of Chief Justices.

Puerto Rico is a small island with an enormous respect and love for democracy and the mechanisms which enable it. I believe no other country in Latin America can value it as we do, because it has been an integral part of our economic, social and political advancement.

Ours is the story of a people who forty years ago decided to rise from utter poverty to attain the highest standards of living; which was achieved within the framework of Democracy.

In the span of four decades, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has conquered the most profound social and economic transformation in this hemisphere. We are the largest economy of the Caribbean. Puerto Rico invests more in applied science and technology than the Caribbean as a whole. Today we have the highest per capita

investment in infrastructure, health and education in the region.

Proud of our imperishable democratic tradition and our economic progress, we are presently working to strengthen progress and democracy throughout the Basin. My administration has aimed, through various initiatives, to serve as an anchor of economic growth and political stability in Caribbean. Our CBI-Twin Plant program has successfully complemented the initiative launched by President Reagan.

I have always said that democracy faces today many challenges, but above all, the challenge of inspired and farsighted leadership of those who --in some way or another-- play an important role in the government of a nation.

The importance of the judiciary in the government of a nation is sometimes underestimated. Evidently, it is an essential part of the checks and balances of the Constitution, but most important, the judiciary

through its actions and decisions has power and responsibility in the fulfillment of the policies that can guide the nation into the future.

Along with the other two branches of government the judiciary must assume an aggressive role, instilling a sense of purpose and direction into judicial decisions which are just and fair in the results and visionary in their response to needs of our present society. It is not easy to temper judicial decisions to the demands of modern society. In the process we must seek the perpetuation of the nation's moral values in theory and practice. We are also well aware of the many problems that today's courts face, such as heavy case loads and difficult ethical questions arising from a society in constant change. It requires strong will to confront all these difficult issues; we must not only face them but move forward in order to better serve the people.

As the United States and Puerto Rico approach the next century, we will need a strong judicial

opinions committed to moral values; we will need decisions, that framed into a strong national purpose, can help in the advancement of civilization. The judiciary has a central role in establishing the ethical character of our society, its human dignity, its wisdom and serenity, its human solidarity.

I know that we will enter into the new decade, guided by the courage and judgement; by the integrity and dedication of the men that lead the government. And I know that the judiciary will excel in the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

May this Conference of Chief Justices serve to clarify, refine and advance the ideals of the constitution we all share.

Now I wish to address a few words in Spanish to the members of the Puerto Rican judiciary. Quiero aprovechar esta oportunidad para saludarlos como grupo, en este año que ha comenzado, espero que el mismo esté lleno de logros para ustedes. Me

alegro mucho de poder compartir esta noche con
ustedes y sus esposas.

Thank you all for coming to La Fortaleza,
please enjoy yourselves.

