A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO
TO VISITING CORRESPONDENTS

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

While here, I encourage you to take time from your Summit Conference activities to meet with our people and to learn of our efforts, our struggles and sacrifices to build a more just and fair society.

You will find that Puerto Rico, although handicapped by severe natural limitations, is a country which has made considerable progress in the past quarter century because of the determination, capacity for change and creative intelligence of its people. This progress, indeed impressive, is only the beginning, as Puerto Rico must now struggle even harder against a growing population, existing pockets of poverty, and the recent economic stagnation brought about by the recession.

These challenges of the future will be dealt with as we have dealt with past problems; in the spirit of openness, honesty and mutual respect that characterizes Puerto Rican political and social life. The profound faith of our people in the democratic process is the bedrock of our development.
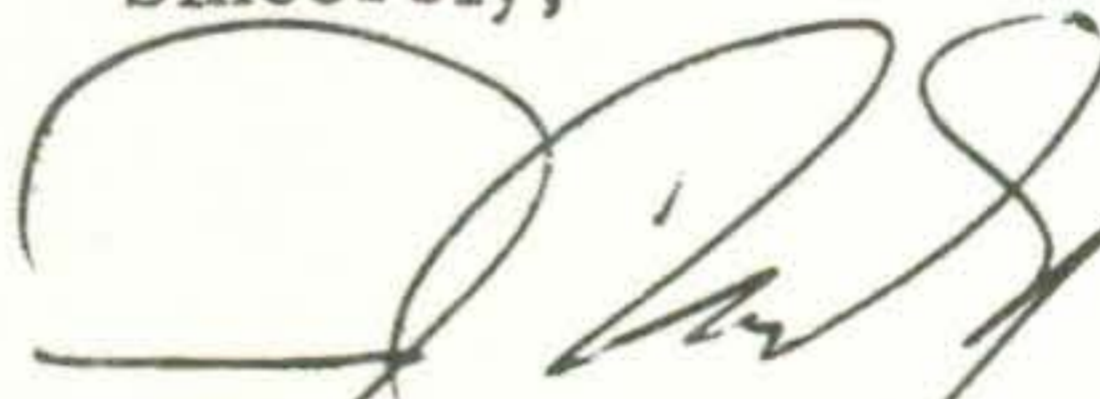
This faith in a democratic form of government by the people is what so intimately unites the people of Puerto Rico with the people of the United States, and, of course, is the wellspring which allows us to grow and improve that relationship.

Puerto Rico is an example of how political creativity can link a great world power and a small country of a different culture in mutual respect and to their mutual advantage.

There is, therefore, much worth knowing about Puerto Rico beyond the fact that it has been chosen as the site of this important Summit Conference.

I cordially invite you to take advantage of your visit here to discover more about our Commonwealth. At the same time, please accept the traditional hospitality of Puerto Rico and enjoy yourselves while you are here. The people of Puerto Rico offer to you a warm "abrazo".

Sincerely,

Rafael Hernández Colón