

Remarks by Incoming U.S. Chargé d'Affaires

Lisa Johnson

Fourth of July Celebration - July 3, 2014

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a true pleasure to stand before you in celebration of the 238th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America. I am honored to commemorate this occasion in The Bahamas with a people who share the same democratic principles upon which the United States was founded. In the United States, we celebrate our independence with good friends. Having arrived in The Bahamas only five days ago, I already feel I am amongst friends and am glad that I can continue this tradition with you tonight.

Your Excellencies Sir Arthur and Lady Foulkes, Acting Prime Minister the Hon. Phillip Davis and Mrs. Davis, Your Excellency Governor Peter Beckingham of the Turks and Caicos Islands and

Mrs. Beckingham thank you for honoring us with your presence this evening. Pastor Prince Bodie, thank you for that wonderful invocation, and to all of you here and to the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, thank you for your many years of friendship with the United States of America. I look forward to getting to know your country and working in partnership with you over the next few years.

Tonight we pay tribute to New York with a salute to a great American tradition, the Broadway musical. I would like to take a moment to thank the outstanding musical performers- The Royal Bahamas Police Force Band, the Bahamas National Youth Choir, and Ms. Anita MacDonald for giving us a little taste of Broadway. I would also like to ask you to help me in thanking Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Allens for their beautiful renditions of the national anthems. Let's give them all a hand.

Each year, Independence Day provides Americans with the opportunity to reflect on the values that the United States represents. In 1776, the founders stated in their Declaration of Independence, that they held the *“truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”*

While those truths may indeed be self-evident, today we acknowledge that they must also be treasured and maintained. For more than two hundred years, the United States has been on a journey to bridge the intent of these words with the realities of our time. Democracy is a continuing process which we embrace and celebrate. So, today we reflect on what more we can do to turn our founders’ ideals into reality.

I am proud to serve in The Bahamas, a country that shares the United States’ commitment to the ideals of freedom,

democracy, and good governance that form the basis of our partnership. I look forward to helping to strengthen the robust security cooperation which is improving security for citizens of both our countries. We also will continue to work together on innovative solutions to spur economic development, advance social equality, and promote a clean and secure energy future for our region.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of the members of the mission staff who helped to make this event such a great success. Again, on behalf of the Embassy of the United States of America, I am grateful to all of the very generous partners who have made this event possible. And now, in honor of 238 years of independence, please join me in a toast,

To the health of our countries, to the steadfast friendship between the United States of America and the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and to the success of our partnership, now and in the future.

Thank you. May God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas,
and God bless the United States of America.