

# **Independence Message 2007**

**By Leader of the Opposition**

**The Rt. Hon. Perry Christie**

**10 July 2007**

My fellow Bahamians. Today we celebrate the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our nation and I am moved by the spirit of patriotism shown by the overwhelming display of our colors black, gold and aquamarine throughout the country.

We must be mindful that this little country of ours requires the support and contributions of every single Bahamian, regardless of race, ethnic origin or political persuasion. I believe that the success of this country as an independent nation lies in the commitment and dedication that every Bahamian should have for making this country live up to its full potential.

We must not allow the wedge of political differences or race or economic standing deter us from the original vision and dream of our founding fathers for this country.

That dream of wiping every tear from every eye must go forward in the actions and decisions of our leaders but more importantly, our people. We are all invested in the success of this land and I make no apologies in saying that all of us must be accountable in this endeavor.

As we go through this day, I want to encourage all Bahamians to keep this spirit of patriotism and national pride going. July 10<sup>th</sup> need not only be a reminder of our country's birth date but the midway point for a year round attitude of Bahamian pride and excellence. National Pride should not and cannot be a fashion statement. It must be a way of life that every man, woman and child called Bahamian must grasp and hold tight.

I love this country dearly, as many of you do.

I can vividly recall standing amongst the crowd at Clifford Park on July 9<sup>th</sup> with Bernadette and many of my fellow countrymen, including some who are today, serving in our Parliament. We were bursting with the pride and reverence for what we knew was a once in a lifetime event. A country, my country, was about to be born officially.

I recall having to learn the words of our beautiful new anthem, penned by Timothy Gibson, hoping my excitement would not cause me to forget the words.

When the Union Jack was lowered and the Black, Gold and Aquamarine standard was raised for the first time, my heart burst with the pride of knowing that finally, a dream had come true.

I have given 33 years of my life to the service of this Commonwealth as a Parliamentarian and with God's strength and guidance; I will continue to serve until the Master calls. I invite every one of you to become owners of this great Bahamian dream.

We must not forget and we must not turn back. It is particularly important for us to remember that at this time if we are to live up to the challenge set forth in 1973.

Happy Independence Day Bahamas.