

**Remarks by The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar S.C., Prime
Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago , on the occasion of the
250th Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America,
Hyatt Regency,
Friday July 10th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.**

Let me begin by warmly welcoming, Mr. Philip Kern, the new Chargé d’Affaires at the Embassy of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Kern, we wish you every success during your tenure and we are especially pleased to welcome you at a time when our countries continue to strengthen an already enduring friendship.

I therefore warmly extend, on behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, our sincerest congratulations on a milestone of extraordinary magnitude, on this special day.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a bold declaration gave rise to what George Washington described as “the last great experiment for promoting human happiness”. It was an audacity of thought that endured not without challenge, but because generations of the American people committed to the ideals within the Declaration of Independence was founded on, “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” and carried profound relevance far beyond the country’s borders.

Today, as we join with you to celebrate this 250th anniversary, the USA has persevered as an architectural pillar of the Western Hemisphere, proving that a nation can forge an unyielding commitment to governance and self-determination. We, in Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed throughout the Americas, honour these remarkable two and a half centuries as partners whose histories and futures are very much linked.

For Trinidad and Tobago, the USA has long been a trusted and valued partner in our shared journey of growth and development. Yet, it is fair to say that over the past year, this partnership has grown even stronger, marked by meaningful cooperation across several critical areas to advance the well-being of our people. This heightened partnership has grown as a result of the shared vision for the Americas and the dynamic leadership of President Trump and the Government of the United States of America. Today, I also salute President Trump and ask that you join me, please.

Our bilateral ties are anchored by a robust security partnership which has certainly flourished into 2026. We have witnessed exceptional cooperation through multiple training exercises conducted by the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit alongside the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force. Just two months ago in April 2026, a landmark collaboration involving the US Embassy, CARICOM IMPACS, the International Law Enforcement Academy San Salvador, and the

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives brought forth vital operational workshops targeting firearms trafficking and transnational organised crime.

The enduring strength of this partnership is also reflected in the realities of our shared geography which connects us through a common space and where opportunities and shared challenges demand unity. It is within this context of shared purpose that Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its support for the Shield of the Americas initiative, an initiative brought forward by President Trump

As we all appreciate, border security and the safety of our citizens remain a priority for the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. In this regard, the Shield of the Americas represents more than a security framework. It is also a profound testament that hemispheric resilience relies on the collective responsibility of all states. Our endorsement of this initiative underscores Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to bolstering security efforts and working with our regional and international allies to ensure a safer, more stable hemisphere.

Beyond security, the spirit of cooperation is equally evident in tangible, life-saving ways. We remain profoundly grateful for the visit of the United States Navy Ship 'Comfort' under the Continuing Promise Mission in August 2025,

which provided critical medical care directly to our citizens. This spirit of solidarity has been further complemented by the commitment of the United States of US\$6 million to strengthen our national health infrastructure over the next two (2) years. Can we thank them for that, please, ladies and gentlemen?

As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, our partnership has also naturally evolved to meet the demands of an increasingly interconnected world. The weeklong Subject Matter Expert Exchange workshop held this past April at the University of the West Indies and supported by the Delaware National Guard equipped over forty (40) of our premier IT professionals to enhance our national cybersecurity capacity.

Our countries have also worked in pursuit of shared goals on the global stage. Trinidad and Tobago deeply appreciated the support extended by the United States during our successful election to the United Nations Security Council for the 2027 to 2028 term. Thank you, USA. That endorsement reflected confidence in our country's ability to contribute constructively to international peace and security.

Of course, it would be remiss of me not to mention that this celebration comes at a particularly exciting time as the 2026 FIFA World Cup unfolds. The United States has been a remarkable co-host and I am sure many of us have been

impressed by the performance of the United States Men's National Team. Their energy and determination have truly resonated with not only supporters, but the rest of the world and has made for an even more memorable tournament.

Our connection through sport extends beyond football. Just recently, Trinidad and Tobago celebrated a moment of immense national pride when San Fernando's very own, Malique Lewis, was selected as the 60th overall pick in the 2026 NBA Draft by the Milwaukee Bucks *via* the Washington Wizards. I take particular pride in witnessing one of our nation's young talents reaching such a remarkable milestone.

For athletes, earning a place in the NBA, which is widely regarded as the "premier professional basketball league in the world", is no small feat. Malique now joins the ranks of a select few from Trinidad and Tobago who have reached basketball's highest level, adding another distinguished chapter to our country's sporting legacy in the United States. I am certain that many of us will be following his journey with great interest when the new NBA season begins.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we mark the 250th Anniversary of American Independence, we are reminded that the "experiment" that is the United States is one which is ever evolving. However, throughout its journey, the US has demonstrated that the strength of a nation is rooted in its people and in their

capacity to adapt, persevere and shape their future. That same spirit of resilience and shared purpose underscores the enduring partnership between Trinidad and Tobago and the United States.

In that spirit, we look forward, with great anticipation, to deepening collaboration with the United States of America, recognising that even the mightiest wings soar higher when supported by strong and enduring partnerships. As the United States embarks upon its next 250 years, let it do so knowing that in Trinidad and Tobago, it finds a friend and partner that is committed to working together toward a prosperous and united future for our nations, our region and the wider international community.

As I record my congratulations to the Government and People of the USA on this historic 250 years of independence, before I close, I want to say that just earlier before I came here, we signed three agreements with three US Companies, Charge', who want to come partner with us, invest here, two for data centres and one to help us rejuvenate and rebuilt our steel industry. Can I thank you for that as well, Charge'?

I say finally, may the United States continue to be guided by the principles on which it was founded, and may the partnership between our Twin-Island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America continue to flourish.

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Happy Independence Day, and may the good Lord continue to bless each and every one of you.

I Thank you.