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Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Dorado Beach, Puerto Rico)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE
OPENING SESSION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PUERTO RICO

On behalf of myself and my colleagues, and the people of the United States, I welcome you to Puerto Rico. We have a formidable task ahead of us in these next two days -- to address major common concerns, and to identify areas in which improved cooperation among us can contribute to the well being of our citizens and to a more secure and prosperous world.

As we all know, meetings of this sort raise anticipations of dramatic results. But the important thing about Rambouillet, and our meeting here today, is that they are part of an essential and continuing bilateral and multilateral effort by the leaders of key industrialized democracies to address common problems and to improve mutual understanding. The complexity of our nations' economies, individually and collectively, means that we as leaders cannot afford to allow major difficulties to arise and then, by dramatic meetings, attempt to resolve them. It requires instead that we concert our efforts to prevent problems from arising in the first place -- to shape the future rather than reacting to it. It is with that objective in mind that this Summit is being held.

The central economic, political, and security importance of our countries to one another, and to the world, confers upon us special responsibilities. In the economic area, on which we will focus today and tomorrow, our strong commitment to shape constructive approaches can contribute to the prosperity of our peoples, strengthen our broader relationships, and prove highly beneficial to the world at large. Recent experience has clearly demonstrated that, because of the interdependence of our nations, common problems are unlikely to be solved unless we apply our mutual efforts. They have, in addition, shown that our common interests are far more significant than the differences which arise among us from time to time. We have, therefore, wisely approached recent problems with a political will and spirit of cooperation which have not only helped us resolve them but which have in fact strengthened considerably relations among our nations and among the industrialized democracies as a whole.

This conference builds on, and can help us continue, the progress already made. The vision and sense of shared purpose which results from our meetings will help each of us pursue constructive policies at home, with respect to our economic partners, and in dealing with major global issues.

I am confident that the same positive spirit that was developed at Rambouillet will extend through our meetings here in Puerto Rico and beyond. Much of the world's future depends on our constructive cooperation.

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