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I bring warm greetings from Gerald R. Ford, the President of the United States, to the people of Puerto Rico.

The President asked that I express both for him and for all the people of the United States our strong and continued friendship.

The President wishes particularly this morning to honor the respect for the freedom and the dignity of the individual and for our democratic traditions that we so dearly cherish and share as citizens.

As we gather here at these inaugural ceremonies to celebrate the change of government that has been accomplished by free citizens voting privately, we know that our democracy works and that the bonds of our common citizenship will last.

The President also asked that I again thank the wonderful people of Puerto Rico for the gracious hospitality that they extended during the Economic Summit Conference which he convened here in June.

Finally, in addition to the privilege of my official duties, I have great personal pleasure in offering congratulations to the Governor-elect, a friend with whom I have worked these past few years and for whom I have the greatest respect and admiration.

He will do well. We wish him well.

Thank you.

