



**Women's Foreign Policy Group  
Embassy Series Event  
June 30, 2010  
Washington, DC**

**Ambassador Glenda Morean Phillip**

*Ambassador for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the US and Mexico  
Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States*

*Celebrating Women of the Caribbean:  
A Farewell to Ambassador Glenda Morean Phillip*

**Patricia Ellis:** Good evening everyone and welcome. I'm Patricia Ellis, President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, and on behalf of WFPG board members Henrietta Holsman Fore and Gail Leftwich Kitch, we are so pleased that you could all join us tonight for this very, very special occasion. I want to begin by thanking the Ambassador so much for opening up her beautiful Embassy, for hosting the event, and most of all for her very warm hospitality. We're gathered tonight to say farewell to Ambassador Glenda Morean Phillip, a friend of many people in the room judging by the amazing turnout of ambassadors, WFPG members, and other friends. She's been one of the most active and really loyal WFPG members. We could always count on her to come to our meetings and participate actively. She's been a speaker at our *Celebration of Women Diplomats* and always warm and friendly, something we greatly appreciated. Personally, I appreciated the opportunity to participate in some of the wonderful events and activities, including dancing, at this Embassy. We really are going to miss her and want to wish her all the very best. Here's a little memento from the WFPG with our name on it so you won't forget us.

I'm going to turn in just one moment to Henrietta Holsman Fore, who is the Co-Chair of our Embassy Series and, as you know, the former USAID Administrator and Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, to introduce the Ambassador. But I would like to recognize all the ambassadors here, so if you could just raise your hands. We have many women ambassadors and their male colleagues. So thank you all so much for coming. We had to recognize the women first, you understand, this is the Women's Foreign Policy Group. [*Laughter.*] We also have people here from the State Department and from many different organizations. I also want to mention one last thing and then we'll turn it over to Henrietta. In your program book we have a reminder about a big event we're having with Melanne Vermeer, the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. It's going to be on July 15th and we hope that you can all join us. Now, Henrietta. Thank you.

**Hon. Henrietta Holsman Fore:** Thank you, Pat. Exceptional women come from all over the globe, but tonight we honor a beautiful woman from the beautiful islands of Trinidad

and Tobago in the Caribbean. Maya Angelou must have had the Ambassador in mind when she wrote, “A woman who is convinced that she deserves to accept only the best challenges herself to give the best. Then she is living phenomenally.”

From her first career as a teacher at a private secondary school in Port of Spain, the Ambassador was determined to continue pursuing her educational goals. She even made this a precondition for her marriage. Now this sounds like a budding lawyer, doesn't it? [*Laughter.*] She went on to obtain her law degree and became the first Trinidad-born woman to be admitted to practice as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago. Later she acquired her own successful law practice and it operated for more than 27 years. She makes time for many other pursuits and has also been active in social welfare and sporting organizations. She's honorary president of the Blind Welfare Association and was the first female president of the Tennis Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

She entered public service in 2001 and became a People's National Movement Opposition Senator and later Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago from 2001 to 2003. In 2003, she was appointed High Commissioner to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland located in London with accreditation to Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. She began a scholarship program for young people interested in joining the diplomatic service. She has championed the ideals and values that matter most to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean community – that is, the crucial need for human prosperity. She's been a strong voice for women, for trade and economic growth, for energy and energy security, and for fighting narcotics and upholding security efforts in the region. She's worked hard to tackle social problems, such as poverty and education, and to deliver aid to the most distressed within the region. We hope to hear, Madame Ambassador, about what will be your next chapter. We hear on the grapevine that there might be a book in the offing. But we very much hope that you continue working with businesses and that that will be part of the future. So we are honored tonight to celebrate you and your work and to have you as our sister at the Women's Foreign Policy Group but also as a woman in foreign policy. May I present to you, the Ambassador.

**Ambassador Glenda Morean Phillip:** Thank you very much Patricia and of course, you have done me...what should I say? Well, I didn't know you were talking about me. [*Laughter.*] Your excellencies, colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I do want to say thank you very much for your turning out in such numbers. I'm talking like I'm on a platform, except I'm not. Because I was just listening to a lot of that in our last election which took place a short while ago. But nevertheless, I do appreciate your presence. I have been saying that I want to leave here by the end of July. I'm getting receptions and good-byes and au revours, but they have not yet confirmed that I'm leaving. [*Laughter.*] I have confirmed that I'm leaving. Because on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, we had a general election. And on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, when I saw where it was going, I turned off the computer, on which I was following things, and typed my letter of resignation and emailed it to Alberta, my secretary, so that next morning I would sign it

and send it off, which I actually did. I sent it off in the morning, because the new government was not forming until the following day. And while it is not written anywhere, if you're a political appointee, with the change of government, you should give the new government a chance to appoint the people they would have confidence in. So I have done that. I have had the packers coming. I haven't got my letter yet. [Laughter.] But I'm living in hope, because I would like to leave here by somewhere around the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. So I am moving as if that is a foregone conclusion.

I would like to congratulate the Women's Foreign Policy Group for the good work it is doing. Now in this town, you have a choice, you have quite an assortment of think tanks and lots of groups. And from my point of view, I think the Women's Foreign Policy Group is number one. [Applause.] And I will tell you why. One of the main reasons for my selecting this group is not the fact that it is gender-sensitive. That is part of it, but not the whole thing. It is the fact that they deal with current issues very efficiently and there are always speakers of the highest rank. You have speakers from embassies and in the State Department, and they are all of the highest caliber. I have been to meetings where we've had the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, we have had Secretary Napolitano, and so it is really, in my mind, one of the premier groups in Washington. So I'd like you to give a round of appreciation for the Women's Foreign Policy Group. [Applause.]

Now, I'm asked all the time: What do I like about Washington? What is the difference between representing my country in Washington and representing Trinidad and Tobago in the UK and all those other countries that were mentioned? There are two major reasons that are compelling as far as I'm concerned. One is the fact that we have good trading relations with the US. In fact, the US purchases more than 60% of our liquefied natural gas, so that they keep the balance of trade positive at all times. That is a major revenue earner for the country. In fact, that is what has our country buoyant. That is what has our country being what you might call the metropolis of the English-speaking Caribbean. So that is one reason. The other is the security aspect. Now while it is true that we have relations with the UK and the other countries in terms of trade and security, with the US, security is much more of an issue for us. As you will have known, there was a recent meeting where the Secretary of State was in Barbados and again it was security matters they were dealing with. So these are the major reasons. In addition, I would say that I came just over two years ago and I think it was one of the most exciting times in the political life of the—or perhaps generally the life—of the US because you had a total change in dynamic. It was very exciting for me to go to the conventions, both the Republican and the Democratic conventions. And you got a good feel of what the policy is like. So while DC may be a small town, well, comparatively speaking, it is a very dynamic place. So that's my answer. I've been answering that question since I've been here. But I don't think I ever quite got around to answering it in the way that I just did.

I will say that I have enjoyed my time here. It has been just over two years; I came in April of 2008. It has been short, hectic, and sweet. So I would like to thank all my colleagues also for ensuring that my stay here has been a very pleasant one and also all of you at the Women's Foreign Policy Group for not only engaging me but also welcoming

me warmly at all your events. So I know that I saw in the program that Patricia said “brief remarks,” so I think I’d better stop. [*Laughter.*] But it has really been an enjoyable time and I do hope you will visit Trinidad and Tobago very soon. I know that some of you here from the State Department are being transferred to Port of Spain. Well, you are in for the time of your life. [*Laughter.*] I am sure that we will get together at some point when you are there. So ladies and gentleman, thank you. Do enjoy the rest of the evening because the whole idea is not just to celebrate my, well I’m not saying celebrate my departure, you’re celebrating my presence [*laughter*], but it’s also for us to meet and greet each other and to get to know each other a little better. It’s a strange town for most of us and it’s a new place, it may be a bit different. But because of the nature of our work—despite the fact that we are itinerant, because that’s the nature of the diplomatic life,—you’re here today and gone tomorrow, but nevertheless, you make the best of the time that you are here and you represent your country in the best way that you possibly can. So thank you.

**Ms. Ellis:** The Ambassador has agreed to take a few questions.

**Ms. Fore:** Yes, Madame Ambassador, I have been very intrigued by the artwork in this Embassy, me and a few others. Will you tell us a bit about it?

**Ambassador Morean Phillip:** Yes. You have heard about the Carnival. It’s one of our, well I should say, our premier festival. It’s perhaps the best time of the year to visit Trinidad and Tobago. And a lot of these are depicting scenes from the Carnival. This picture right here on my left, the top one, that’s the steelpan. Now the steelpan is the only percussion musical instrument to have been invented in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That’s our national instrument. And that is it there, you got a taste of it. And once you get a taste, you will not want to desist. And I’ll give you a little story. We were in Malta and we took our band to play and they were playing in a concert hall. And people got up and were dancing in the aisles. And one gentleman was very upset. He said, “We don’t do this here. We sit quietly and listen to the music.” But then he got up and he started dancing and he said “But I love it!” [*Laughter.*] And what you will notice about the paintings is the color and the light. The vibrancy of the nation is reflected in the paintings. So you don’t get those brown hues and grays, you get a lot of color, a lot of light. Well, I hope I’ve answered it.

**Ambassador Renée Jones-Bos of the Netherlands:** I just want to say very briefly, Madam Ambassador, dear Glenda, how much we will miss you. Because what we have appreciated so much in you is that reach you out to other continents. And we all know that here in Washington we’re very busy with our own countries, our own delegations, often with our own regional groups, but you reached out to us Europeans, to Asians, to Africans, to Caribbean and Latin Americans. I think that was so important to the group of women ambassadors here. On behalf of all of us, if I may, ladies, I would like to thank you very much, Glenda, and you will be greatly missed and if the letter doesn’t come, you can unpack your boxes again. [*Laughter.*]

**Ambassador Debra Mae Lovell of Antigua and Barbuda:** My friends, I am so glad we had this opportunity to say farewell to our dear Glenda. Glenda has worked so much, not only for women, but especially for the Caribbean corps. And we thank you for being with us. As you have said, it was too short. We thank you, Glenda, because you brought the balance of a jurist, you brought the confidence of a professional, and you also brought the tenderness of a mother. And so we wish to thank you so very much for enriching the Caribbean corps with those very fine qualities. We wish to say that you have brought that in everything and to thank the government for sending you to ensure that the corps of Caribbean countries would be able to benefit from all that you had to offer. So again Glenda, thank you so very much for enriching our presence and we wish you all the best in the next chapter.

**Question:** I just want to ask you, what about Americans surprised you the most? Here and overseas, outside of Washington? What was different than what you were expecting and how can we ensure that you will come back?

**Ambassador Morean Phillip:** Well, you don't have to do much to get me back. I have always been a frequent visitor to your country. I have spent some time in your country, not long periods of time, but two months, three months, and so on. In terms of Americans, the comparison I would make is not so much with the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but with the British. Now Americans are friendly and outgoing, and the British, well, you know, they have a stiff upper lip. I like to use this anecdote. We were living at Eton Place in London, we were walking, going in the door, and this lady came up to us and started talking. She said, "You know, I'm American, I'm not British." And she went on and it was such a nice, warm talk. You'll not get the British doing that to you. They pass you, and they might give you some little acknowledgement, sometimes. But that's a rarity. The warmth of the American people is almost like the warmth of the people from Trinidad and Tobago. [*Laughter.*]

**Patricia Ellis:** Well, thank you so much, Ambassador. We really will miss you so much.