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PRESS RELEASE

On Thursday July 25th, I departed the Federation on a scheduled business trip / vacation to the United States. A few hours before my departure, I received notice indicating that a meeting of Parliament was scheduled for August 1st, 2006.

The Office of the Speaker was contacted informing of my absence. The Order Paper for the meeting of Parliament was delivered to my business office on Thursday afternoon July 27th 2006. There was absolutely no reference to the issue of electoral reform.

It should be noted that communication with my office and the Government confirmed the agenda stated on the Order Paper as recent as Monday morning July 31st, 2006. A copy of this Order Paper is attached for public scrutiny.

It was therefore shocking and outrageous to note that an issue of national importance such as Electoral Reform was added to the Order Paper at the very last moment without providing adequate information to the Members of Parliament. It was also disturbing to learn that the Press Secretary to the Office of the Prime Minister has once again abused his office in issuing a misleading and inaccurate statement suggesting that I had boycotted the Parliament sitting which was scheduled to debate electoral reform. He was aware that the Speaker had knowledge of my absence. The Press Secretary also failed to state that the Government did not inform this Representative that a White Paper on Electoral Reform would be laid before Parliament by the Prime Minister. Once again it is clear that the Labour Government continues to act in a very irresponsible and disrespectful manner to elected parliamentarians. They frequently present new (amended) Order Papers during the

sitting of Parliament. Just last year during the budget debate, I was called upon with three hours notice to give the response on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

I consider all matters debated in Parliament as very important to the welfare of the people I represent and serve. The record will show that I am always present for every sitting of parliament and I provide proper, honest and sober representation for the people of Constituency # 5 (Sandy Point) and the People's Action Movement

The People's Action Movement has been in the forefront of the discussion on Electoral Reform. The first Town Hall Meeting to publicly discuss the issue was held in my constituency, Constituency # 5. I held a one-man demonstration at the Electoral Office, while my Leader Lindsay Grant and myself were arrested and charged for demonstrating and protesting against electoral fraud and the need for reform. The people of St. Kitts and Nevis and the Federation are fully aware of the political party which is dedicated to meaningful electoral reform in our nation.

Citizens would recall that a resolution was passed in parliament approximately two months ago stating that a committee would be formed to dialogue with the public. It was expected that the views of the public would then be forwarded to an Electoral Reform Committee which in turn would provide a report to a Parliamentary Committee for presentation to the Parliament. It is now clear that without adequate public consultation, this White Paper can only purport to be a Labour Party position paper which ignores the recommendations of the Commission and the views of the other political parties throughout the Federation.

I call on the people of our Federation to be vigilant and demand that electoral reform protect the rights of the people, secure our democracy, and ensure free elections which are free and fair, and free from fear.