



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 3, 2022, 3:00 PM
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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS DELIVERS REMARKS AND RAISES
PANAMANIAN FLAG**

Consul General Elias Levy, Consulate General of Panama in New York: In closing, I want to share a few additional words. New York, like Panama, was formed and grew thanks to immigrants who, from all over the world, come here to this city to start a new life. A life of hope forged in what is called the American dream. Today, our continent for various reasons is going through an immigration crisis that has not been seen for decades. Panama, like many countries in Central and South America, has dedicated great efforts and resources, which we often lack, to guarantee as far as possible that immigrants as they pass through have the protections they deserve as human beings. They are the same immigrants that today are the grandparents and parents of the Castros, Garnes, Johnsons, and (inaudible).

In that sense, Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you. I want to thank your team and Commissioner Castro for the work you're doing giving dignity to those who left almost everything except their faith in themselves. For those who are with us today, don't forget that the United States provides the conditions and opportunities, but as a friend said, the American dream is really within each one of you. Thank you all. God bless America, God bless Panama, [Speaks Spanish].

Ingrid Lewis-Martin, Chief Advisor to the Mayor: So again, we have to give our consul general a round of applause for an outstanding speech and in history lesson that we all benefited from greatly. The consul general was kind enough to acknowledge our VIPs, but we also have a few other people who are here with us today.

We have the president of our great parade in Brooklyn acknowledging [Panama]. Please stand up, get acknowledged. We also have a brother who could have been on that list that was just announced by our consul general. We have Mr. Greg Meyers who served under Mayor Bloomberg. And we have my brother in Christ, someone who feeds our soul to keep us on track and in the right place, a bishop who is the bishop of all bishops, Bishop Garnes from Flatbush, New York.

So when we get ready to raise the flag, I ask permission from our deputy commissioner, and I'm going to ask the three of you to join with us when we raise the flag. So without any further ado, is it indeed an honor from me to present to you if you don't know him, but you should, someone who has been a friend of the Panamanian community for as far back as I can remember. I've

known this mayor and I worked in partnership with him since 1984. He has been there for everyone.

If you are a Panamanian, if you are from Guatemala, if you are from Ecuador, if you are from Israel, he has been in your corner. He is someone who we know is our brother and he is our friend. So I am humbled and honored to present our 110th mayor of New York City, Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you, Ingrid, and to the consul general who... We were together during my days as borough president. It is a pleasure just to be here now today as well. We've done a number of flag raisings here from various countries throughout this year, but never has there been one that we did that my chief advisor said, "You better not raise the flag without me being there."

She's a true Panamanian and her Bajan roots. It's an exciting time because as the consul general indicated that in the many years of raising the flag here at the heart of our financial strength here at Bowling Green, many of our representations from various countries, they've never had their flag to fly over this location. We made it clear that when you raise the flag, you also raise the spirit of the people to let them know we recognize your contributions to who we are as a city.

This city is a city of immigrants. And the uniqueness about this city and the country that you are told when you arrive here, you are supposed to bring your culture with you. You are not told to leave your culture behind. There's a proud symbol that we can boldly say we are Panamanian dash Americans, we are African dash American, European, Polish, Jewish, Irish, all the different groups.

You bring your culture with you and that is what makes us great. That is the secret sauce to our dream, the American dream. In fact, if you take that away, it's no longer an American dream, it's an American nightmare. And when we close borders and don't allow people who are fleeing persecution and prosecution from other distant shores to come experience this dream, we are betraying what this country is made of. Everyone came from somewhere. So whenever someone says, "Go back to your land," you should say that, "Go back when they go back to theirs." Because we all came from somewhere. We all came here to experience the American experience and American dream.

And we're the only country on the globe where dream is attached to our name. All the people who are taking a picture by the bull, no matter what country they came from, they can't say dream is attached to their name. There's no German dream, French dream, Polish dream, but there's an American dream. There's an American dream and that dream is being reignited today.

118 years ago, you received your independence. It has been celebrated in Brooklyn for the last 25 years as Ingrid acknowledged by a parade that went down Franklin Avenue. That avenue should be called Panama Way because for many years when no one wanted to go to Brooklyn, that avenue was being held down by the Panamanian community. They were there long before Starbucks and we need to recognize the history of the Panamanian community for being there.

But also you were there during COVID. Many people don't know, but I know. When people were sheltering in place, when people were social distancing, when people were unwilling to come out and see this city function, the number one businesses that did not close were the immigrant businesses. They delivered the Uber Eats. They stocked the grocery stores and shelves. They were in the hospitals making sure that those who were impacted by COVID had the medical care that they deserved. They took care of the seniors inside the nursing homes and senior centers.

So if anyone doesn't understand the reality... The immigrant community does not need America, America needs the immigrant community. That's the partnership and the symbiotic relationship that we have. That's why we're raising the flag today. That's why we have raised the flags of all the different groups and they all came to this microphone over and over again and said, "For the first time. For the first time." But this is not going to be the last time.

Each year, we're going to get bigger and stronger than ever. We're going to bring our children to come down here and see and celebrate the diversity of the city and what it has to offer. It's a proud day for you. Right here in Bowling Green, you are raising the flag of the Panamanian community that's here, not only in America, but in the diaspora of this entire country and this entire globe.

So I thank you for what you have done, how you have contributed to this great city. And we are great because of the great people that contribute to us every day. Let's raise this flag, let's raise our spirits and our energy. New York City is not coming back, New York City is back thanks to you. Thank you.

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