

*December 7, 2005*

## **Government of Aruba: Letter to U.S. Governors from Prime Minister Nelson Oduber**

As you may already know, the states of Alabama and Arkansas have made official statements encouraging their citizens to avoid visiting our island, Aruba, as a method to accelerate or intervene in the investigation of the missing young American, Natalee Holloway – in the words of Governor Huckabee, “out of respect for the Holloway family.”

It is hard to believe that anyone in the world’s richest country would find satisfaction and peace of mind by economically harming a tiny, nearby country.

Most American states have a wide variety of industries, services, and economic development activities. In Aruba we have only one – tourism, primarily from American visitors.

This letter, which is also being sent to every American state governor, is meant to serve two purposes:

1. Provide accurate information on what Aruba has been and is doing to find or recover Ms. Holloway.
2. To ask you, as one political leader to another, even though we are separated by national borders and some geography, to search your soul before deciding to punish the Aruban people for the misdeeds of individuals yet to be linked in any evidentiary way to this mysterious tragedy about which very little is known.

Here is a crucial summary of facts to date:

- Aruba has, from the start and continuously, waged a highly professional extensive and intensive effort to find Ms. Holloway.
- Aruba has continuously from the beginning sought and used strategic help from the world’s experts on missing persons, particularly the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- The people of Aruba have cooperated and collaborated with private search and investigation efforts by the Holloway and Twitty families, and credible groups supported and authorized by the parents.
- The people of Aruba will work to accurately communicate their efforts in this case through public channels, diplomatic channels, and in other useful appropriate ways; and to correct and clarify reports and information provided by others who are less informed, in error, or commercially driven by events.
- The people of Aruba treasure their 230 years of friendship with America. It is this friendship and mutual respect for each other that will help all of us successfully get through this very difficult time.

How many American state populations would totally mobilize to find a missing individual within their borders? Alabama Bureau of Investigation, Center For Missing And Exploited Children records indicate that Alabama has more than 70 missing persons dating back to 1980. In addition, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children lists 15 cases of missing individuals in Alabama.

The Arkansas Crime Information Center Criminal History Web site lists 11 missing persons currently, dating back to 1978. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children lists an additional 17 cases of missing individuals in Arkansas.

If you'll kindly read the information presented along with this letter, you will see that we have been doing our level best to conduct a high-level, professionally driven investigation with the assistance of other credible resources, including the FBI. We are working with those who are experts in missing persons recovery, as well as those in other related criminal behaviors to help guide our efforts.

Let me simply make four requests, if you are seriously considering joining the actions of the governors of Alabama and Arkansas, to intervene in Aruba's economic life:

1. Have the head of your state police contact the FBI for a briefing and professional characterization of the investigation being conducted in Aruba. We believe the FBI will characterize our investigation as professional, intensive, complete, and well-focused.
2. Check with the police authorities in your own state as to how they would behave if private citizens, not to mention individuals from outside your state or foreign countries, trampled crime scenes, disturbed evidence, and disclosed crucial investigative information. What would police authorities in your own state do if they discovered that local news media representatives were interviewing witnesses, gathering evidence in the crime, and then not only releasing parts of the information, but refusing to disclose where the information was coming from? This is precisely what is happening in Aruba. My knowledge of America tells me that police authorities in your own state would have to take some action to prevent these behaviors from tainting or destroying a criminal investigation.
3. Check your state's missing person records to determine how many other states and countries you will need to suggest boycotts for, "out of respect for the families of those victims, too." Then begin preparing yourself to answer questions from every cable network, talk show, and hungry, budding media star about why you are not boycotting or searching more effectively.
4. Please call me so we can discuss this personally, before you make a decision.

While the fate of Natalee Holloway remains a mystery to be solved, it is abundantly clear just how devastating a successful boycott action by the leaders of state governments could cause our lovely, peaceful, and happy island where thousands of Americans come each year to set their cares aside for a brief time, relax, and enjoy peace and harmony.

What if Natalee were your daughter? Would you punish, obstruct, and humiliate those whose nearly total focus every day is on finding the answers to the questions raised by such a circumstance?

As human beings, we empathize and share the agony that Ms. Holloway's parents are suffering. As a people, Arubans are naturally empathic and caring. It's a powerful element of our culture.

Despite these personal feelings strongly felt by every Aruban, our country is under attack by commercially driven U.S. media and dubious individuals who always surface when these situations occur. We need sanity and focus and an end to the constant daily distractions that only

slow down the investigation and impugn the integrity of dedicated, committed, and conscientious police officers. We do believe it is our responsibility to find Ms. Holloway.

Thank you for your consideration. Our home country, the Netherlands, is in continuous contact with the U.S. State Department. The FBI is in regular contact and in a mutually cooperative capacity with our policy forces. Rest assured that we are committed to finding Natalee Holloway, and where possible to prevent situations like this from occurring in the future. Help us get this mystery solved, especially for the Holloway and Twitty families but also for everyone concerned for this missing young woman, Natalee Holloway.