



United States Department of State

Focus on the Issues
The Americas

Excerpts of testimony, speeches, and remarks by
U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright on
Colombia, economic issues, Panama, Mexico, Cuba,
Caribbean Ministerial, and Haiti

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and remarks by the Secretary see the State
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Public Information Series
United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs

March 2000

Foreword

A new era of cooperation among the democratic nations of the Western Hemisphere began with the 1994 Summit of the Americas. This historic summit produced a plan of action for development into the 21st century—a blueprint for implementing significant, democratic reforms in the hemisphere. It also created a foundation upon which leaders could commit to advancing human dignity for all citizens of the Americas.

The United States and other nations of the hemisphere remain committed to building upon that foundation and are moving steadily closer to the objectives established through the summit process.

Focus on the Issues: The Americas highlights U.S.-hemispheric cooperation and is the sixth in a series of publications of excerpts from testimony, speeches, and remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright that highlight key policy issues.

Colombia

*Statement on U.S. assistance to Colombia
Washington, DC
January 11, 2000*

. . . I am very pleased to be here with Gen. McCaffrey and Special Envoy MacKay. Today, we are announcing a major initiative in support of Colombian President Pastrana's plan for achieving peace, fighting crime, promoting prosperity, and improving governance throughout his country.

We have a profound interest in helping Colombia to achieve these closely linked goals. Four-fifths of the cocaine entering our country either comes from Colombia or is transported through it. Most of Colombia's heroin production is exported to the United States, and drug-related activities fuel crime, corruption, and social problems throughout the Americas.

Our initiative has five elements, to be funded through a supplemental appropriations request for the year 2000 and as part of the President's budget for the next fiscal year.

Our assistance will be used:

First, to help train and equip Colombian security forces so that more of the country is brought under the control of democracy and the rule of law.

Second, we will actively support President Pastrana's effort to negotiate peaceful settlements with illegal armed groups.

Third, we will dramatically increase support for alternative development, strengthening local govern-

ments, and resettling persons displaced by conflict.

Fourth, we will enhance our backing for efforts to interdict drugs.

Finally, and very importantly, we will assist in strengthening mechanisms for protecting human rights and promoting judicial reform.

As a matter of both policy and law, we will ensure that our assistance does not go to military units that have been implicated in abuses. We will help train judicial officials to investigate and prosecute human rights crimes, and we will continue to encourage Colombian authorities to take appropriate action against violators of human rights whether those violators are military, paramilitary, guerrilla, or just plain criminal.

The United States is not alone in helping Colombia. With our strong support, the IMF has approved a new \$2.7 billion program. We are endorsing Bogota's request for nearly \$3 billion in loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. And we are encouraging other bilateral donors to come forward. Recognizing that neither criminals nor conflicts respect national borders, we are also stepping up support for counter-drug and alternative development programs for Colombia's neighbors.

In preparing our initiative, we have consulted frequently with leading Members of Congress, who have shared with us their strong concerns about law enforcement and human rights. We will continue to work closely with them in the months ahead.

Our Colombia initiative reflects President Clinton's strong support for hemispheric cooperation on behalf of democracy and law and his conviction that President Pastrana deserves our support in his effort to bring the benefits of reconciliation and the rule of law to his people. . . . ■

Economic Issues

*Remarks to the Council of the Americas
Washington, DC
May 4, 1999*

. . . Despite Kosovo and other crises scattered around the globe, I very much wanted this opportunity to speak with you. Earlier this year when I gave my annual “state of the world” testimony on Capitol Hill, I did not begin with Europe and Asia, as it is customary for Secretaries of State to do. I began, instead, with the Americas. I did so because I believe that nothing is more important to the future security, prosperity, and freedom of people in the United States than our partnerships in this hemisphere.

Obviously, our countries are not without problems, which I will soon discuss, but I hope we will never let those problems cause us to lose sight of our strengths.

Today, from Canada’s new territory of Nunavut to Patagonia’s lighthouse at the end of the world, we are a region at peace with each other. With a single exception, we are a hemisphere of democracies, albeit in varying stages of development.

We are a community that, despite some disagreements, is working together to deal with challenges that affect us all—from crime and

disease to illegal immigration and the degradation of our environment. And like in any real community, we are people who help one another.

Where democracy is in peril, we are determined to respond collectively. Where borders are in dispute, we join forces to help find a peaceful solution—as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States recently did in aiding Peru and Ecuador. And when disasters strike, such as the hurricanes in Central America and the Caribbean last fall, we pull together. On that point, I want to emphasize that the President and I are doing all we can to persuade Congress to grant the additional funds we have requested for hurricane relief.

The emergency in Kosovo does not justify giving short shrift to the emergency in the Americas. Precious time has already been lost in helping farms and communities prepare for the rainy season's return and in giving families the faith they need to rebuild their lives at home. So I hope you agree that Congress should approve the funds to help our neighbors, and it should do so in full, without unacceptable offsets—and they should do it now.

We have much to be proud of in this hemisphere, but pride in the present is no guarantee of the future. Our challenge is to build on our strengths and to move steadily closer to the objectives that our leaders have established through the Summit of the Americas process.

This is a challenge to public officials like me but also for you; for the business community has been a driving force behind economic reform and constructive change throughout our region. This is especially true of the Council of the Americas and the Association of American Chambers of Commerce of Latin America.

You are stakeholders in the future, and you understand that if we are to achieve the kind of hemispheric community we truly desire, we must

aim high. We need real, not hollow, democracy. We must create prosperity for the hardworking many, not just the privileged few. And we must ensure a rule of law that protects everyone equally, not so-called justice that can be bought and sold.

Over the past year, economies in Latin America have been shaken by the financial crisis that rocked parts of Asia and then Russia, as investors became nervous about emerging markets. But the region is resilient because of its deep commitment to market reform. The economic fundamentals are sound. For the decade, average growth has been robust, and inflation is lower than at any time in the last 50 years. This provides the basis for a strong revival in Brazil and other affected countries.

As Ambassador Barshefsky discussed this morning, negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas are underway. We have asked Congress to give the President "fast track" authority to help us complete those negotiations by the year 2005, and we are also urging Congress to approve the Caribbean Basin Trade Enhancement legislation to help promote commerce and create jobs.

Economic liberalization and free trade are essential elements in our hemisphere's economic architecture, and we are determined to keep them on the front burner. But alone, they are not sufficient to achieve our goals.

Throughout the region, we must move to a higher level of democratic development. We have to do more to foster a robust civil society and a broad middle class in all our countries. And we have to have the assistance of the business sector not only in helping economies to grow, but in helping societies to become better by enabling more and more people to share in the progress.

As I'm sure that you would agree, we must work toward these objectives not simply because it is right to do so, but also because it is smart. Neither

democracy nor prosperity can endure unless they are broadly based. The policies of free markets and open investment, which are the keys to sustained growth, are vulnerable to challenge if too many people feel shut out or left behind. And as we have seen in parts of Asia, a booming economy can shift rapidly into reverse if problems of cronyism, corruption, and lack of accountability are not addressed.

Complacency is the enemy of democracy, and if we do not ensure that the process of globalization goes forward with a human face, we run a grave and unnecessary risk. In some countries, we may see public confidence in democracy erode and we may see basic institutions of society lose their legitimacy. We may see support grow for an array of failed remedies from the past, such as protectionism, and giveaway social programs that cannot be funded without spurring inflation. We may even see instability and turmoil leading to the return of authoritarian leaders.

None of this needs to happen. But much of it may, unless we address the gaping inequality in our hemisphere between those who have and those who have not, between those with the access and skills to make it in the new world economy, or those denied that access or not yet equipped with those skills. As President John Kennedy said in his inaugural address almost two-score years ago, "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Last April at the Santiago Summit, our leaders endorsed a series of initiatives designed to respond to precisely this problem. Their emphasis was not on spending more but rather on investing more wisely. There were initiatives, for example, to strengthen local governments and thereby broaden opportunities for political participation. There were strategies to formalize property rights, including the assets of the poor, such as a house or farm. There were programs to reinforce the rule of law, including creation of

hemispheric justice studies centers. There was support for the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, whose ratification for the United States we are urging our Senate to approve this year. And there were proposals, in which USAID is actively participating, to increase support for microenterprise, which is particularly important to the economic empowerment of women.

But even with better access to credit, it is often unnecessarily difficult to start a small business. In this decade, governments have done much to privatize and decontrol large sectors such as aluminum and steel, communications and power. But in many nations, the system for licensing and regulating small business remains extremely time-consuming and complex. This makes it harder for those without a lot of money to make money and for those at the bottom of the income ladder to begin the climb up.

As a result, a bad situation grows no better. The Americas continue to have the world's most unequal distribution of income. During the "lost decade" of the 1980s, that gap grew significantly wider, including in the United States, and it has continued to increase in most countries, even with the resumption of overall economic growth.

The Inter-American Development Bank— IDB— estimates that in Latin America currently, the top 20th of the population receives one-fourth of the income, which is more than in Africa or Asia. The poorest 30% receive only 8% of the income, a lower proportion than anywhere else.

Bank studies also show that in many countries, unsound labor, tax, and financial policies perpetuate and reinforce these disparities. It is sobering and saddening that today, on the threshold of the 21st century, one in every three people in Latin America and the Caribbean must live on less than \$2 a day. This is a human tragedy. It is also a threat to stability and political freedom. Citizens across the social

spectrum need to see that democracy and the market system are improving their lives. Ensuring this will be the central challenge of America during the coming decade.

In addressing that challenge, President Clinton had it right when he said at the Santiago Summit,

There is no priority more important than giving our children an excellent education. The fate of nations in the 21st century turns on what all citizens know and whether all citizens can quickly learn.

Unfortunately the knowledge gap today is huge. According to recent data, one-fourth of adults in Latin America and the Caribbean have had no education at all; the majority have less than 5 years. The average educational level has been rising, but the annual rate of increase is low—less than 1% over the past two decades. This compares to 3% in East Asia.

Not surprisingly, children from poor families tend to go to lower quality schools and drop out sooner. Children from wealthy families go to the best schools and graduate far more often. This is true in much of the world, and it may be unrealistic to expect that we could end all disparity. But leaders in the Americas are committed to narrowing the gap by building from the bottom up.

In Santiago, they vowed that by the year 2010 all children—rural and urban, female and male, indigenous or other—will have access to and be expected to complete a program of quality primary education. At least 75% should have access to secondary education. To these ends, programs are now underway to improve teacher training, establish standards, and make the tools of knowledge—from textbooks to cutting-edge technology—more available.

Clearly, you who are leaders in human resource management have the capacity to speed and improve the educational reform process. Your involvement

can make schools more relevant to your own need for well-trained workers and to society's need for well-informed and responsible citizens. I know that many of you are already involved, and I ask you to continue and deepen your engagement.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Simon Bolivar said that he wanted the Americas to be measured by no other standard than "her freedom and glory." Today, that vision of a continent bound together by liberty and a passion for justice is closer to reality than ever before. But we are not there yet.

The Summit of the Americas process has generated an inspiring set of objectives toward which we all may work—stronger democratic institutions, respect for human rights, education for all, prosperity for the many, security for those who abide by the law, and fairness for everyone under the law. . . .

This morning, at a time of turbulence and uncertainty in many parts of the world, I pledge my own best efforts, and I ask your help in furthering our partnerships for freedom, security, and prosperity throughout the Americas.

Let us achieve the goals we have set for the benefit not of some, but of all our citizens, and thereby secure the future for our own children and establish an example for friends around the world. ■

*Remarks at a Central America event
Washington, DC
February 16, 1999*

. . . The plight of the victims of Hurricanes Mitch and Georges bring to mind the words of the 69th Psalm: "Save me. . . for I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."

The author of those words was addressing a much higher power than us. But the words still speak to us because so many of our neighbors have found themselves in a place "where there is no standing"—and in desperate need of help.

That work matters to us on a human level, and on the level of our national interest, as well. Over the past decades, we have invested billions of dollars in helping Central America recover from war, build democracy, and create economic opportunity. We did so because we have a large stake in a region that can provide a healthy and rewarding life for its people at home.

Destruction yields desperation, which can contribute to crime, conflict, and a renewed rush of illegal immigrants. The immigration issue has been one of the most difficult and mutually painful problems with which we and our neighbors have had to wrestle. It harms our communities, while exposing would-be migrants to exploitation by smugglers and con artists. We should do all we can to see that the problem does not become worse.

Fortunately, the American people and our government have responded rapidly and generously to the disaster relief needs of the affected countries. Among the first visitors to the region were the First Lady and Tipper Gore. Their first-hand accounts of the destruction and their strong recommendations for effective and sustained U.S. assistance form the basis of the commitments being announced today.

We are working very closely with leaders in the Congress, who have also shown deep concern about the impact of this disaster on Central America and the Dominican Republic. We will be seeking their full support for our efforts to aid reconstruction, and the President will soon be sending legislation to Capitol Hill for an enhanced Caribbean Basin Initiative; CBI is a critical tool for the rebuilding of Central America.

The leaders of Central America and the Dominican Republic have expressed their appreciation for the outpouring of assistance and support they have received. They have also expressed their determination not only to rebuild and replace, but also to improve and strengthen—so that the region's democratic institutions will grow broader and more effective. Sound environmental practices will be put into place, the rule of law will be extended, and the roots of freedom will grow deep enough to withstand future storms, whether of the natural or human-caused variety. In these efforts, it is both the smart thing and the right thing for the United States to continue to help. . . . ■

*Statement at Miami Herald Symposium
Miami, Florida
February 5, 1999*

. . . From Key West to Prudhoe Bay, we Americans compete in a global workplace and do business in a global market. We travel further and more often than any prior generation.

We see advanced technology creating new wonders but also spawning new dangers, such as the threats posed by terror, crime, drugs, pollution, and disease spread across national borders.

We want to live—and we want our children to live—in peace, prosperity, and freedom. But the plain truth is that we will not be able to guarantee these blessings for ourselves if others do not have them as well. So our strategic goal is to bring the nations of the world closer together around fundamental principles of democracy and law, open markets, and a commitment to peace.

During the next few minutes, I would like to discuss this goal in the context of our own hemisphere. This is appropriate given Miami's role as an air and water bridge within the Americas. And it is timely, because events in the region are very much on our minds.

Later this month, the President will visit Mexico, with whom we share a 2,000-mile long border and a host of common interests. In March, he will travel to

El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to discuss a full range of economic and political issues. Foremost on his agenda will be efforts to help our neighbors—the victims of Hurricane Mitch. . . .

The fury of Mitch washed houses into raging rivers and the unforgiving sea. It destroyed whole villages, disrupted power lines, demolished businesses, and inundated croplands. Most painfully, over the course of a few devastating days, it separated families into grieving survivors and the dead. More than 9,000 people perished, and hundreds of thousands lost their homes. The President's trip will remind the world and our own citizens that, though the rains have stopped, the hard work of rebuilding and recovery has just begun. . . .

Nowhere have relief efforts been more generous and sustained than here in Dade County, where Operation Helping Hands and the Miami-Dade Search and Rescue Operation have done much not only in Central America, but also in the Caribbean and now in earthquake-ravaged Colombia.

When I leave here, I will meet with some of the participants in those efforts. But I take the opportunity now to congratulate the *Miami Herald* for its own leadership role. Through your caring and commitment, you have served your broader community very, very well.

The United States has also responded as a country. I will not go through the entire list, but a host of agencies from USAID to the Department of Defense to our State Department embassies have contributed in accordance with their capabilities and expertise. All told, we have dedicated approximately \$300 million to relief and recovery efforts. And that is only the beginning. We are currently consulting with Congress about a substantial commitment of additional funds.

We will also ask Congress to enhance and expand the Caribbean Basin Trade Initiative to help spur business activity throughout the region, especially in the storm-damaged areas where opportunity and hope are desperately needed and in very short supply.

The response to the recent disasters has been gratifying, but it should not be surprising—for it reflects the blossoming partnership that has grown out of the Summit of the Americas process.

That process began here in Miami in 1994 and continued in Santiago last year. Its purpose is to build a true hemispheric community that reflects not only our proximity of geography, but also our closeness of interests and values. Over the years, we have worked hard to build such a community and have made remarkable progress.

On the economic front, we have forged a commitment to integration and growth based on open markets, open books, better schools, and broader participation. These policies have paid off for our neighbors and for us. We export more to the Americas than to any other part of the world. And while our overall exports went down last year, exports to this hemisphere increased by more than 6%. For Miami, that means jobs in the port, at Miami International, and for the sellers of everything from light bulbs to life insurance.

As the President made clear in his State of the Union address, the United States is firmly committed to achieving a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005. Through negotiations based here in Miami, we are laying the groundwork for such an agreement.

We are also working closely with Brazil and other countries in the region to prevent the further spread of financial instability. The key to this is what we refer to as second-generation economic reforms that extend accountability and the rule of law to the financial world, thereby promoting prosperity that is more widely shared and less vulnerable to the kinds of disruptions we saw in East Asia.

In the area of security, our hemispheric community has also made great strides. With our help and that of others, the troubling border dispute between Ecuador and Peru has been resolved. In Central America, after decades of fighting, differences are being settled by ballots, not bullets. And counter-narcotics cooperation is stronger than ever, because the understanding is broader than ever that the drug plague threatens us all and that we must all do our part in the struggle against it.

As our hemisphere builds peace at home, we also promote freedom—for at the heart of the Summit of the Americas process is a commitment to democracy. Two decades ago, a map of the Americas that showed blue for democracy and red for dictatorships would have been mostly red. Today, with a single exception, it would be as blue as the waters of Biscayne Bay.

We realize, however, that many democracies are fragile and their growth threatened by weak political and judicial institutions, wide disparities of income, corruption, and crime. We are working with our partners to change that. In nations such as Venezuela and Peru, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic, we are helping democratic forces to assemble the nuts and bolts of lasting freedom.

In Colombia, we see an opportunity to strengthen democracy because a promising new president has made possible a new spirit of cooperation and partnership. President Pastrana is committed to the rule of law and a future of peace for his country. He is being opposed by guerrillas on one hand and paramilitary groups on the other. Both are violent, and both are complicit in the drug trade that is flooding our shores with cocaine and has undermined the very fiber of Colombian society.

In his new budget, President Clinton is requesting almost \$300 million, including \$230 million in emergency funds, to help President Pastrana end the

civil conflict, fight drug traffickers, support alternative development, and create a climate in which the rights of all Colombians may be respected.

In Haiti, the long-unresolved conflict between President Preval and majority legislators has stalled economic reforms and led to the de facto dissolution of Parliament. The Haitian people deserve better. We want to continue assisting them as they struggle to build better lives.

In Cuba, we have taken a series of measures designed to help the Cuban people without strengthening their repressive and backward-looking rulers. Our goal is to do what we can to help Cubans prepare for a peaceful transition to democratic rule. To this end, we have sought to make it easier for Cubans to be in touch with family and friends here in the United States and easier for the Cuban-American community to help those who stayed behind. We recognize that, as one Cuban-American leader told us, "In building civil society, the strongest NGO is the family."

Although the specifics of our approach to promoting democracy vary from country to country, the fundamental goals are the same. We seek to foster where we can the development of free institutions and practices.

One example is our Vital Voices Initiative, which was launched by First Lady Hillary Clinton in Uruguay last October. This initiative seeks to increase the role of women as decisionmakers and opinion shapers.

We can expect that much of the energy and drive of the next phase of democratic development in the Americas will be provided by the entry of women into politics, business, and private life. This is a historic and irreversible change, and the United States should be proud to champion it. . . .

Many years ago, the man known as The Great Liberator, Simon Bolivar, expressed the hope that the Americas would be best known throughout the world, not for vast territory or material wealth, but for “freedom and glory.”

Today, that honorable vision is closer to reality than it has ever been. But it remains a work in progress.

As we approach the year 2000, the United States is committed to forging with its neighbors a new American century—in the broadest sense of that term. We want a century in which every nation in our hemisphere will be able to live in peace, every society will be ruled by law, every individual will be able to pursue happiness to the fullest extent of his or her abilities, and every government—without blemish or exception—will be accountable to its people.

That is a lofty vision, but a worthy one, and one that is attainable. Toward its fulfillment, I pledge my own best efforts and respectfully solicit both your wise counsel and support. Thank you very much. ■

Panama

*Remarks prior to dinner with President Moscoso,
Presidential Palace
Panama City, Panama
January 15, 2000*

. . . Fifteen days ago, we marked the end of one volume in the history of the relationship between Panama and the United States. But we also started a new era that is full of hope and great promise.

Last month's Canal transfer reflects a process of growth in both our countries, through which discredited patterns of paternalism and resentment have been supplanted by partnership and resolve.

Our two governments have quickly developed an excellent working relationship, with a farreaching agenda that includes not just the security of the Canal, but also fighting organized crime and drug trafficking, assuring the integrity of national borders, environmental protection, increased trade and investment, and strong support for democratic institutions and human rights.

This is a broad agenda and an ambitious one. But if human hands and minds could build the Panama Canal at the outset of the 20th century, we would be fools to limit our vision at the outset of the 21st. We must dare to dream of a future in which a similar combination of ambition and technology will both enrich the quality of life for everyone from David to Darien and from Patagonia to Prudhoe Bay.

So let me say, for me, it was a personal pleasure to be able to be here today. I worked on the Panama Canal Treaty in 1976 and 1977 both as a member of the staff for Senator Muskie and then as a member of the National Security Staff for President Carter.

I am very proud to have been able to be at the Canal today. I think I even understand how it works, and I turned the locks; with my own power I helped a ship go through. I consider that it was. . . a very important act of the United States to turn over the Canal to the country to which it belongs. I would like to say that I also consider, and I hope that you do, it very symbolic that my first trip as Secretary of State in the 21st century is to Latin America. I hope you will see this as a sign of a millenium in which the Americas will have an entirely new relationship.

So let us work together for democracy and prosperity in both our countries and in this wonderful hemisphere of ours. ■

Mexico

Press Conference remarks at the conclusion of the 15th meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission Washington, DC June 11, 1998

Good afternoon. Foreign Secretary Green and I have just finished cochairing this year's session of the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission attended by more than a dozen Cabinet officials from our two nations, underlining that for scope, depth, and quality of discussions, there is no partnership like ours anywhere on earth. Certainly, we have no relationship with more dramatic impact on the health and prosperity of the American people. Mexico is our second-largest export market. We share a 2,000-mile border. Our people have ties of culture, history, and blood. Our nations face common challenges from environmental protection and public health to hemispheric peace and global non-proliferation.

To meet those challenges, we must work together. And at this commission and every day, we are building partnerships and getting tough jobs done, whether helping Mexico gain control over the fires that have blanketed both our countries with smoke in recent weeks, assisting reforestation after that disaster, or improving infrastructure to end delays at our border.

At these meetings, we have agreed to cooperate to make food safer for consumers and to make sure truck drivers are tested for drugs and alcohol. We

adopted a joint response plan for environmental emergencies and new agreements on cooperating to improve energy efficiency. We will encourage exchanges of healthcare professionals and put a new spotlight on education. The United States will open a new consul in Nogales, Mexico, to improve our services to U.S. citizens and our involvement in border issues.

We have developed a common strategy for fighting drug trafficking and are using it to develop shared measures of performance and trade timely information instead of accusations. We're working to protect the lives and dignity of migrants, while honoring the right of this and every nation to control its borders. And we're seeking ways to cooperate on other issues from protecting worker rights to countering climate change. Most important, we put forward this week a common vision of what the quality of life along our common border should be—a showplace of sustainable growth, cultural diversity, and human dignity—and outlined strategies for translating that bold vision into reality.

Of course, it's not always easy being neighbors. It takes constant effort, considerable goodwill, and commitment to coping with incidents which do arise—such as the response to the money-laundering investigation called Operation Casablanca. That investigation has clearly raised some questions about coordination between the United States and Mexico. We are addressing these issues, and we are both committed to maintaining a common front against our common enemies, the drug traffickers. Our Presidents showed this commitment on Monday when they met in New York to reaffirm our mutual dedication to combating drug-related crimes and to ask Attorneys General Reno and Madrazo to begin talks on improving law enforcement coordination; those talks are going on as we speak. By acting

decisively, Presidents Clinton and Zedillo demonstrated the depth and strength of the U.S.-Mexican relationship.

As I depart this evening for another meeting, I think of crises between neighbors there and elsewhere around the world, and look with pride at the level of cooperation and confidence that we have established in North America. Our relationship as nations is close, and I'm pleased that the personal ties between Foreign Secretary Green and I are based on friendship and respect. . . . ■

Cuba

*Remarks at Opening of New Headquarters
of Office of Cuba Broadcasting
(Radio and TV Marti)
Miami, Florida
February 5, 1999*

. . . I am delighted to be in Miami to join with you in dedicating this wonderful new facility. It is a structure built of steel and stone upon a solid foundation of principles and ideals. Under the leadership of Director Herminio San Roman, Radio and TV Marti are conveyors of information that is objective and accurate.

As lovers of liberty, we celebrate the truth and strive in all that we do to uphold it. But we know that to dictators, truth is usually an inconvenience and often a mortal threat. That is why dictators try to grab the truth and leash it, ration it, mold it, or hide it. They want to keep a stranglehold on the flow of information so that their myths are believed, their blunders concealed, and their people kept in darkness.

Radio and TV Marti exist to give the people of Cuba what they have always deserved but long been denied: broadcasting that is fair and independent; broadcasting that conveys not lies but facts.

Radio and TV Marti have been effective both because of what you do is right and because you do it the right way. Through news and entertainment, features and enlightened commentary, you have found an audience among young and old, urban and rural, women and men.

Your programs are listened to and their influence magnified by the human broadcasting system, for your message is transmitted by word of mouth from Santiago to Havana and to all points in between. There are some critics who suggest that what you do doesn't count, that it has no effect, that Radio and TV Marti are not important contributors to the future of freedom in Cuba. To that, I can only reply with a term of diplomatic art: "balderdash;" or, in Spanish vocabulary: "tonterias."

These arguments are rebutted by the Cuban Government's own actions. From the first day, it has done all it could to keep your programming from reaching its intended audience. That is the mark of insecurity, the sign of illegitimacy, the evidence of fear.

I am here to tell you that the Clinton Administration supports your efforts. We will fight for your budget; we will defend your mission; we will continue working to overcome the jamming of your programs. We will not waver in our commitment to democracy, which is the right of all people.

As you know, last year and this, we have taken measures designed to address the needs of the Cuban people without strengthening the repressive and backward looking regime in Havana. We have sought to make it easier for Cubans to be in touch with family and friends here in the United States and easier for the Cuban-American community to help those who stayed behind. We have sought to encourage independent civil society, recognizing the limitations on what is now possible but recognizing, as well, the need to prepare for a peaceful and democratic transition in Cuba.

We have strived to build pressure throughout the hemisphere and around the globe for democracy in Cuba and to keep the spotlight on heroes such as Vladimiro Roca, Rene Gomez, Felix Bonne, and Beatriz Roque who are in jail because they dared to

suggest that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights applies to their country, as it does to the world.

Jose Marti said once that even if people are free, they have no license to be evil or indifferent to human suffering. “Man is not free,” he said, “to watch impassively the enslavement and dishonor of men nor their struggles for liberty and honor.”

Today, Cuba is—as Marti once described it—as beautiful as any country but stretched out in chains, a prison moated by water. We are not free to accept that. There is nothing natural or permanent about the plight of Cuba today. The rulers in Havana may hold power over a country, but they cannot embargo the mind. They may imprison bodies, but they cannot break the spirit. They may prohibit the exercise of liberty, but they cannot extinguish the desire to be free.

By bringing the truth to Cuba, Radio and TV Marti are illuminating the land with the most powerful force for constructive change under the sun—and that is knowledge. You are operating in a proud tradition of independent broadcasting that penetrated the concrete of the Berlin Wall and helped millions to move from the dark of dictatorship to the daylight of democracy.

On this special morning of dedication and commitment, let us vow that in this happy respect, at least, history will repeat itself— maybe not today or tomorrow but soon, so that the new century will echo not with fated dogmas of the past but with the sparkling promise of tomorrow, and the empty slogans of communism will be eclipsed forever by the sound of “*Viva Cuba Libre.*” Thank you very much, and now let's cut the ribbon. ■

Statement on Cuba
Washington, DC
January 5, 1999

Good afternoon. Last March, in response to Pope John Paul II's inspired pilgrimage to Cuba, the Clinton Administration took steps to reach out to the people of that country to make clear our concern for them and to help make their lives more tolerable.

Today, after consultations with concerned non-governmental organizations and leading Members of Congress, we're announcing additional steps in furtherance of that policy. Our goal is to encourage the development in Cuba of peaceful, civic activities that are independent of the government and that will help the Cuban people prepare for the day when their country is once again free.

First, we will seek to expose additional elements of Cuban society to democratic practices and values by encouraging additional religious, scientific, educational, athletic, and other exchanges between our two people. We will do this by streamlining visa and licensing procedures for travel between Cuba and the United States by qualified persons other than senior Cuban Government officials.

Second, we will expand direct licensed passenger flights to Cuba by authorizing flights from cities other than Miami and to destinations in Cuba other than Havana.

Third, we are broadening the categories of eligible recipients in Cuba for the receipt of financial remittances from the United States. Under this policy, all U.S. residents will be authorized to send up to \$300 each quarter to any Cuban family, except for senior government and party leaders. In addition, U.S. citizens and non-governmental organizations will be licensed on a case-by-case basis to send larger remittances to entities in Cuba that are independent of the Cuban Government.

Fourth, we will authorize the sale of food and agricultural inputs to private entities and farmers in Cuba. This will also be done on a case-by-case basis and for the purpose of promoting economic activity that is independent of the Cuban Government.

Finally, we will seek to restore direct mail service between the United States and Cuba.

These steps are neither designed nor expected to alter our relations with the Cuban Government. But taken together, they constitute a major advance in our effort to reach out to the Cuban people. They should help all Cubans to understand that the United States is on their side in the search for economic choice and prosperity, in the quest for the freedom of religion, expression and thought, and in the desire to fulfill Jose Marti's dream of a Cuba where all may participate freely in the political life of their country.

One year ago, Pope John Paul II brought to Cuba a message of hope and justice, liberty and love. Thanks to him, the right to celebrate Christmas has been restored to the people of Cuba. Unfortunately, the Cuban Government has shown no interest in restoring other freedoms. On the contrary, authorities have been heavy-handed in crushing efforts to express dissent or to mobilize support for internationally recognized human rights.

It is the responsibility of the United States, our partners in the hemisphere, and the world at large to maintain pressure for democratic change. To this end, the Clinton Administration will continue to support adequate funding for broadcasting to Cuba. We will ask the Broadcasting Board of Governors to study possible additional broadcasting sites, and we will intensify our efforts through public diplomacy to promote international support for those in Cuba who are struggling to gain the freedoms to which people everywhere are entitled. . . . ■

*Opening remarks on Cuba at a press briefing
Washington, DC
March 20, 1998*

Good afternoon. Today, I want to discuss with you four actions the President has decided to take to reach out to the people of Cuba to make their lives more tolerable.

First, we will work with congressional leaders such as Chairman Helms—with whom I discussed this subject at length yesterday— and with Senator Dodd, Senator Graham, and Senator Torricelli and others in both the Senate and House who have demonstrated concern about the plight of the Cuban people. Together, we will develop bipartisan legislation to meet humanitarian food needs on the island.

Second, we will streamline and expedite the issuance of licenses for the sale of medical supplies to Cuba.

Third, we will resume licensing direct humanitarian charter flights.

Finally, we will restore arrangements to permit Cuban-American families to send remittances to their relatives in Cuba.

Let me explain what these actions do and do not mean, and why we have taken them at this time. Let me be very clear: They do not reflect a change in policy toward the Cuban Government. That policy has been, and remains, to seek a peaceful transition to democracy.

Over the past two decades, the Americas have been transformed from a hemisphere dense with dictators to one in which every single country, except for Cuba, has an elected government, if you will look at your maps. We believe the Cuban people deserve the same rights and liberties as their counterparts from Patagonia to Prudhoe Bay.

With that goal in mind, we will maintain economic pressure through the embargo and the Helms-Burton Act. We will seek to increase multilateral support, which has been building, to press for political openness in Cuba and respect for human rights. We will continue to shine a spotlight on Havana's prisoners of conscience and call for their release. We will strive to ensure that migration from Cuba is safe, orderly, and legal. And we will not forget that, 25 months ago, three U.S. citizens and one legal resident were shot down in international airspace, nor will we cease our efforts with the world community to make Castro's regime take responsibility for those acts of murder.

Of course, we would like to see Castro embrace democracy, but after 38 years, he appears as autocratic as ever—continuing to arrest political dissidents and exile others. Nevertheless, the Cuban people are beginning to think beyond Castro. We need to do the same.

The basis of any dictatorship's power is control. The more dependent people are on the state, the more they are controlled. We can help to lessen the Cuban people's dependence on the Cuban state by addressing humanitarian needs, aiding the development of a civil society, and strengthening the role of the Church and other non-governmental organizations. By so doing, we can begin to empower Cuban citizens and help them prepare to make a peaceful transition to democracy.

We are taking these steps now not because of anything the Castro regime has done, nor are we doing it to improve official relations with the Govern-

ment of Cuba. On the contrary, we are acting because of new possibilities that exist outside the government's control. Those possibilities were brought into the open this past January by Pope John Paul II's historic visit to Cuba. The Pope went to Cuba—in his own words—as a pilgrim of love, of truth, and of hope. And he delivered a clear and unambiguous message that prisoners of conscience should be released, human rights should be respected, and a climate of freedom should prevail.

Earlier this month, I met with His Holiness in Rome. He spoke warmly about the reception his message had received. He expressed support for steps that would reduce the suffering and isolation of the Cuban people, and he has publicly stated the hope that his pilgrimage to Cuba would have an impact similar to that of the trips he had made earlier to a Poland then still behind the Iron Curtain and still ruled by martial law.

Of course, Cuba is not Poland, where pride in the Pope's background gave his visit extra meaning. But there are similarities. As in Cuba, the Pope's visits to Poland were arranged by the Church, not the government; the out-pouring of enthusiasm astonished the regime, which had assumed wrongly that years of dictatorship had caused religious faith to erode. In Poland, and I suspect in Cuba, thousands upon thousands of citizens realized for the first time that they shared a deep bond not created or controlled by the state. This is the kind of realization that can produce historic change.

Over the past month, in Florida and elsewhere, I've consulted with the Cuban-American community. Not surprisingly, there is a divergence of views. But there is agreement that the Pope's visit generated huge currents of energy and excitement within Cuba and that we should explore ways to help the Cuban people without helping the government.

As we implement the steps I'm announcing today, we will do all we can to meet that standard. For example, we will continue to verify that medicines reach the Cuban people and are not diverted to other uses. We will allow humanitarian, but not tourist or business, flights. And we know that we will have a better chance of seeing that remittances go to the intended recipients if they are regularized in transparent and legal channels.

For far too long, the Cuban people have been held back by the old thinking and brutal policies of Fidel Castro—a leader they never chose. The time has come to move on and to look ahead to a new era of fresh thinking based on timeless principles.

We know that in expectation of the Pope's visit, Christmas Day had special meaning in Cuba this year. We will not rest until another day—election day—has real meaning there, as well. That day will come; we hope soon.

Bearing in mind Jose Marti's words that fraternity and solidarity is never a concession, it is always a duty, we will do all we can to help meet the needs of the Cuban people—our neighbors, brothers, and sisters—as they prepare for that new day. ■

Caribbean Ministerial

*Remarks at Opening Session of the
Caribbean Ministerial Meeting
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
April 6, 1998*

. . . Thank you very much. . . . I am truly delighted to be here. After spending all of yesterday here in Trinidad and Tobago, I am tempted to suggest we meet on a weekly rather than a semiannual or annual basis. . . . I want to begin by thanking our hosts here in Port of Spain for the excellent arrangements they have made for our meetings.

In preparing for this event, I came across a description of the Caribbean region written nearly 30 years ago by Dr. Eric Williams. He wrote then of a region being dragged down and held back by instability, political and economic fragmentation, and a feeling of dependence. But in looking to the future, that great statesman found hope in the idealism and intelligence of the Caribbean people, in their energy and pride, in their search for a way to cooperate more closely with their neighbors—including the United States—while maintaining their own identities and culture.

I mention this because it illustrates, at least for me, how far you have come toward fulfilling the aspirations Dr. Williams had for this region. Clearly, much more remains to be done, but this ministerial, building on the spirit of Bridgetown, is an opportunity

to keep moving in the right direction, to talk with each other and listen to each other, and to take specific new steps to enhance our cooperation and improve the lives of our people.

The structure established last May is working. It is not achieving miracles, but it is enabling us to move ahead. And the United States is determined to do its share to see that progress continues.

For example, the Administration remains fully committed to approval in the United States of NAFTA parity legislation for the Caribbean. Under our constitutional system we cannot guarantee its passage, but we can guarantee to fight for it—and I do, and we will.

The United States warmly endorses the concept of a quick consult mechanism so that we may respond to trade concerns rapidly before they develop into serious problems. We look forward to starting bilateral negotiations with your governments on "Open Skies," civil aviation agreements which are good for business, good for travelers, and good for the cause of regional cooperation.

Next month, we will send a business development mission to the eastern Caribbean to explore new opportunities, especially in the areas of tourism, services, and food. Through USAID we are helping the Windward Islands move toward economic diversification. We are providing microenterprise aid, new scholarships, rural assistance, and helping gain the access to other sources of international funding.

We are also providing assistance on a regional basis to build the capacity of Caribbean nations to respond quickly and effectively to natural disasters and to protect priceless natural resources.

On justice and security issues, with you we have developed new programs for each area set forth in the Bridgetown plan. We are providing planes, patrol

boats, and training to enhance law enforcement capabilities. We are helping to finance criminal justice reform. We are emphasizing the importance of laws that allow authorities to seize the assets of drug peddlers, and with the help of the EU, we are supporting a region-wide, anti-money laundering project. We are contributing funds to help implement the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, and we want to move ahead promptly to ratify and implement the Inter-American Convention on Illegal Arms Trafficking.

Certainly, there remain some areas of difference between and among us, but we come together this morning with a shared determination to preserve and extend the sway of freedom in this region and in our hemisphere to ensure that the galloping global economy does not trample small economies or leave them behind to help raise the living standards of our people while at the same time protecting the health and beauty of our natural environment, and to safeguard our children and all our people from the predators of international drug trafficking and crime. To these goals, I firmly pledge the continued best efforts of the United States and express the hope that we will make further progress. . . . ■

*Press Conference following Caribbean
Ministerial Meeting
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
April 6, 1998*

Thank you very much. Foreign Minister Maraj, it's a pleasure to have this meeting here, and I thank you for all your hospitality. Other distinguished Foreign Ministers, Mr. Secretary General, distinguished guests, and members of the press: I do think that we have had a very productive day.

I want to begin by thanking the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Panday for the wonderful welcome they have provided and for the absolutely first-rate arrangements made for these discussions. But even more important than the beautiful surroundings has been the true spirit of cooperation. Our countries are linked not only by proximity of geography but also by proximity of values. Our nations are drawn together by a shared belief in freedom, in law, in tolerance and in working together to improve the lives of our people.

As Mack McLarty—the President's special envoy to the Americas—can attest, these beliefs are reflected in the Bridgetown Plan of Action which our leaders agreed upon last May. And they also reflect the spirit of the upcoming Santiago Summit. These beliefs were much in evidence during our meeting today.

During that session, we were able to look back on the progress made during the last 11 months—efforts to facilitate trade and create economic

opportunity through microenterprise, scholarships, and rural development; efforts to improve emergency response capacity and to protect the environment; and a host of initiatives to improve cooperation in the war against drugs and crime.

The major focus of our discussions, however, was on the future. Mack McLarty is just back from Santiago and has filled me in on the preparations for the second hemispheric summit later this month. There, we will launch the negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas for the year 2005.

We are establishing a "quick-consult" mechanism so that when concerns in trade, and in the trade area arise, they are dealt with rapidly instead of being allowed to fester. We look forward to discussions aimed at concluding "Open Skies" civil aviation agreements which would benefit our economies, our travelers, and our interest in closer regional ties. Underlying all our deliberations is a determination to see that no nation is left behind as the global economy moves ahead.

The United States is committed to assisting development in states whose economies depend a great deal on the export of bananas. We are increasing our support for economic diversification, especially in the Windward Islands. We are sending a business development mission to the eastern Caribbean next month.

We welcome the Dominican Republic's offer to host next January the first Caribbean-U.S. Trade and Investment Forum. We hope to bring the public and private sectors together there to share perspectives and to explore opportunities for further integration and growth, and the Clinton Administration remains strongly committed to approval by our Congress of legislation that would provide NAFTA parity for the Caribbean.

Just as we seek to move ahead economically, so we are moving ahead on all fronts in the struggle for security. Our goal is to construct a web of legal

arrangements and law enforcement actions that will discourage international criminals from acting, while leaving no place to hide if they do.

In today's discussions, we focused, in particular, on money laundering, witness protection, and implementation of the recently concluded Inter-American Convention on Trafficking in Illegal Arms. We also stressed the importance of seizing the assets of drug dealers so that criminals will pay more—and our taxpayers less—of the costs of law enforcement.

Before closing, I also want to highlight the growing value of CARICOM as a vehicle for purposeful and principled partnership within this region. We note that it played a useful role recently in sending assistance to Montserrat, and we also support CARICOM and OAS efforts to help St. Kitts and Nevis find constitutional alternatives to secession. In Guyana, we commend CARICOM's important role in helping the parties resolve their political impasse and call on the parties to observe the letter and spirit of the Herdmanston Accord.

As President Clinton made clear in Bridgetown, the process in which we are engaged does not involve discussions between Caribbean countries and the United States but rather meetings among Caribbean nations, including the United States, for the United States is also a Caribbean nation. And we know that no nation is so strong that it can get by without the help of friends or so small that it cannot make a real difference in the affairs of the world.

The United States looks forward to strengthening and expanding its partnership with its Caribbean neighbors. Mack will continue this close contact with all of you, and I look forward to continuing our dialogue at the Santiago Summit, in New York at the General Assembly this fall, and, I hope, in a second post-Bridgetown ministerial, I hope, in this region. . . . ■

Haiti

*Press Conference
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
April 4, 1998*

. . . The purpose of my visit to Haiti today is to reinforce our message of friendship to the Haitian people and to show that the United States remains fully committed to Haiti's democracy.

I have just come from a meeting with President Préval. We discussed a range of issues related mostly to democratic progress, the rule of law, and economic reform.

We also discussed the need to organize now for national elections scheduled this fall. The United States and other international partners are prepared to assist local authorities to see that these elections do go forward and that they are fair, well run, and broadly participatory. True democracy requires more than elections, but without elections there can be no democracy at all.

Shortly, I will meet with other political leaders. I will convey to them, as I did to the President, the importance of ending the current paralyzing and costly political crisis so that a prime minister may take office, international aid can flow more readily, and needed legislation may be enacted.

A solution to this crisis cannot be imposed. Haitians from different parts of the political spectrum must come together to do it. And the sooner they do, the sooner the Haitian people will see the benefits of democracy and reform.

To give just one example: If the Parliament were to approve the World Bank and IADB loans proposed for Haiti, it is estimated that the Haitian economy could achieve an annual growth rate of 5%. The resulting rise in incomes could lift more than one million Haitians out of poverty.

There is no reason we cannot achieve this goal, and then build on it, and then build some more. But first, there must be a solution to the political impasse.

Frankly, we have been disappointed that Haiti's political leaders have taken so long to resolve their differences. Democracy requires leaders who will compromise and who are willing to put the needs of the nation above those of party or faction. That quality is essential here in Haiti today.

Also this morning, I had a chance to visit with the U.S. Support Group, the UN Civilian Police Mission, and the Coast Guard. Their presence here is but a small part of the large and multifaceted international effort that is underway to help Haiti.

The commitment of the United States to this effort is reflected in President Clinton's request of \$140 million in assistance to Haiti over the next fiscal year. A major focus of our increased aid will be on areas outside the capital, for that is where the majority of Haitians live and where the needs are the most severe.

I am also pleased to announce this afternoon that David Aaron, the Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade, has agreed to serve as Chairman of a Special Committee of the U.S. National Security Council on Haitian Economic Growth.

Ambassador Aaron—who is here with me today—will be working to mobilize agencies within the U.S. Government and private sector, with their counterparts here in Haiti, to promote investment, growth, and sound financial management.

The United States is committed to assisting Haiti—when and where we can and when and where Haiti asks—to help democracy take root and to get Haiti’s economy moving forward. That is in our interests; it is the smart thing to do. It is also the right thing: to help our neighbors who have long deserved, but long been denied, the blessings of freedom and the fruits of prosperity. . . . ■