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DOC 1 OF 1

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Address of
The Honorable James A. Baker, III
Secretary of State
to
The Carter Center's Consultation
on a New Hemispheric Agenda

Carter Presidential Center
Atlanta, Georgia
March 30, 1989

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President Carter, President Ford, President
Perez, Prime Minister Sandiford, Prime
Minister Manley, members of the Council of
Freely-Elected Heads of Government,
distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

I am delighted to join you today.

It is a special privilege to join two American
leaders who together symbolize the promise of
bipartisan foreign policy, President Jimmy
Carter and President Gerald Ford. Before I
begin my remarks, let me say a brief word
about these two former Presidents.

Just five days ago, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Camp David Accords. All of the bright promises of that historic Treaty have not yet been realized; but for ten years neither Israel's sons nor Egypt's sons have died in battle with each other and peace reigns today on the Sinai. That historic Treaty will forever be a monument to the vision and leadership of three men of peace: Anwar Sadat, Menachem Begin, and President Jimmy Carter.

I was also struck on my recent tour of Europe by the new, historic stirrings for greater freedom and democracy from Poland to Hungary to the Soviet Union itself.

There are many causes for these profound changes, but surely history will record that one of those important reasons is the leadership shown by President Gerald Ford in defending human rights in the Helsinki Final Act.

I very much appreciate the hospitality of President Ford and President Carter in inviting me to join you today.

We meet at an historic moment for Latin America and for the United States. Across the Americas today, from Punta del Este to California, an old order is dying and a new world is struggling to be born.

Brazil is manufacturing communication satellites. Mexico has joined the GATT. A new vision of regional trade and integration is taking shape in the Caribbean Basin. And the winds of democracy are blowing across our hemisphere, stirring from Chile to Paraguay to Central America.

The United States does not stand aloof from the historic changes transforming our hemisphere. Just the opposite. We are proudly rediscovering our shared heritage with Latin America.

Stand in Miami airport today, or go to San Antonio. Close your eyes and listen. You could easily imagine yourself in Caracas or San Jose.

The fifth largest Spanish-speaking community in the world now lives in the United States.

Our culture and economy is vastly enriched by the contribution of these Americans.

Soon we will enter the 21st Century, and we face a choice between two very different futures. Down one road lies a vision of freedom and opportunity and economic development. It's a vision in which all our citizens can share as partners in a global economy and a true community of democratic nations. Down the other road lies a failed vision of dictatorship and state control and missed opportunity. We know which road we must travel -- and we know we must journey together.

To put it simply, we need each other as never before.

The agenda of issues before this important conference confirms the new reality.

Democracy. Development. Debt. Trade.

Drugs. Migration. The environment. Nuclear proliferation. These are neither North nor

Latin American responsibilities only. They are, instead, the common challenges we must confront together to shape successfully our shared destiny.

In recent weeks and months, President Bush and I have heard that very message.

We have heard it from Presidents Salinas, Alfonsin, Carlos Andres Perez, Azcona, Cerezo, and Duarte, and Prime Ministers Eugenia Charles and Michael Manley -- all of whom were welcome visitors to Washington recently. We have heard that message as well from many in this room.

I believe Latin America's democratic leaders are reaching out to the United States to offer a new partnership built on mutual respect and shared responsibility. I am here on behalf of a new President of the United States and a new Administration with our answer: We are reaching back to you.

The problems we face will not be resolved through quick promises or easy answers. Instead, we must confront them together with candor and courage and commitment. Let us begin by recognizing a simple truth we have forgotten too often in the past. We have much to learn from each other.

In recent years, the people of North America have learned a lesson from the people of Latin America about personal courage and the passion of ordinary people to be free. Peasants and political leaders, shopkeepers and market ladies have defied death threats and guerrilla violence, colonels and comandantes, to fight for democracy. We learned that lesson again ten days ago in El Salvador.

We have watched far-sighted democratic leaders take the first vital, and often politically difficult, steps to shed layers of state regulation and special preference that for too long have held in check the creative, productive energies of Latin America. And we have learned a lesson from Latin America about political leadership.

We continue to be reminded of the values we hold dear by Latin America's special sense of family, friendship, culture and hospitality.

We hope that our experience in the United States with democracy, and a free economy, may offer useful lessons to our friends in Latin America.

The United States enjoys political stability, peaceful succession of power, unquestioned civilian authority, and the steady expansion of human rights. We enjoy these blessings because for 200 years we have struggled to ensure that every citizen can shape our political destiny. We are committed to helping Latin America wage that successful democratic struggle too.

We have also learned that a free economy releases the energies of individuals and entrepreneurs, rewards initiative, and offers upward mobility. Economic liberty is the surest way to fulfill the aspirations of our citizens. Those Latin nations which have turned to this model have already begun to see a tangible reward.

During earlier phases of our history, we in the United States too often sought rapid growth at the expense of our nation's environment. We hope that our experience can help Latin nations learn from our mistakes, rather than repeat them.

While we have much to learn from each other, we also have much to expect from each other. Together, we must set aside the easy politics of blame and mutual recrimination. Let us forge instead a new bond of cooperation and mutual responsibility.

Those mutual responsibilities are the subject of this conference, and we will discuss them also in our private dialogue.

Let me mention a few of those subjects briefly.

The democratic wave sweeping Latin America today has been propelled by the aspirations of ordinary people for freedom and a better life. Now one question, above all others, confronts this hemisphere: Can democracy deliver?

Can democratic governments begin to satisfy their peoples' basic needs for jobs, health care, homes and schools? Can fragile new civilian regimes construct and strengthen democratic institutions, protect their citizens against organized violence from both the extreme right and left, and normalize succession of power through peaceful electoral processes?

The answer must be yes.

Yet, hanging over every decision which the region's elected leaders contemplate is the spectre of deep economic and social crisis and the weight of Latin America's foreign debt.

"The elected Presidents of the continent," The Economist wrote recently, "rule from capital cities ringed by shanty towns, swollen with refugees from the depressed countryside."

That is not our shared vision of Latin America's future.

Clearly, Latin America must begin to grow again and the fruits of that growth must be more widely shared.

To grow, Latin America cannot continue to be a net exporter of capital. Instead, it must create a climate for investment that will bring flight capital back to the region and attract new capital flows. Debt is a problem, but it is also a symptom of the problem. If there were a magic solution that did not require structural economic reform, then those nations which have declared a moratorium on debt would be growing today; but that is not the case. Instead they are in deeper economic crisis. Today, democratic governments must try to reform bloated state-dominated economies, service their debt, and satisfy the real needs of their citizens -- all at the same time. We understand that facing this challenge alone is a nearly impossible juggling act.

We do not expect you to face this challenge alone. As you move forward to take the necessary, but difficult steps to restructure and reform your economies, we must be prepared to hear your calls for help. And we accept that responsibility.

Within the first five weeks of our Administration, we have announced a new approach to help reduce Latin America's debt burden. In the weeks and months to come, we must negotiate case by case the details of that policy to ensure continued economic reform, a real reduction in existing debt burdens -- and new capital flows in the future.

If we ask Latin America to strip away the layers of protection that shield your economies from the free flow of trade in goods and services, then we, too, must confront protectionism in the United States and steadily reduce the barriers to your products.

If we ask that you confront the new menace of organized drug cartels, now often in league with guerrilla movements, then we must not only assist you in that effort, but also confront the terrible demand that exists in our country for these drugs. Only by tackling both supply and demand can we free our hemisphere from this drug menace.

If we are engaged in a joint venture North and South to advance and defend democracy, then we must each do our part -- collectively wherever possible -- to create new mechanisms and strengthen existing ones to defend human rights, guarantee the integrity of elections, and establish sanctions against those who threaten democratically elected governments through violence or coups.

If you ask the United States to forgo unilateral initiatives and work instead in good faith with the democratic nations of Latin America in a new cooperative diplomacy to support democracy, then we ask you to join with us in good faith to turn the promise of that diplomacy into a reality throughout this hemisphere.

Our Administration has negotiated a new Bipartisan Accord with Congress on Central America. We are committed to work with Latin and Central American democratic leaders to translate the bright promise of the Esquipulas Agreement into concrete realities on the ground. That is a challenge, but also an opportunity. All those who advocate diplomacy and political solutions to the region's conflicts have a responsibility to prove that this is the best and surest route to achieve our common goals. We invite Latin America's democratic leaders to join us in this challenge.

Together, we must insist that the promises in that regional treaty for democracy, peace, and security are not only kept, but verified.

We are prepared, as President Bush declared in announcing the Accord, to support a process that guarantees democracy in Central America. But the United States will never support a paper agreement that sells out the Nicaraguan people's right to be free. Nor should any other democracy in this hemisphere.

And together we must send a clear message to others outside this hemisphere: This is not a dumping ground for their arms or their failed ideologies. We are looking for signs of new thinking. The Soviet Union now has an opportunity to demonstrate it in Central America. That is what the Esquipulas Agreement requires and what the democratic community demands.

Finally, if we support dialogue between the Government of El Salvador and the Marxist guerrillas to end the conflict there, then we must insist on dialogue as well between the Government of Nicaragua and the peasant army of the Nicaraguan Resistance so the guns of war can stand silent throughout Central America.

For only when democracy and peace reign throughout Central America can we get on with the urgent work of economic integration and development for which the people of that war-torn region deeply yearn.

Some look at the crises and problems facing Latin America today and they despair. I am not one of them.

I believe that if we have the courage and the will to seize the opportunities before us, this is a time to dream great dreams for all the people of the Americas.

I believe the day will come when Carlos Andres Perez and Raul Alfonsin, Vinicio Cerezo, Jose Napoleon Duarte, Carlos Salinas, Julio Sanguinetti, Jose Azcona, Oscar Arias -- and many others -- will be seen as the pioneers who blazed the trail that will lead one day to the world's first democratic hemisphere.

I believe that our hemisphere can become the model for the rest of the planet for a true partnership between the developed and developing nations, where trade is free and prosperity is shared and the benefits of technology are harnessed for all.

And I believe that through the work of meetings such as this the day will come when in all nations of the Americas the rule of law prevails, human rights are respected, the strong are just and the weak secure, and the people live in peace.

Thank you very much.

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