

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2015*

**Remarks Following a Meeting With President Juan Carlos Varela of Panama  
in Panama City, Panama**

*April 10, 2015*

*President Varela.* We are very happy to have President Obama in our country. We congratulate him on all the effort he's doing to unite our continent. I think it's a historic meeting. It's going to be a very successful Summit of the Americas.

I think President Obama is going to leave a legacy the way he is supporting Hispanics in the United States, and also his new policy for Cuba for us is very important. And I thank him also for the cooperation that the U.S. Government has given us in these past 7 years of the administration in different regions like security, education, health. And we look forward to work with him as a regional partner—not just a bilateral relationship, but as a regional partner to make America a strong place and continued peace.

*President Obama.* Well, I just want to thank President Varela and the entire team and the people of Panama, for the incredible hospitality. I had a chance earlier to visit the Panama Canal for the first time and saw the extraordinary progress that's being made in the new development that will be completed next year. It's really a symbol of human ingenuity, but also Panama's central role in bridging the two continents and bringing the hemisphere together.

And I congratulated the President not only on what I'm certain will be a successful summit—

*President Varela.* Yes.

*President Obama.* —but also the extraordinary progress that Panama has made economically, the transparency and accountability that his Government has shown. We—Panama is a proud democracy, and its ability to engage in elections and peaceful transfers of power, I think, is a symbol of the progress that's been made throughout the hemisphere over the last several decades.

And as President Varela noted, we are great partners on a whole range of issues—security, the economy, education—and we had an excellent discussion about how we can further deepen those ties.

So we are very appreciative of the great friends that we have in the Panamanian people.

*President Varela.* Thank you, sir.

*President Obama.* We want to thank you for hosting us. I know these summits are a lot of work. I want to thank the team. I want to thank the people of Panama, especially because I'm sure they're having to put up with some traffic—*[laughter]*—while all these leaders are here. And we look forward to excellent discussions during the course of the next 2 days.

*President Varela.* Thank you, Mr. President. It's an honor.

*President Obama.* Thank you. All right. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:25 a.m. at the Hotel Riu Plaza Panama.

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