

June 18 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for President Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil

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President Bush. Good morning all, and welcome to the White House. It is my great honor to greet you, Mr. President: one of Latin America's most dynamic statesmen.

The U.S.-Brazilian friendship has spanned nearly two centuries. Now an alliance built on fidelity—to democracy, healthy mutual respect, and firm collective will—the relationship has never been better. The most basic roots of our friendship lie in our dedication to democracy, our allegiance to the power of individuals, and the rule of law.

The nations of the Americas all struggled and gained independence from the old ways of the Old World, and we built nations of promise and renewal. One hundred and seventy-nine years ago, the United States was proud to be the very first nation to recognize the newly sovereign Brazil. And that year, your predecessors achieved independence without bloodshed, traded goods with the world, and began to integrate a vastly diverse country. Today, President Collor, you represent the modern leader, Brazil's first directly elected President in 29 years. We understand the challenges you face and we admire the vigor with which you are dealing with them.

Across the spectrum, from trade and economic matters to environmental issues, to concerns over nuclear proliferation, we are determined to treat our common challenges as opportunities, opportunities to improve life throughout this hemisphere.

Brazil, with its great natural wealth and resourceful people, can make enormous contributions to the world economy and to hemispheric prosperity. Along with the other nations of the Americas, as a long-term goal, we aim to create the largest free-trading partnership of sovereign states in the world.

The Enterprise for the Americas Initiative which I unveiled 1 year ago next week can help make this goal a reality, and we are already making great strides. I am pleased to announce that tomorrow we will sign completed negotiations for a trade and in-

vestment framework agreement with Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay—the countries of the planned Southern Common Market, MerCoSur. This agreement is a significant step toward achieving our common goals, and we look forward to this new era of enhanced cooperation.

Mr. President, America stands by your side as you tackle Brazil's most pressing issues. When I visited Brazil last December and was received so warmly by you, sir, I saw the bold economic changes that you were making. And I saw something else; I saw a bold, active President, too. We all know that he's a tireless worker, but add to that jogging, piloting fighters, jet skiing, and several other activities. My kind of guy. [*Laughter*]

You've trimmed government and announced plans to reprivatize enterprises, fight inflation, and liberalize trade. These are the keys to growth and prosperity in Brazil.

As the 21st century draws near, we'll mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the Americas and the arrival of Cabral's Portuguese fleet in Brazil. Spectacular change characterizes the half millennium. The New World is becoming integrated in ways our forefathers would never have dreamed. And our firm collective will can help ensure a future filled with cooperation, not conflict.

Brazil knows well the importance of united efforts, aligning with the allies in both World Wars, its brave expeditionary forces playing a key role in World War II. A half-century later, Brazil supported the United Nations resolutions and sanctions against Iraq despite significant economic losses to Brazil. And that, Mr. President, testifies not just to your vision but to your courage; and for this, we thank you, also.

On behalf of all Americans, I salute the shared ideals that unite our nations and the lasting friendship between the people of the United States and the people of Brazil.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to

the White House. May God bless the Federative Republic of Brazil. Welcome, sir.

President Collor. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen: Relations with the United States of America are a priority for Brazil. In my inaugural speech, I stated the need to eliminate from our relationship the emphasis which up to then had been placed on contentious trade issues. Such an emphasis used to obscure the true sense of a partnership based on common values, aspirations, and enterprises.

This first goal has been achieved. In a mutually satisfactory way, Brazil has shown its earnestness and willingness to approach the issues pending on the bilateral agenda. Today, the Brazil-United States agenda is clearly positive, and this is only a starting point for continuous improvement in our relations.

Brazil and the United States are the two largest democracies on the American continent. We place our most profound trust in political and economic freedom as the only way to achieve the individual and collective fulfillment of our citizens. We cannot limit ourselves to solving circumstantial problems. The advances that we make must be founded upon a wide-ranging political vision and serve to reinforce a strong and lasting friendship.

It is in this spirit that we salute the Initiative for the Americas. Aside from its very important conceptual gains such as the linkage between foreign debt, trade, and investment, the initiative is remarkable above all because of its vision of the future, a future that we must build together.

Mr. President, let us close the chapter on past trade disputes and past debt problems. Let us join efforts to expand mutual trade, technological cooperation, new credit, and investment flows. My idea of a truly stable international partnership is based on two major assumptions: The first is that is up to every country to determine its own destiny and to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve its national goals.

The Federalist Papers themselves state that: provided there be a free people and carefully managed finances, "foreign nations will be much more disposed to cultivate our friendship than provoke our resentment." Brazilian democracy has fol-

lowed this lesson very closely. Brazil is making enormous sacrifices and resolutely carrying out its economic modernization project. We have adopted an adjustment program that is comparable only to the most rigorous and contemporary world history. In Brazil, the state will no longer be a producer of goods but rather a promoter of collective well-being.

The second assumption for a true partnership is a recognition of the interdependence that exists among nations, a reality which imposes upon all societies and their leaders the obligation to ponder the international consequences of their actions. Brazil is fully aware of this. We know that despite our present hardships, our policies of liberalizing reform will not succeed without real cooperation and positive responses on the part of the international community regarding solutions to such problems as foreign debt, removal of trade barriers, and access to advanced, clean technologies.

Though we respect the legitimate values and interests of all peoples, we must insist on cooperation in the crusade we lead to achieve harmony between men and nature. This is precisely the challenge that stands before us as we approach the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro: the search for a balance between man's seemingly infinite quest for progress and the finite limits of Earth's resources.

Mr. President, I look forward to our coming talks. I'm certain that our commitment to democracy and, believe me, my personal deep esteem for you will help us attain good results. We have before us a historic opportunity to create a new partnership between Brazil and the United States. Let us grasp it with determination and a sense of the future.

May God help us to elevate our relations to the level warranted by the greatness of our two countries. Thank you very much.

Note: President Bush spoke at 10:15 a.m. at the South Portico of the White House, where President Collor was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. Following the ceremony, the two Presidents met in the Oval Office.