

May 4 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

Appointment of John C. Harper as Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

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The President has announced his intention to appoint the Reverend John C. Harper to be Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. He would succeed John F. W. Rogers.

Since 1963, Dr. Harper has served as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, DC. He currently serves on the Decatur House Council, previously served on the Woodrow Wilson House Council, and is an ex officio member of the National Trust for Historic Preserva-

tion. He has also been active in the ongoing restoration of St. John's Church and its parish house, Ashburton House, both of which are listed on the National Historic Register.

Born in Winthrop, MA, Dr. Harper graduated from Harvard University (A.B., 1946), Episcopal Theological School (B.D., 1953), George Washington University (D.D., 1966), and Nashotah House (D.C.L., 1983). He is married, has three children, and lives in Washington, DC.

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 5, 1992

If I might be informal, Gus, thank you very much for the warm introduction and the warm welcome. And I just can't tell you how pleased I am to be in this beautiful place. There are many familiar faces out there, so many Members of both Chambers from Mexico. We salute you, and we welcome you all. I had a chance to greet the Members a second ago. Members of the Mexican-American business community, we're very pleased to have you all here. I see Senator Gramm and Representatives Kolbe and Gilman and Tallon, all here to salute this show of force and show of friendship for the delegates from south of the Rio Grande. The interparliamentary union, the Mexican-American interparliamentary relationship, is a good one. I can tell some of you older members of this delegation that I was a member of that interparliamentary action back in 1968 and 1969 and 1970. So I welcome you all once again.

I was pleased earlier to see Jose Niño and Raul Yzaguirre, two American leaders who do so much for strong relations between Mexico and the United States. And, of course, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate President Carlos Salinas for preserving this remarkable historical land-

mark and for creating the institute to strengthen the ties of friendship between our two nations.

Relations between the United States and Mexico are tremendously important to both our countries. It's exciting to note, and I would note and I'd say with some pride, that relations between Mexico and the United States have never been better than they are now. And I take great pride in that, as I say, but I commend especially Carlos Salinas for the role that he's played in strengthening this special friendship that benefits both our peoples. The Mexican President has done an awful lot to hold out his hand to us, to emphasize the importance to Mexico of the U.S.-Mexican relationship. And he's done a wonderful job.

I want to thank all of you for letting me share this special day, a day made even more meaningful because 1992 marks 500 years of Hispanic heritage in this hemisphere. And this heritage is a wonderful, rich tapestry that our kids, Barbara, and I were lucky enough to first experience during our west Texas years. I remember our Cinco de Mayo festivities out there, exploring the ties between our countries, ties of family, friendship, and faith. So, my expo-

sure to Cinco de Mayo started in the year 1949 out in west Texas, and it's been a part of us ever since.

The Bushes are very lucky to be able to keep that celebration alive. Our daughter-in-law, as some of you know, was from Mexico, now an American citizen, and we take great pride in that. Three of our grandchildren are Hispanic-American, and they bring the wonder of this dual heritage into our family. I have only one complaint with them. All four of them, my daughter-in-law and the three grandchildren, none of them has been able to teach their grandfather to speak Spanish. [Laughter] When things calm down a little, maybe I can make a little more headway.

I remember being so proud when Noelle, our granddaughter, and her mariachi group sang at Barbara's First Ladies luncheon during our inauguration. I heard the mariachi group upstairs, and I'm kind of glad that there wasn't a comparison between Noelle's mariachi group and this group of wonderful musicians that enlivened the festivities here. But I was delighted to hear the music today.

We all know the facts of Cinco de Mayo, that long-ago May 5th when General Zaragoza and his outnumbered troops stood up to the empire of Napoleon III. Stirring facts, but what's most important is the spirit of that day, the spirit of those few poorly-armed men who turned the battle into a glorious symbol. Cinco de Mayo is a symbol of the struggle for self-determination against astounding odds, and it's the symbol of a brave people's unbeatable determination to fight for their own destiny. It's a day like the downing of the Berlin Wall, the vote against apartheid, the defeat of Iraq's aggression: events that transform our world and the way we see each other. It's also of course, a national holiday, a day of pride in Mexican culture, a day of pride in Mexican heritage.

The Los Angeles Unified School District sponsors an annual Cinco de Mayo essay contest, and I just want to share with you a couple of the quotes. A senior high school student wrote that this day, and here's the quote, "instilled within me pride and appreciation for the beauty of my people and the richness of my roots." And a middle school student wrote, "The real significance of

Cinco de Mayo is the pride Mexicans everywhere have in their heritage."

And that's a glorious thing to celebrate. And when I think of the Hispanic community in our country, the first words to come to mind are faith, family, and freedom. These values have been interwoven into the strong, bright fabric of the Hispanic tradition for generations, and they're also the very values that this Nation was founded on.

Cinco de Mayo shows that we all have debts to our ancestors who took risks and made sacrifices for us, whether on the battlefield or out in the farm field. And we must honor these men and women who ached to pass on a richer life, a freer life, a better life, who sacrificed all they had in order to guarantee opportunity, freedom, and hope for their children and their children's children. One essay winner in this Los Angeles contest wrote, "Celebrating the deeds of our ancestors helps us keep in touch with our history and reminds us of past suffering and hardship that brought about the comfort we have today." Cinco de Mayo, it does not belong solely to another land; it's a celebration of ideals that know no border. And today we rejoice at the men and women who came to this country from across the world, brought their finest strengths, their rich culture, their proudest tradition, and fit them into the vibrant mosaic that is America.

We must also look toward the future to prepare the legacy we will leave our children. I believe of all the gifts that we could give them, the three most important are jobs, family, and peace. And the America we will leave to our country will be a better land and a more just land if we make progress here on five key areas. I'm thinking of our health care system, our legal system, our education system, our system of Government, and of course, we must expand world trade. These are the keys to thriving in the future.

And so much depends upon trade. Mexico and the United States share a great deal. President Salinas, as I say, is a dear friend. He also is a bold and imaginative leader, and the deep and enduring relation-

ship we're forging between our countries is based on cooperation, mutual respect, and open trade. And I will fight to tear down economic barriers with Mexico.

I notice the portrait of Juarez watching us. And seeing him reminds me of that great fresco I saw upstairs, "The Liberators of the American Continent." For those who haven't seen it, it's a symbol of the friendship and union that we share. It shows the great leaders of our lands and a picture of North America and Latin America shaking hands. This idealized portrait shows what we're going to achieve in trade because I am absolutely committed—put the politics aside—I am absolutely committed to signing a sound North American free trade agreement just as soon as possible. The time of opportunity is now. I've told our negotiators to accelerate their work. I believe we can conclude a sound and sensible deal before this United States election, and I will sign it just as soon as it's ready.

A great lesson of our age is that trade and enterprise can build jobs and certainly can preserve freedom. NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, will be the key to higher standards of living for the peoples of our continent. I hope it helps, and I'm sure it will, the standard of living in Mexico. I know it will do the same for the United States. And then I believe the benefits will flow south where it will open the door for other such free trade agreements. It will liberate our markets, and it will increase trade, investment, and jobs, yes, jobs, in Mexico, in Canada, and right here in the United States of America.

I must say, as I look over here I have a little guilt complex because I see Bernie Aronson who is working so very hard and in such effectiveness to bring forth a trade agreement, and he's done a wonderful job in our relationship. Bernie, I should have mentioned you earlier, but I'm just delighted you're here.

But as he knows and all of us, I think, know, a free trade market made up of these three nations, Mexico, Canada, and the United States, would be the stuff of dreams, one of the largest markets in the world, 360 million consumers in a \$6 trillion economy.

Now, Mexico is among the fastest growing national markets for U.S. exports, and

they've increased by two-thirds just over the past 3 years. And our exports of auto parts and telecommunications equipment have doubled. Imagine what will happen under a free trade agreement. It will create thousands more jobs on both sides of the border. And all of us will be winners. And in that spirit of vital cooperation, I know that we will grow together.

But all communities within the United States need to pause right now in the wake of tragic events in Los Angeles. We must rethink and reaffirm the bonds that knit all nationalities together. The violence brought much suffering to the Los Angeles Hispanic community. And I am certain that many of you, as did I, shared in their pain. And even as my heart, too, goes out to them, I found in the midst of the devastation there were signs of promise, neighbor helping neighbor, regardless of race or cultural background. Converging in Los Angeles were three fundamental issues of a civilized society: justice, order, and tolerance. And these must remain our goals as we mend the wounds of Los Angeles. From New York to San Antonio to San Jose, we must redouble our efforts to build on our strengths, the same strengths of character that are at the heart of the Hispanic community here in the United States and in Mexico as well.

My friends, I look forward to spending future Cinco de Mayo days with you. I loved the music, as I said. I can't wait to hear it again. And thank you very much, Gus, for including me in this wonderful day. And here's something my 8-year-old grandson, Jebby, did teach me: *Vaya con Dios*.

Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. at the Mexican Cultural Institute. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Gustavo Petricoli of Mexico; Jose Niño, president of the U.S.-Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Raul Yzaguirre, president of the National Council of La Raza; and Bernard W. Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.