

Remarks on Arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica

May 7, 1997

President Figueres, Mrs. Figueres, members of the Costa Rican delegation, and let me say a special word of thanks to the students and to the National Youth Symphony for giving us such a warm welcome. Thank you very much. I am pleased and honored to be in Costa Rica for the very first time and to experience firsthand your unique tradition of greeting foreign leaders not with a military salute but with the cheers of your wonderful young people.

Costa Rica's steadfast devotion to peace and democracy and your commitment to education and to the preservation of your marvelous environment have long been a model for the stable, democratic, and prosperous hemisphere we are working to build together.

This is a moment of great opportunity and hope for all the Americas, but especially here in Central America where decades of conflict and division have given way to peace and cooperation. That new reality helps to open a new era of partnership between the United States,

the nations of Central America, and the Dominican Republic. Over the next 2 days, I look forward to working with President Figueres and our fellow leaders to strengthen democracy, expand the reach of free and fair trade, and improve the life of all of our people.

Mr. President, I honestly believe the young people here and in my country and throughout our region will have more opportunities to live out their dreams than any generation of young people in history, if we do our jobs.

On behalf of Hillary and myself and our entire American delegation, let me thank you again for making us all feel so at home. *Muchas gracias. Nos vemos mañana.* [Thank you very much. We'll see you tomorrow.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:26 p.m. at Juan Santa Maria International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to President Jose Maria Figueres of Costa Rica and his wife, Josette Altmann de Figueres.

Remarks at the Central American Summit Welcoming Ceremony in San Jose

May 8, 1997

Thank you very much. President Figueres, thank you for bringing us all together. And to my fellow leaders from Central America and the Dominican Republic, thank you for coming. To all of you, to our distinguished guests, to all Ticos and all the people of Central America, let me say, *Es realmente un nuevo dia.*

Less than a decade ago, much of the Americas was still dominated by civil war, repression, and hopeless poverty. Today, we celebrate the advance of peace, growing prosperity, and freedom across our hemisphere. And we honor the remarkable men and women of Central America who helped to lead the way.

When the history of our region and our time is written, it will record your courage and your strength in ending four decades of conflict, braving the threat of bombs and bullets to cast ballots, embracing the challenge of economic re-

form, and opening the door to a new era of partnership among all our nations.

President Figueres, in that epic struggle, Costa Rica, this nation of brothers, has been a wise leader and set a powerful example. Waging peace as tenaciously as others have waged war, Costa Rica has shown that a country does not need an army to be strong. We thank Costa Rica and its leaders for building a vibrant democracy that takes care of its citizens and shoulders its responsibilities in the world.

Three years ago, our hemisphere's 34 democracies met in Miami at the historic Summit of the Americas to secure the hard-won gains our nations have made and to make them work for all our people. Today in San Jose, in the first summit between the leaders of the United States, Central America, and the Dominican Republic in almost three decades, we stand before

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you united in our course, determined to advance together to help the daily lives of our people in better jobs, safer streets, cleaner air, brighter hopes for our children and their future.

We are here to help our economies grow and to grow closer by opening our markets, protecting our workers, and sharing more fairly the benefits of prosperity. We are here to give all our people the tools to succeed in the global economy by making good education the birth-right of every citizen of every country here. We are here to strengthen our democracies by standing against the criminals, the drug traffickers, the smugglers who exploit open borders to threaten open societies. And we are here to protect our future by launching new efforts to prevent pollution and protect our precious natural environment.

When President Kennedy came to Costa Rica more than three decades ago, he said, "Every generation of the Americas has shaped new goals for democracy to suit the demands of a new age. Our generation must meet that chal-

lenge, and we must do it together. We know that we must not be just neighbors but real partners, working together in a spirit of friendship, equality, and mutual respect."

My fellow citizens of the Americas, that is the partnership we have come here to build. Here in the heart of our hemisphere, let us go forward into a bright new century full of unlimited possibilities for our young, knowing that to realize those possibilities we must go forward together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. at the National Theater Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to the following summit participants: President Jose Maria Figueres of Costa Rica; Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel of Belize; President Leonel Fernandez of the Dominican Republic; President Alvaro Arzu of Guatemala; President Carlos Roberto Reina of Honduras; President Arnaldo Aleman of Nicaragua; and President Armando Calderon of El Salvador.

The President's News Conference With Central American Leaders in San Jose

May 8, 1997

President Figueres. Good afternoon, friends. I wish to express on behalf of the heads of state and of government of Central America and the Dominican Republic how pleased we are with the results of the extraordinary work session we have had this morning with President Clinton. It has been a very sincere dialog, a very realistic dialog, a very human dialog, and especially, a very friendly dialog.

I would like to share with you four main conclusions which are the outcome of our discussions and which are reflected in the joint declaration which we have just signed. First of all, we've inaugurated a new phase, a new stage in the relations among our countries. We attach a very special importance to this alliance. It reflects a new visional mood, a more optimistic one, a more mature one, and a more propositional one. And it also demonstrates the existence of a shared agenda, the fundamental objective of which is the well-being of our peoples through the consolidation of economies which

are more and more open and integrated. And we have ratified this will.

Secondly, we wish to emphasize the brotherly spirit, the friendship and the understanding which have prevailed in our discussion of topics which we knew were sensitive and complex. We have made a special effort to reach agreements, to compromise and to understand the realities which our Governments face. Beyond those realities, we found a will to work together, and we have opened areas for this dialog to continue and for our collective action.

Third, we underlined the importance of having maintained, as a constant concern of this meeting, the social issues, the importance of which for Latin America and for our region is more vital today than ever before. We share a special concern with the more needy, a concern which reflects solidarity, not charity, as a means to generate opportunities for productive employment and to ensure the dignified life which our peoples demand.