

Interview With Radio Programas de Peru March 20, 2002

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, for this historic interview with Radio Programas de Peru.

The President. Si.

Action Against Poverty in the Hemisphere

Q. First question. After the tragedy of September 11th, you have led the world into a battle against global terrorists. Now, in the context of this important visit to Latin America, are you prepared to take the lead in fighting global poverty?

The President. Por cierto. Por cierto. Mi vision es eso: yo quiero la paz para todos, pero yo quiero vida mejor para todos tambien. I believe we need to fight for peace. I believe we need to work for a better life.

One of the main reasons I'm going to our—in our neighborhood is to say, the best foreign policy is to make sure the neighborhood is prosperous. I look so forward to coming to Peru. I'll be the first sitting President in *la historia de mi pais para viajar a Peru*. And I look forward to talking to President Toledo.

I want to talk about how to encourage prosperity for everybody through trade, good trade policy. But as well, I come to Monterrey *para discutir un plan para distribir dinero a los paises en este hemisphere en otros lugar para*—to encourage growth and habits of growth, *tambien* education, health care. And so, yes, I'm absolutely committed to helping fight poverty.

Q. Your personal dealings with Latin America are strong and part of a long family tradition. As President, your father launched important regional initiatives. Are you on the verge of launching your own Latin America initiatives?

The President. Well, I want to make sure that that which has worked continues to go forward. NAFTA has worked. I want the Andean trade preference passed out of

the United States Congress so that Peruvian farmers or Peruvian business men and women can realize markets in the United States. I think that's good for Peru; I think it's good for jobs; and I think it's good for the working people.

My initiative is the free trade of the Americas, which is a large concept of a marketplace, united from the north of Canada all the way to the south of Argentina. Plus, I'm coming with this, what we call the Millennium Challenge Fund, which is \$10 billion of new money. It's actually money the first year, plus money the second year, plus money the third year, up to \$5 billion. When you add up all the new money, it equals about \$10 billion or so, and that will be money to help alleviate poverty.

But I want to do it in a way that just doesn't give money; I want to do it in a way that rewards countries who battle—which battle corruption, which honor education, which focus on health care, so that there is good habits developed, so that people actually benefit—and not just a few.

Peru-U.S. Relations

Q. In the case of Peru, what concrete announcement should we expect? Perhaps expanding Plan Colombia into the region, or any interdiction flights over Peru? A free trade agreement of the Andean region, with Peru?

The President. Si. Well, first of all, *por cierto*, I want to tell people that we're going to work to get this Andean trade preference in place, real, so that the Andean countries can plan on it.

Other than that, the main thing—the reason I'm coming to Peru is, I want to make it clear how much I appreciate President Toledo's focus on democracy and reform. He's been a bold leader, and I thank him for that very much. And I want the

Peruvian people to know that we will cooperate and work closely with the Government to foster institutions that promote freedom. I know President Toledo is committed to that.

But the main thing I'm concerned about is making sure that prosperity is alive and well with our friends. We want our friends to succeed. A strong Peru, a healthy Peru, is good for the United States.

Q. President, could you please use this occasion to say a few words in Spanish directed to the people of Peru.

The President. Pues, to las personas que vida en Peru, quiero decir estamos sus amigo aqui en los Estados Unidos. Hay muchas personas que desean relaciones buenos, mejores con los personas que viven en

Peru. Y tambien quiero decir a President Toledo, usted es mi amigo, y muchas gracias para la oportunidad de viajar a esta pais muy importante.

Q. Muy bien. Muchas gracias, Senor Presidente.

The President. Si.

Q. Si, es un honor para nosotros para conversar con usted.

The President. El placer es mio. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:48 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Alejandro Toledo of Peru. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Lourdes Meluza of Univision March 20, 2002

Visit to Latin America

Ms. Meluza. Some countries in Latin America feel that after 9/11, the region has been relegated—or has lost its priority that you have so clearly stated in the past. Do you plan with this trip to reinsert the region in your priorities, in your agenda? And if so, what are the substantive issues to prove it?

The President. Sure. First of all, the trip will give me a chance to say again that the best foreign policy for America is to have a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous neighborhood.

Secondly—and it should be noted that my first stop is to Mexico. Obviously, there's the development conference, which is an important conference. That, in itself, will help me talk about how we've committed a lot of money to helping alleviate world poverty. And there's poverty in our neighborhood.

It will also give me a chance to have a bilateral meeting with my friend Vicente

Fox to talk about the importance of Mexican-U.S. relations. That relationship has not diminished. I mean, that relationship is as strong as ever. We've got huge amounts of trade going back and forth, a lot of people going back and forth, and we're going to talk about initiatives that make the border policy more productive, better, more efficient, and at the same time protect both our countries from terrorist threats.

My trip to Peru will give me a chance to talk about the Andean Trade Preference Act. I want to—that needs to be passed by the United States Congress, and it needs to be passed quickly. This will give me a chance to, on the one hand, say to our friends there, not only Toledo but to the leaders, that I want the Andean Trade Preference Act; I'm committed to it; I will fight for it; and then at the same time send a message to Congress.

Y por fin, El Salvador is a Central American country, and again it will give me a