

sure America will do a great thing and move forward in all fields, for the stability and security, mainly, of my region, the Gulf region.

We have an old relationship that's lasted for more than a hundred-and-something years. And I think we will keep that one. And that's why I'm here, to consult on matters of security, on matters of trade, on matters of development. And I thank the President for his invitation, his kind invitation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Colonnade at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks to the Council of the Americas Conference**

*May 7, 2001*

Thank you, Mr. Rhodes, I'm honored; and thank you for having me, sir. It's an honor to be here with Senator Chuck Hagel. He's a man who's got a good vision of the world. He's also a fine United States Senator, I might add. Thank you for being here, Senator. It's good to see Ambassadors from nations in our hemisphere. Mr. Rockefeller, thank you very much for your support of trade in our hemisphere.

It's an honor to be here with the best pick I could have possibly made to be the Secretary of State, and that's Colin Powell. He's doing a really good job of making the case for our country in a strong and humble way. When it's all said and done, his tenure is going to mean the world is more peaceful and more prosperous.

I appreciate so very much, Peter Romero from the State Department, who has been working side by side with those of us at the White House. I appreciate Thomas McNamara and Bill Pryce, as well. And thank you all for coming, and thank you for letting me talk about a subject near and dear to my heart.

The Council of the Americas was formed 36 years ago, in a different America. And it's certainly a different world. In 1965 international trade and investment mattered much less to the U.S. economy. We traded mostly with the countries of Europe. Inter-

estingly enough, at that point in time, Mexico was our fifth largest trading partner. Today, she's the second largest trading partner, behind Canada.

In 1965 so few Americans traced their ancestry to Latin America that the census didn't even bother to tabulate them. Today, some 35 million Americans are of Hispanic origin. In 1965 military and authoritarian regimes ruled all too many of the countries of the Americas. Today, with one sad, solitary exception, every nation in our hemisphere has an elected government.

Our recent summit in Quebec symbolized the new reality in our hemisphere, a unity of shared values, shared culture, and shared trade. And together, we made good progress at that summit, the beginnings of a really strong and fruitful relationship all throughout the hemisphere.

In 1980s and the early nineties, our Nation negotiated many important trade agreements: the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade talks. Since then, efforts have stalled as U.S. trade promotion authority was allowed to lapse. The inactivity of the American Government has had real costs for the American people. The United States has few better friends, for example, than the Republic of Chile, but the fact is, Canadian goods sold in Chile pay a lower tariff than American goods do, because the United States has left its trade talks with Chile unfinished.

Free trade agreements are being negotiated all over the world, and we're not a party to them. And this has got to change.

Americans are the world's preeminent inventor of new technology and the world's biggest foreign investor. We're the world's most efficient food producer and the world's leading source of information and entertainment. For our farmers and our inventors, for our artists and for ordinary savers open trade pays off in the form of higher incomes and higher returns.

We benefit from open trade in less tangible ways, as well. Americans want to live on a cleaner planet; we want labor standards

upheld and children protected from exploitation. Americans want human rights and individual freedom to advance. Open trade advances those American values, those universal values.

By failing to make the case for trade, we've allowed a new kind of protectionism to appear in this country. It talks of workers, while it opposes a major source of new jobs. It talks of the environment, while opposing the wealth-creating policies that will pay for clean air and water in developing nations. It talks of the disadvantaged, even as it offers ideas that would keep many of the poor in poverty.

Open trade is not just an economic opportunity; it is a moral imperative. Trade creates jobs for the unemployed. When we negotiate for open markets, we are providing new hope for the world's poor. And when we promote open trade, we are promoting political freedom. Societies that open to commerce across their borders will open to democracy within their borders, not always immediately and not always smoothly, but in good time.

Look at our friends, Mexico, and the political reforms there. Look at Taiwan. Look at South Korea. And some day soon, I hope that an American President will end that list by adding, look at China. I believe in open trade with China, because I believe that freedom can triumph in China.

Later this week, I will send the outline of my trade agenda to Congress. My administration wants to work with Congress and to listen to what the Members have to say. We've been especially impressed by the fresh new thinking of many Members about how to advance environmental and worker protection concerns in ways that open trade rather than closing trade. They recognize that one-size-fits-all policies can't succeed. They know we need a toolbox equipped to match diverse tools with diverse problems, and I agree.

And one tool I must have is renewed U.S. trade promotion authority. I urge the Congress, restore our Nation's authority to negotiate trade agreements. And I will use that authority to build freedom in the world, progress in our hemisphere, and enduring prosperity in the United States.

We must pass the free trade agreement with Jordan, one of our best friends in the

Middle East. We need to complete our free trade agreement with Singapore. We must proceed with other bilateral and regional agreements. And the time has come for a new global trade round.

I'm optimistic about trade. I'm also realistic about trade. I will enforce our laws against unfair trade practices. And I want to consider how we can improve our program for trade adjustment assistance when it comes up for reauthorization next year. But we must understand that the transition costs of open trade are dwarfed by open trade's benefits that are measured not only in dollars and cents but in human freedom, human dignity, human rights, and human progress.

We must make those benefits a reality for all the people of our hemisphere. And that's the task ahead. I accept it with enthusiasm. And I'm counting on the Council's help to bring sanity to the United States Congress.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to William R. Rhodes, member, David Rockefeller, honorary chair, and Thomas E. McNamara, president, board of directors, and William T. Pryce, vice president, Washington operations, Council of the Americas; and Peter F. Romero, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

## **Proclamation 7434—Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 2001**

*May 7, 2001*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

As we move into the 21st century, the United States continues to greatly benefit from the contributions of its diverse citizenry. Among those who have influenced our country, Asian/Pacific Americans merit special recognition. Their achievements have greatly enriched our quality of life and have helped to determine the course of our Nation's future.