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feel strongly that for our taxpayers to be comfortable with money being spent, there's got to be something, there's got to be an effort made—a true, honest effort made to improve the plight of the people we're trying to help.

And I'm optimistic about all this. We've got some terrible problems in the world. I'm deeply disturbed about the AIDS crisis. It is a significant, significant issue in Africa, obviously. There's a place where we've put up a half a billion dollars to begin. And when I see a strategy, a focused strategy that will yield results, then we'll be willing to work with Congress to put more money in.

But I want to see—and we didn't mind; we're happy to take the lead in starting to seed the fund. But now, it's time to see whether or not there can be a strategy in place that will actually work. And when we see something working—and we'd like to help—but when we see something working, we'll be an enthusiastic backer. But if it doesn't work, it's time—it's time—to hold people accountable. And that's exactly what my message is going to be in Monterrey. I'm looking forward to giving—I'm sorry. I've got to go. [*Laughter*]

Q. I will wait and see.

The President. *Tengo que salir.* You'd better yell loud, because I can't hold this pack back. [*Laughter*] They'll be up there yelling and elbowing and screaming out questions. You watch; they're a very aggressive lot back there.

Possible Caribbean Visit

Q. Mr. President, do you envision going to the Caribbean soon at all or doing the same kind of thing that you're doing in Central and South America?

The President. *Quizas, quizas.*

President Duhalde of Argentina

Q. Mr. President, are you going to see President Duhalde of Argentina, do you know? Is he on your schedule, do you know?

The President. I don't know. Oh, you mean in Monterrey?

Q. Yes, sir, on this trip.

The President. I imagine I'll see him. We're having a dinner, leaders' dinner only, if I'm not mistaken.

Q. Yes. A luncheon.

The President. Luncheon. *Almuerzo.* Thank you all.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vicente Fox of Mexico; President Alejandro Toledo of Peru; President Francisco Flores of El Salvador; President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; former President Alberto Fujimori of Peru and his adviser Vladimiro Montesinos; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; President Fidel Castro of Cuba; and President Eduardo Alberto Duhalde of Argentina. The President also referred to section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which expired April 30, 2001; AUC, the United Self-Defense Forces/Group of Colombia; FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia; and PAN, the National Action Party in Mexico. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 20. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Television Azteca

March 20, 2002

Mexico-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much for being on Television Azteca. It's a pleasure and an honor, sir, to have you. Let me first ask you, in Monterrey there are many people demonstrating against the meeting, not only of Mexico and the United States but in general of this world meeting. And they say that this will be an occasion to have Mexico subordinated to the United States. What do you tell these people?

The President. *Mexico es a grand amigo de los Estados Unidos,* and we're equal partners. It's very important for people in our hemisphere to know that we've got a unique relationship with Mexico and a very positive relationship. We've got a lot of trade that goes on on a daily basis. We've got a lot of contact with Mexico. And my attitude is, if Mexico succeeds, that is good for the United States. A strong Mexico, an equal partner is very good for the people of our country.

Everywhere I go, there's protesters, so I don't worry about protesters. What I worry

about is to make sure that we have good relations with Mexico. It's an important part of my foreign policy. This will be my second trip to Mexico since I've been the President, in a year's time. That should send a clear signal of the importance of the relationship.

Q. And this is not an occasion to subordinate anybody or anything?

The President. No, of course not. There's no subordination. This is an excuse for people who want to disrupt a positive relationship. And it's important for us to have a positive relationship with Mexico, and relations with Mexico have never been better.

Vicente Fox is my friend. I can have very good dialog with him. He's a strong, strong proponent of what's good for Mexico. He speaks his mind, as he should. And there are some areas where we agree and some areas where we don't agree, but we always agreed to have good relationships.

Immigration

Q. Mr. President, one of the issues that you're going to be discussing with President Fox is the one related to immigration.

The President. Yes.

Q. And I talked to a lot of people—community leaders, immigration attorneys—and they tell me that 245(i) only helps a very small percentage of people, and that, in reality, something has to be decided about this guestworker program initiative, the illegalization of all those Mexicans who are still here and working every day, and they haven't been able to get their residency—those kinds of things. But they say that as long as you push and you put your political capital on this, something can be done. Otherwise, it won't. My question is, are you willing to put that political capital on——

The President. Well, I've always been one who understands that we need to make sure that a willing employer and a willing employee can come together in a legal way. That's been my position for a long period of time. 245(i) is just the beginning of a lot of discussions; 245(i) is a compassionate approach to helping reform immigration. And so the issue is broader than 245(i), as far as I'm concerned, and it's going to take a lot of work, however.

And it's very important for our Mexican friends to understand that as a result of the attacks on America, the American people are focused on terror and focused on making sure people don't come in the country to hurt us. I, of course, reminded people that most people from Mexico that come into the country come to help, not to hurt. So we've got a lot of work to do.

But I haven't changed my mind; I think it's important. The first step is to see if we can get 245(i) out of the United States Senate. And so all those lawyers you've talked to or advocates need to be up working the United States Senate right now to see if they can perform.

Q. Many people feel that this will only happen if you push and you put your political capital there.

The President. That's what I'm doing. I've said, first things first. I'm the President who stood up and said, "Get me 245(i), let's get that done." And the Senate can't move. And so I called upon the Senate again, "Let's see you perform, and let's get all these advocates in Washington, DC, to whom you've spoken up on the Senate floor. Get them up there getting something done."

See, I'm one of these let's-see-if-we-can-get-things-done guys. There's too much talk in Washington and not enough action. And so I've not only talked about immigration reform that makes sense, I'm pushing to get 245(i). Once we get 245(i), we can deal with the next issue. And there's a lot of issues we need to discuss, and I'll discuss them with my friend Vicente Fox.

Narcotics

Q. And my last question: Benjamin Arellano-Felix, the head of this cartel, suspect in Mexico, was apprehended there. Are you going to ask for extradition—for an extradition of this guy to the United States?

The President. *Si, por cierto. Por cierto.* He's under indictment here in the United States, and I look forward to working with the Fox Government on extradition. We've had a great—great cooperation on the issue of extradition. As you know, the Government has made some—honored our requests a couple of times, and for that I'm grateful. And yes, we'd like to see him extradited.

And I'm so appreciative of the Mexican authorities arresting this—arresting this man. It's a good signal. And it's a good signal for many Americans to hear it and realize that the Fox Government is getting tough on these narcotraffickers.

Now, let me talk about drugs very quickly. I want the Mexican people to understand that we'll work together—and we are—to stop the flow of drugs. But here in America, we must do a better job of not using *las drogas.* We've got to do a better job of reducing demand. We have an obligation; we've got an obligation to work closely with our Mexican friends; we've got an obligation at home to convince our young not to use drugs.

And so I want the American people to hear me loud and clear: Drugs will destroy your families, and drugs will destroy life. And we've got to do a better job of promoting that. And so when demand for drugs goes down, which I hope it does—and I think it can with good, focused effort—it will help our Mexican friends deal with a very tough issue.

Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:40 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vicente Fox of Mexico; and Benjamin Alberto Arellano-Felix, head of the Arellano-Felix Brothers organization drug cartel. The President also referred to section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which expired April 30, 2001. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

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 distrubir 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