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confirm North Korea's claim. Nonetheless, such a claim itself constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The United States condemns this provocative act. Once again North Korea has defied the will of the international community, and the international community will respond.

This was confirmed this morning in conversations I had with leaders of China and South Korea, Russia, and Japan. We reaffirmed our commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, and all of us agreed that the proclaimed actions taken by North Korea are unacceptable and deserve an immediate response by the United Nations Security Council.

The North Korean regime remains one of the world's leading proliferator of missile technology, including transfers to Iran and Syria. The transfer of nuclear weapons or material by North Korea to states or non-state entities would be considered a grave threat to the United States, and we would hold North Korea fully accountable of the consequences of such action.

The United States remains committed to diplomacy, and we will continue to protect ourselves and our interests. I reaffirmed to our allies in the region, including South Korea and Japan, that the United States will meet the full range of our deterrent and security commitments.

Threats will not lead to a brighter future for the North Korean people nor weaken the resolve of the United States and our allies to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Today's claim by North Korea serves only to raise tensions, while depriving the North Korean people of the increased prosperity and better relations with the world offered by the implementation of the joint statement of the six-party talks. The oppressed and impoverished people of North Korea deserve that brighter future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hu Jintao of China; President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Alan Garcia Perez of Peru

*October 10, 2006*

***President Bush.*** *Bienvenidos, Mr. Presidente, a la Casa Blanca.* I'm proud to welcome the President of Peru to the Oval Office. We've had a fascinating and important discussion. First of all, I appreciated his experience, and I appreciated his advice on some key issues. He comes to the Oval Office as a friend, somebody with whom I can have good working relations.

We talked about world issues; we talked about issues regarding South America and Central America; and we talked about our bilateral relations. The central issue facing us right now is the passage of a free trade agreement. I assured the President that I will work with Congress as soon as possible to get this agreement passed. We talked about the need for both countries to work closely to fight drugs, and I appreciated the President's attitude and understanding of this important issue.

And we talked about the need to work together to help promote social justice. The President has a big heart. He cares deeply about those who suffer. And I assured the President it's in our Nation's interest that we work with our friends in the—in South America to promote good education and good health care and good opportunities.

All in all, it was an excellent meeting. And, Mr. President, welcome.

***President Garcia Perez.*** Thank you. I am very happy to be here for the first time in the Oval Office. President Bush and I have agreed on the general topics that we discussed in terms of strengthening democracy and also strengthening relations between developed countries and developing countries. And one basic tool for that goal is free trade. And we are very satisfied to have heard President Bush's promise to work with the Congress to push forward the passage of a free trade agreement with Peru.

And we have explained today that in terms of free trade, we are looking for an agreement that does much as focus on the most modern or the most significant economic groups in the country. We are also looking to have a free trade agreement that is focused

internally and that will benefit our entire population, all our productive sectors, including the less advantaged sectors, so that they may export to the world and to the United States in particular.

We see the free trade agreement as one of our tools in our fight against poverty and also a tool for us to strengthen equality. Also, however, it is a tool that will help us achieve security through democracy and to give our population a road, a goal, and an aspiration in terms of economic development in the country.

We see our role as a country in terms of helping strengthen democracy and achieving friendship without threat in our region. And in this regard, Peru will continue to work towards the democratization of Latin America. As I said, it's a comprehensive democratization that we are looking for. We are looking to strengthen the options that our populations have in participating in the benefits of modernization and democratic civilization everywhere in the continent.

And one issue that we need to work on is a full eradication of the threat of drugs. And this is a commitment that we share with the United States. It's a commitment that will be strengthened and revised. And at some point, we will propose a high-level meeting on this topic in order to relaunch the fight against drugs in terms of offering other alternatives, such as alternative development, and the free trade agreement is one of these tools. And the goal is to allow the poorest sectors, the farmers in the Andes, to have access to the buying power of the U.S. market and other markets in the world.

In the relationship between the United States and Latin America, there have been several missed opportunities in the 20th century. There was an opportunity that was put forward by President Roosevelt in the '40s, with his proposal. There was also the Alliance for Progress, proposed here by the United States, by President Kennedy. And now we have a third possibility involving—or increasing world trade and the use of free trade as a tool to fight poverty. And it is an opportunity that Latin American countries must take advantage of this time. What could have been done almost 50 years ago with the Alliance for Progress is something that we can do now, thanks to the technological and computer revolution that we are experiencing. And this is a way also to reach the poor in our countries and give them access to the world market.

And finally, I want to say that I'm a leader who belongs to a party that is a popular party, that believes in social justice and fights for sovereignty in our country. However, I recognize the opportunities that this time offers us in terms of our economies, and I believe it is important for our peoples to have specific and concrete gains in terms of the economy, education, and health. And I believe that this free trade agreement that we have been referring to is a very important tool in its regard.

And we have told the President that even though we are coming from a more modest position, we believe that with our leadership, we can stand side by side with the U.S. and make contributions in order to strengthen democracy and peace in the world and social justice among nations and also within our societies.

And I want to thank the President for his hospitality. I look forward to continuing to work together, and I hope that we will see the President soon in Peru. And thanks again for your invitation. Thank you a lot, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

***President Bush.*** *Muchas gracias, senor.* Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Garcia Perez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Peru

*October 10, 2006*

Presidents George W. Bush and Alan Garcia underscored the strong relationship between the United States and Peru, and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening democracy and expanding free trade in the region as a means of improving the well-being of all citizens by securing freedom and delivering the greatest possible economic