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President Fernandez Reyna. I thank you very much, Mr. President. It's a pleasure to be here. And I want to thank President Bush for the warm welcome that he has given me, along with my delegation, here to the Oval Office of the White House.

As the President indicated, we have touched on a number of issues of mutual interest to our two countries. First of all, DR–CAFTA; its implementation, hopefully, will take place very soon. We are now in the final phase. This is a bill now before our own Congress in the Dominican Republic. We are dealing with some minor legal amendments, and our two teams have been working very hard to obtain a speedy implementation of DR–CAFTA. President Bush and we have agreed to the need to accelerate this process to benefit both our countries.

Second, as President Bush indicated, we have also touched on the issues of disbursements by multilateral institutions. These are extremely important in order to help the progress of countries like the Dominican Republic to establish confidence, to maintain the confidence in our countries, and also to help us sustain ability of our economies.

The Dominican Republic has agreements with these multilateral institutions, and we hope that they will be honored soon, with regard to these disbursements. The sooner that they are complied with the better it will be for us.

And third, of course, we have touched on a number of issues such as the issue of drug trafficking, as President Bush mentioned, the issue of crime, the issue of the good relations that we have had for so many years between the United States and the Dominican Republic, the issue of good governance, the issue of respect for human rights, and a number of other things.

It has been a very good meeting. Thank you so much.

President Bush. *Gracias por su tiempo.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Fernandez Reyna 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.

Remarks on Signing the Secure Fence Act of 2006

October 26, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you. Please be seated. I'm pleased that you all are here to witness the signature of the Secure Fence Act of 2006. This bill will help protect the American people. This bill will make our borders more secure. It is an important step toward immigration reform.

I want to thank the Members of Congress for their work on this important piece of legislation. I welcome you here to the White House. I'm looking forward to signing this bill.

I appreciate the Vice President joining us today. I thank the Deputy Secretary, Michael Jackson, of the Department of Homeland Security. Rob Portman—he happens to be the Director of the OMB. I want to thank Ralph Basham, who is the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection—David Aguilar is the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol.

I appreciate the fact that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has joined us, as well as House Majority Leader John Boehner. I appreciate them coming in from their respective States as I sign this piece of legislation. I want to thank Congressman Peter King, who's the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee in the House of Representatives. I appreciate you being here, Peter.

Ours is a nation of immigrants. We're also a nation of law. Unfortunately, the United States has not been in complete control of its borders for decades, and therefore, illegal immigration has been on the rise. We have a responsibility to address these challenges. We have a responsibility to enforce our laws. We have a responsibility to secure our borders. We take this responsibility seriously.

Earlier this year, I addressed the Nation from the Oval Office. I laid out our strategy for immigration reform. Part of that strategy begins with securing the border. Since I took office, we have more than doubled funding for border security—from $4.6 billion in 2001 to $10.4 billion this year. We've increased the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to more than 12,000, and by the end of 2008, we will have doubled

the number of Border Patrol agents during my Presidency.

We've deployed thousands of National Guard members to assist the Border Patrol. We've upgraded technology at our borders. We've added infrastructure, including new fencing and vehicle barriers. We're adding thousands of new beds in our detention facilities so we can continue working to end catch-and-release at our southern border. During the course of my administration, we have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering our country illegally. And I thank the Border Patrol for their hard work.

The Secure Fence Act builds on this progress. The bill authorizes the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing along our southern border. The bill authorizes more vehicle barriers, checkpoints, and lighting to help prevent people from entering our country illegally. The bill authorizes the Department of Homeland Security to increase the use of advanced technology like cameras and satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles to reinforce our infrastructure at the border. We're modernizing the southern border of the United States so we can assure the American people we're doing our job of securing the border. By making wise use of physical barriers and deploying 21st century technology, we're helping our Border Patrol agents do their job.

The Secure Fence Act is part of our efforts to reform our immigration system. We have more to do. Meaningful immigration reform means that we must enforce our immigration laws in the United States. It is against the law to hire someone who is here illegally. We fully understand that most businesses want to obey that law, but they cannot verify the legal status of their employees because of widespread document fraud. So we're creating a better system for verifying documents and work eligibility and, in the meantime, holding people to account for breaking the law.

We must reduce pressure on our border by creating a temporary-worker plan. Willing workers ought to be matched with willing employers to do jobs Americans are not doing for a temporary—on a temporary basis.

We must face the reality that millions of illegal immigrants are already here. They should not be given an automatic path to citizenship; that is amnesty. I oppose amnesty. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic pass to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation. And I look forward to working with Congress to find that middle ground.

The bill I'm about to sign is an important step in our Nation's efforts to secure our border and reform our immigration system. I want to thank the Members of Congress for joining me as I sign the Secure Fence Act of 2006.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. H.R. 6061, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law No. 109–367. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Congressional Candidate Jeff Lamberti and Iowa Victory 2006 in Des Moines, Iowa

October 26, 2006

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm Iowa welcome. It's kind of like old home week here when I look around. [*Laughter*] It's good to be in the midst of a lot of friends who made possible for me to stand here and address you as the President of the United States.

I'm proud to be here with Jeff Lamberti. No doubt in my mind he is going to be the next Congressman from this congressional district. He is smart; he is capable; he is accomplished; he listens; and he cares. The right man to represent the Third Congressional District in Iowa is Jeff Lamberti.

I not only feel that way, but Laura feels that way. [*Laughter*] She sends her best to Jeff and Shannon and their family. She sends her best to you all. She has got to be the most patient woman in America. [*Laughter*] I also happen to believe, in all due respect to my mother, she's the greatest First Lady our country has ever had.