AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO



2002. And so today we're reopening the consulate. And it's a good sign, because we celebrate the values that cause Mexico and the United States to be friends, values like family and faith and culture.

We celebrate the enduring and close partnership between our countries. Mexico and the United States are working together to build a future of prosperity and opportunity for people on both sides of the border.

And at this ceremony, we also celebrate the comeback of a great American city. You know, I chose New Orleans for our meetings with Mexico and Canada because I wanted to send a clear signal to the people of my country that New Orleans is open for business, and it's a good place to visit, and that after the devastation of Katrina, it's become a hopeful city.

And so, on behalf of the people of the United States, Mr. President, *mi amigo*, I thank you for reopening this consulate. I look forward to our meetings. And it's my honor to bring you to the podium.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Foreign Relations Patricia Espinosa Cantellano and Consul Andrea Garcia Guerra of Mexico; Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana; Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana; and Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Calderon. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Discussion With President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico in New Orleans

*April 21, 2008*

***President Bush.*** Mr. President, thank you very much. We just had a very long and really good discussion on a variety of issues. U.S.-Mexican relations are very important, and sometimes we in America take those relations for granted. But we share a large border; we share the same values. We've got people on both sides of the border who've got friends and family members. And it is fitting that you and I have this kind of conversation.

I want to congratulate you and thank you for your strong leadership. I appreciate the fact that you inherited a very difficult situation. One, you inherited, you know, high demand for drugs in the United States. In other words, people are using drugs, and therefore, people are supplying drugs. And it's caused difficult security problems in your country, and you've responded aggressively. And I think it's in our interests that we fund the joint initiative. We got to work hard on our side to make sure that we reduce our drug use and, at the same time, work with you in the close coordination to defeat these drug traffickers.

We need to do—continue our initiative that we started with—during your administration, Mr. President, on dealing with arms trafficking—arms coming from the United States into Mexico. We've got a strategy in place, and we're now beginning to implement it. Congress has a chance to send a strong statement that we want to work in a collaborative fashion with the money that's going to be in the supplemental. My hope, of course, is they fully fund the program, and they fund it—a strategy that will be effective.

We talked about trade and how trade has been beneficial to both our countries. When you and I grew up in our respective countries, the border region of Mexico and the United States was very poor. And today, when you go down there, there's prosperity on both sides of the border. A lot of that has to do with trade. Our trade has tripled, and our economies have grown. And this has been a very positive aspect for both our countries. And so we're going to talk about that, of course, with the Canadian Prime Minister in our dinner tonight.

But we also talked about the need to have a successful Doha round. We talked about climate change. We talked about a lot of issues and—but that's what you expect friends to do. So I welcome you.

[*At this point, President Calderon spoke in Spanish, and it was translated as follows below.*]

***Interpreter.*** [*Inaudible*]

***President Bush.*** I understood every word. [*Laughter*]

***Interpreter.*** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you so much for your hospitality and for very long and productive discussion we had today. As is fitting for the relationship that Mexico and the United States enjoy, we have been able to discuss a long list of issues today, because we have a very complex and rich relationship.

We talked first of all, as President Bush said, about security. We talked about security along our common border. We talked about the common strategies that we are implementing in order to fight the double scourge of organized crimes and drug trafficking.

***President Calderon.*** The common enemy.

***Interpreter.*** Common enemy—thank you, Mr. President.

[*The interpreter continued to translate President Calderon's remarks as follows.*]

***Interpreter.*** We discussed the Merida Initiative, a very important initiative that will allow a common strategy that will benefit families on both sides—on the side of Mexico and on the side of the United States.

I also want to express my appreciation for the work the U.S. Government has begun on the problem of arms trafficking. We know that this is a complex issue. We know there is much to be done, but a very important first step has already been made in that direction.

We also discussed the defense of the Mexican administration, of the rights of our Mexican citizens. And we have also discussed the issue of trade and how trade is benefiting both of our peoples. And we have discussed the issue of trade and its benefits. I think that I have made it very clear that as far as I'm concerned, trade is an issue that benefits both sides greatly. It is something that generates jobs both on the U.S. side and on the side of Mexico. We have seen an enormous increase in benefits for consumers as a result of trade as well. We see that the quality of products in general has gone up as a result of increased trade.

And I stress this issue because recently NAFTA has come under criticism, and I do not believe that people are realizing how many benefits NAFTA has brought both to the United States and to Mexico. I can say that hundreds of thousands of jobs have been created on both sides of the border. As far as Mexico is concerned, this increase in jobs has also led to a direct decrease in the amount of immigration from Mexico to the United States. It has generated growth; it has generated jobs; and it is decreasing the flow of immigration.

And we have discussed the defense of the rights of Mexican citizens and the need to increase the way we watch over those rights. This is a very important issue for my administration. We need to continue working on an agenda to find a comprehensive solution for that. I understand that the United States is going through an electoral process, and we respect that process, of course. But I do want to point out that it's very important for my administration—for us to find a solution to this issue, and a solution that will not just find a way to deal with the immigration problem but one that will do so with respect and responsibility.

We also discussed the concern that we have with regard to the increase of prices of foods around the world and the public policies that are involved in finding alternative fuels and how all of this goes into the mix. We need to face the problem of economies all around the world who have not been able to deal with this problem very well. In Mexico, we have been able to find solutions, but we are concerned about the situation of other countries in Latin America that are not faring quite as well.

And finally, I simply want to say how happy I am to be in the United States. And I don't want to get ahead of myself, but tonight I will be extending an invitation, hopefully, to the next President of the United States to visit us in Mexico next year for this event. And of course, President Bush will always be a welcome visitor in Mexico.

***President Calderon.*** Thank you.

***President Bush.*** Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. at the Windsor Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada in New Orleans

*April 21, 2008*

***President Bush.*** Mr. Prime Minister, thank you, sir, for your personal friendship. Thank you for your leadership. I don't know if the people of Canada understand the leadership role you took in Romania, but it was strong and effective. And I want to congratulate you in front of your media about the job you did. Not only did you represent your country well, you represented universal values, and you spoke clearly about them. And so I thank you for that.

We had a good visit. I'm always interested in making sure that if there's any bilateral tensions or bilateral issues, that I know of them so that we can work collaboratively to deal with them. And in the past, one such issue was whether or not our people could travel back and forth between our respective countries in a way that didn't inconvenience them, or if our borders were—being able to flow smoothly so it didn't inconvenience trade. And I think we've worked through those issues.

I can remember the last time we visited, there was great concern about whether or not the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative would be counterproductive to our friendship and relationship. And I thank your Government, thank your ministers, and the people in your staff for working hard to find a way that meets our laws and didn't inconvenience the people of Canada or the United States. So I'm pleased with that progress.

We also talked about the importance of trade between Canada and the United States, and Canada and Mexico, and the United States and Mexico. And I assured the Prime Minister that I'm a strong advocate for free trade. I believe it's in our nations' interests that we continue to have a free trade agenda. All of us want to make sure we're treated fairly, and we can do that. And this summit comes at an opportune time to reaffirm the benefits of the trading arrangements between our three nations.

Canada and the United States have got a very unique and important relationship, and I really appreciate the chance to spend time with you and visit about these—about the issues of concern.

Finally, the Prime Minister is very articulate on the subject of climate change. And I assured him that my speech in the Rose Garden was a sincere speech, a speech that laid out a strategy that I think will be effective. And I look forward to continuing to work with you on that issue.

But, thanks; good to see you.

***Prime Minister Harper.*** It's nice to see you again. Thank you for the warm welcome and hospitality.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.*]

***Prime Minister Harper.*** I'll just say once again, delighted to be here in New Orleans—originally a francophone city, in fact, founded by New France——

***President Bush.*** That's true.

***Prime Minister Harper.*** ——my dad's favorite American city, I was telling him. We discussed a lot of things to do with the border, to do with environment, energy, trade, and commercial relations. And as you've mentioned, we've made some considerable progress on some of these things.

That said, what I appreciate most—what I've appreciated in our relationship over the past couple years has been the fact that whether we agree or disagree, we're always able to talk very frankly, very upfront. The President has never promised me anything he couldn't deliver, and that's always appreciative—appreciated.

We have some important joint work going on, not just in this continent but around the world, including in Afghanistan. I appreciate your words about Bucharest, and I can tell you our armed forces look very much forward to working in partnership with your people in Kandahar.

So I'm sure we'll have a great summit. And see you again at the G–8. And I feel we've got a few more of these to go through before it's over. [*Laughter*]

***President Bush.*** Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. at the Windsor Court Hotel.