

**Remarks Following a Discussion  
With President Alvaro Colom  
Caballeros of Guatemala**

*April 28, 2008*

**President Bush.** It's been my honor to welcome to the Oval Office the President and First Lady of a close friend of the United States. Mr. President, thank you for coming.

We've had a good discussion about a variety of issues. We discussed bilateral relations between Guatemala and the United States, which are very strong. We are friends. We treat each other with respect. Our objective is—with U.S. foreign policy—is to have a neighborhood that is peaceful and prosperous, where social justice is important; want to achieve social justice through good health policy, good education policy, and good judicial policy. The United States is pleased to help this Government, as best as we possibly can, help the average citizen get a good education and have good health care.

We talked about how CAFTA is working. Exports to the United States have increased; exports from the United States have increased. And that's good.

We talked about security and the need for the region—Mexico, the United States, and the countries of Central America—to fight drug trafficking. I told the President that we are working hard to reduce demand for drugs here in America. And at the same time, we want to work in conjunction with strong leaders to make sure these drug traffickers don't get a stronghold. And that's why it's very important for Congress to fund the Merida project.

We talked about the reforms that the Government is instituting inside of Guatemala, including tax reform and reform to make sure that people who break the law are held to account.

I was particularly pleased to note that the Guatemalan Government and its leadership is promoting laws to make sure women are treated well and that violence against women is prosecuted.

And so—and we're going to talk a little later on about the Millennium Challenge Account. And by the way, we were talking about blueberries, and—so that blueberries are able to come off-season here to the United

States, which is a positive development for Guatemalan farmers.

And finally, of course, the President brought up the issue of immigration. And he wanted to urge me to think about TPS—TPS for citizens, as well as comprehensive immigration reform. I assured him that I will consider his request. And I assured him that I believe comprehensive immigration reform is in our Nation's best interests.

And so we've had a good discussion, and right after this press availability, I'll be taking he and the First Lady to lunch. And I'm looking forward to serving them lunch, and I bet you're looking forward to eating lunch. [Laughter] Thanks for coming.

**President Colom.** I want to thank President Bush for his hospitality. We've spent a couple of days working here, and we are very happy to hold this meeting in which we have discussed strengthening our relationship with an—already a strong relationship, in fact.

We discussed, as the President mentioned, the fight against drug trafficking. We are doing everything necessary to eliminate drug trafficking and drug traffickers from our territory.

We discussed the issue of social investment. We have received support from USAID. We—our two countries have common aims in this regard.

We also discussed the issue of our migrants. We brought up TPS with the President. We will be awaiting a response on that.

We described our recent tax reform to the President. That is something we're starting in Guatemala because we need to ensure that we have the public funds to be able to carry out the reforms in the areas of social justice and others that we have discussed.

We want to express our appreciation for the support that we have received from the United States to combat drug trafficking. Recently, we received four helicopters. This has been extremely helpful to us. We've also achieved good success on this front with the recent cocaine seizures. In fact, an operation was just carried out last night, a very large one, very successful. And on that, we are working not just with the United States but also with Mexico and the entire neighborhood in Central America, because all of us

must be involved, as President Bush said, in order to combat that scourge at all levels.

And so we are very happy to be here and very happy to be moving forward. Thank you.

**President Bush.** *Gracias, señor.*

**President Colom.** *Si. Gracias.*

**President Bush.** Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sandra Torres de Colom, wife of President Colom. President Colom 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 Prior to a Meeting With U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum Officials

April 28, 2008

It is my honor to welcome the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum here to Washington. First of all, I want to thank my friend President Lula for encouraging this forum to go forward. It's an indication of the importance that we both place on our bilateral relations. Brazil is a very powerful, very important country in our neighborhood. And it's really important for this administration and future administrations to work closely with the Brazilian Government, like it is important for our respective business communities to work closely together.

I do want to thank you all very much for putting forward a list of recommendations. I'm looking forward to our discussion. As I understand, the list of recommendations includes a successful Doha round as well as a bilateral tax treaty and a bilateral investment treaty. One of the things I will share with the Brazilian CEOs is that I strongly support a successful Doha round, and our Government will work closely with Brazil to get that done. And secondly, in terms of our bilateral policy, I also strongly, as does my administration, support a bilateral tax treaty and a bilateral investment treaty.

I'm—relations between our two countries are very positive, and they're very important. And so thank you all for coming. Please give my best regards to President Lula. Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil.

### The President's News Conference

April 29, 2008

**The President.** Thank you. Good morning. This is a tough time for our economy. Across our country, many Americans are understandably anxious about issues affecting their pocketbook, from gas and food prices to mortgage and tuition bills. They're looking to their elected leaders in Congress for action. Unfortunately, on many of these issues, all they're getting is delay.

Americans are concerned about energy prices, and I can understand why. I think the last time I visited with you it was like—I said it was like a tax increase on the working people. The past 18 months, gas prices have gone up by \$1.40 per gallon. Electricity prices for small business and families are rising as well.

I've repeatedly submitted proposals to help address these problems. Yet time after time, Congress chose to block them. One of the main reasons for high gas prices is that global oil production is not keeping up with growing demand. Members of Congress have been vocal about foreign governments increasing their oil production. Yet Congress has been just as vocal in opposition to efforts to expand our production here at home.

They've repeatedly blocked environmentally safe exploration in ANWR. The Department of Energy estimates that ANWR could allow America to produce about a million additional barrels of oil every day, which translates to about 27 millions of gallons of gasoline and diesel every day. That would be about a 20-percent increase of oil—crude oil production over U.S. levels, and it would likely mean lower gas prices. And yet such efforts to explore in ANWR have been consistently blocked.

Another reason for high gas prices is the lack of refining capacity. It's been more than 30 years since America built its last new refinery. Yet in this area too, Congress has repeatedly blocked efforts to expand capacity and build more refineries.