

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil

June 18, 1991

Q. Are you in a talking mood today?

The President. Out of respect for our guest, the only talking I want to do in here is not to respond to questions but just to repeat what I said out there: how much respect I have for President Collor, how much I value our personal relationship, but even more important, how determined we are to work with Brazil for the common aims that we, both countries, have. And I'm just delighted you're here, sir.

Barbara and I are looking forward to the social end of it, and much more important to us is working with you to achieve the goals that you've set in a very difficult situation. But you're doing great, and we want to help.

Q. How much of an issue will weapons proliferation in the Gulf be, sir?

The President. You misunderstood what I said. I said I wasn't going to take any questions; I just wanted to give a speech. It's two entirely different things. But all issues will be discussed.

Q. If you make your statement, we should be allowed to ask questions.

The President. No, no, wait a minute.

Q. Can we speak in English?

The President. Yes, but I don't take ques-

tions in here. But I think out of fairness, let me just simply say what I said to the second wave of press, and that is how delighted I am to have my friend President Collor here in the Oval Office. And so, we've been looking forward to this visit on two planes: one, pure friendship and social side, which pales in comparison to the importance of working with this President to further our common aims, to see how the United States can be helpful to the broad reform agenda that he has courageously set. The problems are big, but we salute him for his tackling of those problems, and it's those things that I think are the most important for this visit.

Q. A policy meeting next year, Mr. Bush, in Brazil?

The President. I'm not taking any questions. It wouldn't be fair to the others; I said I wouldn't take questions here. We normally don't in the Oval Office, so I just can't, but there will be a chance to ask them later on, I think.

Note: President Bush spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a White House Briefing for Law Enforcement Officials on Crime Legislation

June 18, 1991

I understand you've been here for a while, but I'm the last event, you'll be happy to know. [*Laughter*]

I first want to single out the two gentlemen, and I use the term advisedly, sitting behind me: our Attorney General, who has done such a superb job in standing up for the victims of crime and against the criminals, and then Governor Bob Martinez, who has just taken over as our czar. Why in America we call people czars, I don't know.

[*Laughter*] But nevertheless, if there is one that should be termed that, it is he, because he has a fantastically important portfolio. He has hit the ground running, not just domestically but in working with our foreign friends whose cooperation is absolutely essential if we are going to make your work and the work of those you support any easier. By that, I am talking about law enforcement.

So, I want to thank you all for coming. I promise to be brief. I want to single out not just the law enforcement people themselves, but those who represent in one way or another the victims of crime. We had a little ceremony a while back to salute them, to honor them, and all three of us here feel compassionately and strongly about that question. And we must never forget to honor them and to facilitate the caring that they deserve from the Government and from every other quarter.

I hoped that I might have had a chance to see all of you, knowing of your commitment, a little sooner than now. I had hoped that the Congress would have taken up our crime bill before now and that we could have gathered there for a signing ceremony. It may well happen; it must happen. It's right for this country that it happen. And at least the Senate has consented to begin work this week on this issue of vital importance to all Americans.

The people simply don't understand this. We sent a crime bill up 2 years ago, and the American people say: What in the world is going on? What is taking so long? And I know I run the risk of "bashing" the Congress. But that is not what this is about. It is trying to encourage this lethargic system to do that which the people want, do that what I was elected to try to do.

So, we'll keep on pushing, but your help in this is vitally important. Those of you here today represent a promising development in the past 2 years. More than ever, we've seen, I think, a new sense of cooperation among Federal, State and local law enforcement officials. And the victim groups—again, strong cooperation, the neighborhood organizations that are essential to this fight, strong cooperation—all are saying that the time for reform is now.

This coalition is the front line in our war on crime. Frankly, it is tired of felons going free on technicalities in sentences that seem tough but are not carried out because the defendant is clogging our court system with appeal after appeal after appeal.

As part of this unique coalition, you know the kinds of changes in the law you need from Congress to really make a difference in this fight. That's what this is all about—making a difference. You know that our

bill, with its habeas corpus reform, its exclusionary rule reform, revised death penalty procedures, will help you. And in a broader sense, it'll help the entire criminal justice system. With its provisions regarding racial bias, it will ensure fair jury deliberations and fair sentencing.

You know that the so-called racial justice act in the Biden bill will in effect invalidate, regardless of the cause of the sentence, virtually all State death penalty laws and those death penalty sentences that have not yet been implemented. You know that the exclusionary rule provisions in the Biden bill at best codify existing law, and that the assault weapon provisions in the bill, by identifying particular weapons, can certainly be easily circumvented.

What is clear is that the Biden bill will make our jobs harder. We can have real criminal law reform without hollow gestures. And I know you share my view that we need real change, substantive change, not some watered down bill that's passed just before we move into an election year—a watered down bill that really gives the appearance of doing something, that doesn't have the effect of getting the job done. The Congress needs to hear from you.

I used to wonder before I got into this job how much appeals to Congress really meant; whether individuals that are really concerned can effect progressive, constructive change. I'm absolutely convinced that you can. So, they need to hear from you. They need to learn the importance of increasing the accountability and the certainty of punishment in our criminal system.

That's why you're so important to this debate. You're out there, working for all of you—many on the streets and the highways, many working with officers that are. And you know how things really are, and I think you know what really needs to be done. So, I wanted to thank you for coming over. I wanted to thank you for your commitment. I expect there are times—because when you're working as hard as you do—that you wonder if anybody cares.

I know we do. I know we care a lot. But I think much more important than that is, I really believe the American people care.

It's areas, some that are hurt the most by poverty and despair, that will be helped the most by this kind of legislation. So, we care about you. We're grateful to you. And thank you all very, very much for what you're doing. And now, P.S., please work even harder if that's possible. Thank you all very much.

Thank you all very, very much for coming

and for the work you're doing.

Note: The President spoke at 4:04 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Dick Thornburgh; Bob Martinez, Director of National Drug Control Policy; and Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Toasts at the State Dinner for President Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil

June 18, 1991

President Bush. Mr. President and Mrs. Collor and distinguished guests, friends of Brazil, it's a distinct privilege for Barbara and me to salute this extraordinary President, Fernando Collor de Mello. I'm glad that Indiana Jones and his wife could join us tonight. *[Laughter]*

I hear that, yesterday, en route from Brasilia to Washington, the President himself piloted the plane and even helped land it. I'm glad he didn't pull a barrel roll over the South Lawn. *[Laughter]* But all our Brazilian guests are here tonight, so I guess the passengers weren't too much in danger. Captain Collor got them here a half-hour early, and nobody lost their luggage—*[laughter]*—so things are going very well to start off our visit.

Our two countries were built on the aspirations of pioneers, immigrants, merchants, and workers, hardy people, filled with the spirit of enterprise and independence, enthusiasm and ingenuity. And they came to the Americas determined to achieve lives of freedom and opportunity. And this is our heritage, and we will continue to fulfill it.

The legacy we leave to our future generations must be an alliance of democratic institutions, free markets, and environmental stewardship. President Collor, I salute you, sir, for your efforts to invigorate your political system, your firm commitment to free people and free markets, your determination to raise environmental awareness both at home and abroad.

Our guests deserve to know about your trek to Brazil's scientific outpost in Antarctica. You moved around at such a pace that you almost lost one of your cabinet officers in a snowbank—something like speed golf, only this was in Antarctica. *[Laughter]*

Your service to your nation expresses your faith that Brazil will move forward and that our nations will continue to be loyal friends and allies as we enter the 21st century.

In 1876, as the United States celebrated its Centennial, a certain foreign visitor was making his own headlines. Clad in a black suit and silk cap, your Emperor, Dom Pedro II, sailed into New York's East River as thousands of spectators thronged the docks, cheering and saluting. And then he did this: he traveled our country on our new railroad, over 9,000 miles from Maryland to Wyoming to California to Louisiana, causing one newspaper editor to remark that: "When he goes home, he will know more about the U.S. than two-thirds of the Congress." *[Laughter]* An exact quote.

Finally, on July 4th, in Philadelphia, Dom Pedro joined President Grant in opening our centennial exhibit. A hymn was written especially for our 100th birthday by the celebrated Brazilian composer Antonio Carlos Gomes. A tribute to your Emperor noted that, "no distinguished stranger ever came among us who, at the end of 3 months, seemed so little of a stranger and so much of a friend to the whole American people as Dom Pedro II of Brazil."

Today, Mr. President, you sir, carry on