

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration May 5, 1994

The President. Thank you very much. Ambassador and Mrs. Montano, thank you for welcoming me here at this magnificent building, and thank all of you for coming and giving me a chance to celebrate Cinco de Mayo with you. I want to recognize here the Secretary of Transportation, Federico Pena, and thank him for all of his work; three of my able White House aides, Joe Valasquez, Suzanna Valdez, and Grace Garcia. And I want to say a word about the Members of Congress who are not here, apparently. They're still voting—[laughter]—but that is, in some ways, our fault. We staged a great fight today in the House of Representatives to pass the assault weapons ban. So they are a couple of hours behind schedule, but it's because they did the work of America tonight, and I'm very grateful to them.

It's an honor for me to be here to celebrate on this holiday Mexico's unity and national sovereignty. The Hispanic community, Mexicans and 13 million Mexican-Americans who live here in our Nation have every reason to mark this day with great pride.

With the implementation of NAFTA, the friendship between our two nations has grown even closer. Our cooperation is also critical to strengthening democracy in this hemisphere. Sometimes in the pursuit of that great goal of democracy, we encounter tragedy. We have known it in our own country, and we here shared your profound sadness over the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio last March.

But Mexico's response to this loss, in my judgment, showed its resilience, its courage, its determination, its true patriotism. These are qualities which can inspire the world and can strengthen democracy even in adversity. The United States is committed to standing with you.

Immediately after hearing of the tragic assassination, the Secretary of the Treasury and I talked very late at night, and we committed to establishing a multibillion-dollar contingency fund to help to stabilize the financial markets until people were able to deal with the consequences of these tragedies.

I have profound confidence in the strength of Mexico's political institutions and its leadership, and in the bright prospects for the Mexican

economy. I think Mexico can overcome any setbacks and any tragedy. And on August the 21st, I believe that Mexico will hold full, free, and fair elections.

I also want to say that all of you know our cooperation is terribly important for what we can do together economically and for what that can mean for all of Latin America. The North American Free Trade Agreement is a fine example of how we must go forward together. In a time when nations face crucial choices all around the world, we can be proud that, together, we made the right choice in going forward with NAFTA. I want to say again tonight how much I appreciate President Salinas in his unswerving support of the agreement. The implementation, I can report to you, is proceeding smoothly. And we are committed to continuing that cooperation.

Next week, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, our HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, our EPA Administrator Carol Browner all will visit Mexico City to meet with their counterparts to discuss the issues that we can work together on. And in December, I will convene in Miami a Summit of the Americas where democratically elected leaders of 33 nations will come together to discuss our common goals. You think of it: Every nation in this hemisphere, save two, tonight is governed by a democratically elected leader, and one of those two had a democratic election in which the leader was ousted. That is an astonishing record. No hemisphere can claim to do so well in the pursuit of democracy.

Benito Juarez once said, "The respect for other's rights means peace." We in the United States believe if we can promote democracy around the world, there will be more peace. There will be more opportunity to make agreements. There will be more reliability. There will be less war, less turmoil, and less hatred. Not the end of problems, not the end of conflict, but the promise of working through them, that is the promise that we see fulfilled today in the wonderful relationships between the United States and Mexico, a genuine partnership among equals, striving for the future in the best way

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we know how. That is worth celebrating on this Cinco de Mayo.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at the Mexican Cultural Institute. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Jorge Montano of Mexico and his wife, Luz Maria Valdez de Montano.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Federal Advisory Committees

May 5, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

As provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (Public Law 92-463; 5 U.S.C., App. 2, 6(c)), I am submitting my first Annual Report on Federal Advisory Committees for fiscal year 1993 for your consideration and action.

Consistent with my efforts to create a Government that works better and costs less, I issued Executive Order No. 12838 on February 10, 1993, requiring the executive branch to conduct a comprehensive review of all advisory committees. Based upon this assessment, each department and agency was directed to reduce by at least one-third the number of committees not required by the Congress. I am pleased to advise that this initiative has resulted in a net reduction of 284 unproductive advisory committees, exceeding our elimination target of 267, by 6 percent, or 17 committees. In addition, we have identified approximately 30 unneeded statutory groups.

While progress has been achieved in assuring that the work of advisory committees remains focused on national, rather than special interests, I am asking for your support in effecting other needed improvements. The Administration will forward to the Congress a legislative proposal to terminate 30 advisory committees required by statute, but for which compelling needs no longer exist. I urge the Congress to act quickly

and favorably on this proposal, and I welcome any recommendations of the Congress regarding additional groups that may be eliminated through our joint efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Government. Toward this end, I hope the Congress will show increased restraint in the creation of new statutory committees.

I have directed the executive branch to exercise continued restraint in the creation and management of advisory committees. This will allow us to obtain further savings recommended by the Vice President and the National Performance Review. Consistent with Executive Order No. 12838, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget will continue to approve new agency-sponsored committees when necessary and appropriate. In addition the General Services Administration, as apart of its overall responsibilities under the Act, will periodically prepare legislation to propose the elimination of committees no longer required by the Government.

We stand ready to work with the Congress to assure the appropriate use of advisory committees and to achieve the purposes for which this law was enacted.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 5, 1994.