

Remarks on Arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica May 7, 1997

President Figueres, Mrs. Figueres, members of the Costa Rican delegation, and let me say a special word of thanks to the students and to the National Youth Symphony for giving us such a warm welcome. Thank you very much. I am pleased and honored to be in Costa Rica for the very first time and to experience firsthand your unique tradition of greeting foreign leaders not with a military salute but with the cheers of your wonderful young people.

Costa Rica's steadfast devotion to peace and democracy and your commitment to education and to the preservation of your marvelous environment have long been a model for the stable, democratic, and prosperous hemisphere we are working to build together.

This is a moment of great opportunity and hope for all the Americas, but especially here in Central America where decades of conflict and division have given way to peace and cooperation. That new reality helps to open a new era of partnership between the United States,

the nations of Central America, and the Dominican Republic. Over the next 2 days, I look forward to working with President Figueres and our fellow leaders to strengthen democracy, expand the reach of free and fair trade, and improve the life of all of our people.

Mr. President, I honestly believe the young people here and in my country and throughout our region will have more opportunities to live out their dreams than any generation of young people in history, if we do our jobs.

On behalf of Hillary and myself and our entire American delegation, let me thank you again for making us all feel so at home. *Muchas gracias. Nos vemos mañana.* [Thank you very much. We'll see you tomorrow.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:26 p.m. at Juan Santa Maria International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to President Jose Maria Figueres of Costa Rica and his wife, Josette Altmann de Figueres.

Remarks at the Central American Summit Welcoming Ceremony in San Jose May 8, 1997

Thank you very much. President Figueres, thank you for bringing us all together. And to my fellow leaders from Central America and the Dominican Republic, thank you for coming. To all of you, to our distinguished guests, to all Ticos and all the people of Central America, let me say, *Es realmente un nuevo día.*

Less than a decade ago, much of the Americas was still dominated by civil war, repression, and hopeless poverty. Today, we celebrate the advance of peace, growing prosperity, and freedom across our hemisphere. And we honor the remarkable men and women of Central America who helped to lead the way.

When the history of our region and our time is written, it will record your courage and your strength in ending four decades of conflict, braving the threat of bombs and bullets to cast ballots, embracing the challenge of economic re-

form, and opening the door to a new era of partnership among all our nations.

President Figueres, in that epic struggle, Costa Rica, this nation of brothers, has been a wise leader and set a powerful example. Waging peace as tenaciously as others have waged war, Costa Rica has shown that a country does not need an army to be strong. We thank Costa Rica and its leaders for building a vibrant democracy that takes care of its citizens and shoulders its responsibilities in the world.

Three years ago, our hemisphere's 34 democracies met in Miami at the historic Summit of the Americas to secure the hard-won gains our nations have made and to make them work for all our people. Today in San Jose, in the first summit between the leaders of the United States, Central America, and the Dominican Republic in almost three decades, we stand before