

Oct. 11 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:47 p.m. on October 10 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 11.

Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Community Reinvestment Act *October 12, 1997*

On the 20th anniversary of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), we should all be proud of what that law has meant for low- and moderate-income Americans of all races. Although we still have a long way to go in bringing all Americans into the economic mainstream, under CRA the private sector has pumped billions of dollars of credit to build housing, create

jobs, and restore hope in communities left behind.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 11 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on October 12.

Remarks on Arrival in Caracas, Venezuela *October 12, 1997*

President and Mrs. Caldera, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the entire American delegation and all the American people, let me first say, *Saludos, amigos*. It is good to be in Venezuela.

When the first explorers came to the Americas centuries ago, there was no distinction in their minds between North and South America; it was simply the New World. Now we have an opportunity to bring the Americas together again; a land united by shared values from Alaska to Patagonia; a place the rest of the world can look to and say, this is where the future lives.

Indeed, we are present at the future. Every country but one in our hemisphere is now a democracy. Command economies have given way to free markets and the more widespread prosperity they bring. We tear down trade barriers and create good jobs for all our people in the Americas, North and South.

Even as our governments are devoted to free markets and enterprise, we assume the necessary responsibility for meeting their challenges: to educate our children, to protect their health and the environment, to defend their liberty and human rights. If we stay this course, in the 21st century the Americas can be a stronghold

for security and prosperity; a model to the world that democracy, open markets, and cooperation can deliver blessings to all our people.

Venezuela has been a driving force in this quiet revolution. Your democracy is strong after weathering difficult challenges. Your economy is growing in the wake of real sacrifice. The strength you find in Venezuela's diversity is indeed an inspiration to every nation in our hemisphere.

The United States is proud of its partnership with Venezuela, proud that we share a fundamental optimism about the future and a common resolve to work toward securing the benefits of peace and prosperity. From an abiding faith in democracy to a willingness to fight crime and corruption, from energy development to environmental protection, from music to baseball, we are united by our concerns and by our passions.

Thirty-six years ago, John Kennedy became the first American President to visit Venezuela. In speaking to the people here, he cited his predecessor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and his earlier efforts to promote friendship between the nations of this hemisphere—and I quote—“united by nature and united in their common

aspirations.” Today, I proudly follow in the footsteps of both men, committed to sustain their impulse to reach across borders and learn from our friends and neighbors for our mutual benefit.

As we stand on the edge of a new century in a new millennium, we are very much like the first explorers who came here centuries ago; we can see a new world in the making. That

is our chance and our responsibility. Let us seize it together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. at La Carlotta Air Base. In his remarks, he referred to President Rafael Caldera of Venezuela and his wife, Alicia.

Remarks at the Venezuela-United States Agreements Signing Ceremony in Caracas

October 13, 1997

President Caldera, Foreign Minister Rivas, Energy Minister Arrieta, Dr. Tablante, Secretary Peña, Secretary Albright, Special Envoy McLarty, to all the Venezuelan and American officials here, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. President, our hemisphere is coming together in a spirit of mutual respect and equality rooted in democracy, which you have championed for so long. And now we can become a stronghold for security and prosperity, and an example to the world that market democracies can deliver for all our people. These agreements on energy and counternarcotics are practical results of the partnership between the United States and Venezuela, which is strong and growing stronger.

Last year Venezuela became the United States’ number one supplier of foreign oil. But for the last 80 years, Venezuela has been a rock of stability, staying out of the oil embargo, stepping in to boost production in moments of crisis from World War II to the Gulf war. The investments we have made in each other’s energy sectors have created good jobs and spurred innovation in both our countries. The people of the United States are grateful for the benefits of our modern partnership.

Today’s energy agreement will strengthen that partnership for tomorrow, helping us to provide cleaner energy from more sources to more people more efficiently. Let me thank Secretary Peña and Minister Arrieta for their hard work and their teamwork in getting this done, and for the example of leadership they set for our entire hemisphere.

The Alliance Against Drugs we embrace today also enhances our partnership and our future.

For throughout the Americas, drugs threaten the very fabric of civil society. They destroy lives. They spread violence to our streets and playgrounds. They corrupt and kill law enforcement officials. They create instability that can sweep across borders. Drugs are not simply a problem for the United States or for Venezuela; they are our common problem, and we must fight back together.

In the United States we are working hard to reduce demand, with the largest antidrug effort in our history. But we must also be relentless in attacking supply. The Alliance Against Drugs is an important step forward. New equipment and training for Venezuela’s drug fighters, including patrol boats and surveillance planes; deeper cooperation between our law enforcement communities to speed prosecutions and extraditions; a Joint Intelligence Coordination center to share information and coordinate anti-drug operations: each of these initiatives will make us stronger in the fight against drugs, and our children safer for the future.

Mr. President, Minister Rivas, Dr. Tablante, Secretary Albright, General McCaffrey, thank you for making the United States-Venezuela Alliance Against Drugs a reality. And let me thank all of you here for taking the partnership between our two countries into the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at Miraflores Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel