

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

Angel Burelli Rivas; Minister of Energy and Mines  
Erwin Jose Arrieta; and Minister of State and Na-

tional Commission Against Illicit Drug Use Presi-  
dent Dr. Carlos Tablante.

## Declaration of the Presidents of the United States of America and of the Republic of Venezuela

*October 13, 1997*

Meeting in the city of Caracas, we, William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States of America, and Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic of Venezuela, have had a fruitful dialogue about developments in our bilateral relations and the shared perspective and objectives of both countries in the hemisphere and in the world.

We reaffirm that our reciprocal relations are inspired by the highest ideals of liberty and democracy, and we express our satisfaction for the existence of that form of government in almost all the countries that make up our hemisphere.

This meeting has also permitted us to agree on the necessity of promoting at the international level respect for and guarantee of human rights, cooperation in the struggle against corruption and terrorism, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In short, we reaffirm the long history of shared friendship and cooperation between Venezuela and the United States of America and we express our willingness to expand and deepen the ties in all areas of common interest.

We reaffirm the commitment to continue working toward the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas by the year 2005, and in this sense give our support to the comprehensive negotiations which to this end will begin during the 1998 Summit of Santiago, Chile, on all the subjects related to this theme listed in the Miami Declaration. We reaffirm the commitment made in the Declaration of Miami that concrete progress toward the attainment of this objective will be made by the end of this century.

We recognize the importance of the expansion of commerce and bilateral investment to improve the standard of living of the people of our countries and for this reason reaffirm our political will to sign a high-standards Bilateral Investment Treaty which meets the interests of both parties and satisfactorily resolves those

issues over which agreement has not yet been reached. We recognize the progress reached in the negotiations which we have conducted, and have instructed our representatives to aim to conclude this treaty as quickly as possible. Furthermore, we express our willingness to reinstate talks on a basis that leads to the signing of a treaty to avoid double taxation.

As an expression of our close bilateral association in the field of energy, we note with great satisfaction the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Cooperation that extends ties in petroleum matters to new areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, development of natural gas, and integration of energy resources that will promote still more reciprocal investment in the energy sector.

In view of the importance of the strengthening of the process of hemispheric cooperation and integration in the area of energy, we support the initiative of the Government of Venezuela to convene a hemispheric meeting of ministers of energy in January 1998 as an important step prior to the Hemispheric Summit of Santiago de Chile.

Given the active cooperation of our two countries in the struggle against narcotics trafficking and related crimes, we welcome the signing of the "Strategic Alliance Against Drugs" as the expression that our governments continue to give the highest priority to combat this scourge together and without quarter. Thus we reaffirm the desire to initiate negotiations as soon as possible to sign a new comprehensive maritime cooperation agreement for the struggle against drugs. We note with approval that the United States of America continues to cooperate with Venezuela in counternarcotics activities through the provision of equipment, training teams and other useful measures.