

challenges and to restore confidence in open markets.

We are also particularly grateful for Argentina's leadership beyond the Americas. Day-in and day-out, your peacekeepers promote stability in Haiti, Cyprus, Bosnia, the Persian Gulf, and other trouble spots, often working side by side with our troops. President Menem has consistently worked to encourage constructive dialog between nations and to oppose those who would intimidate their neighbors through military aggression.

Finally, he has shown real vision and courage before one of the great challenges of the new century, securing his people's prosperity while protecting the environment for future generations.

In 1999 our two nations will continue to work together closely, building a vibrant, open international economy while preserving natural resources, forging international peace and stability, honoring individual rights along with the larger community to which we all belong.

Mr. President, our two nations have come far together over this past decade. But thanks in no small measure to your leadership, there is no limit to our progress in the century ahead.

*Bienvenidos.* Welcome to America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House, where President Menem was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Menem.

## Statement on the 90th Anniversary of the Canada-United States Boundary Waters Treaty

*January 11, 1999*

Today the United States and Canada mark the 90th anniversary of our Boundary Waters Treaty, signed on January 11, 1909. I salute the U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission (IJC), established to implement the treaty's terms, meeting today in Ottawa. For most of the 20th century, the IJC has served to prevent and resolve disputes over the use of shared waters and to provide independent advice on other transboundary environmental issues. The excellent relationships we have developed in dealing with the precious air and water resources we hold in trust together reflect the success of the Commission's efforts. From cleaning up the Great Lakes to managing water levels and flows

in transboundary lakes and rivers, the Commission has come to serve as a global model for international cooperation in the realm of shared resources. More importantly, the IJC has improved the quality of life for Americans and Canadians while preserving for future generations the beauty and vitality of our lakes and rivers.

Through its air quality monitoring and international watershed initiatives, the Commission is already confronting future environmental challenges along our border. I look forward to its continued success as the United States and Canada extend their partnership into the 21st century.

## Statement on the Nigerian Elections

*January 11, 1999*

I congratulate the people of Nigeria for the strong turnout and orderly conduct of the January 9th elections for State Governors and assemblies. Although results from these elections have not yet been released, Nigeria should be proud

of its achievements to date in conducting transparent and inclusive elections that are building the foundation for a successful return to democratic, civilian government. I am pleased that

the United States is providing \$5 million to support this effort.

These elections represent a critical step in Nigeria's transformation. Since June, General Abubakar, his government, and the people of Nigeria have engaged in a sustained and serious effort to rectify the abuses of the past: political prisoners have been freed; onerous restrictions on labor unions have been lifted; the empty

positions on Nigeria's Supreme Court have been filled; and a transparent "Budget of Realism" has been announced by the government. I and the people of the United States look forward to continuing to work with Nigeria to ensure that these political and economic reform efforts continue. And I hope that some day soon, Nigeria will be able to resume its place as a democratic leader in Africa.

## Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring President Carlos Menem of Argentina *January 11, 1999*

Good evening. Welcome to the White House and to this wonderful dinner. As you can see, we had so many people who wanted to be here, who love Argentina and respect you, Mr. President, that we're in more than one room tonight. But we're all happy to be here, and Hillary and I welcome you all.

Mr. President, we hope that we have, in some small way, repaid the hospitality you showed us during our unforgettable visit to Argentina in October of 1997. At our dinner in Buenos Aires, I cited the memory of Domingo Sarmiento, who loved the United States but who complained that we ate our meals far too fast, often in 5 minutes or less. *[Laughter]* Tonight I hope our guests from Argentina will see that we value constructive criticism. This will be a long, leisurely meal. *[Laughter]*

The friendship between our two peoples reaches back to our earliest days as sister republics. In fact, our first envoy to Buenos Aires was sent well before there was a nation called Argentina. In 1810, as Joel Poinsett was leaving to take up his post in Argentina, he was instructed by the State Department to "promote the most friendly relations" between us, and remember that all nations lie under—and I quote—"a common obligation to maintain that system of peace, justice, and good will which is the only source of happiness for nations."

Mr. President, those words are still a good description of our warm, rich, friendly relations. We share aspirations old and new, to deepen democracy, to strengthen justice, to educate our children, to preserve and enhance what we have inherited from our descendants, and to give

other peoples a chance to live as peacefully and as prosperously as possible at the dawn of this new century.

Now, there are certain disputes we will never resolve, like which country has the better beef or whose cooks have better mastered the ancient art of barbecue. *[Laughter]* But as we approach the 200th anniversary of our official relationships, our friendship has never been stronger. We have a common enthusiasm for the future and a common parallel in our history: two nations generously blessed, blessed by nature, blessed by hard-working immigrants eager to build a better life.

Mr. President, I know how much this legacy means to you personally. It says a great deal about Argentina that a child of Syrian immigrants would grow up to be its President. It is remarkable to consider how far you have come and how far the nation has come under your leadership in the last 9 years.

Over the last decade, the world has undergone a remarkable transformation. Nowhere has it been more dramatic or complete than in the Americas, where Argentina has led by its example at home and its commitment abroad to freedom and democracy, to peace and prosperity. A great deal of the credit for South America's achievements and for its promise belongs with the man we honor this evening.

Borges once wrote a poem about our great 18th century theologian Jonathan Edwards. It included this line: "Today is tomorrow and yesterday." Tonight let us remember the best days of our past and plan even better days yet to