

Apr. 20 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Leaders of Andean Nations in
Quebec City, Canada
April 20, 2001

I want to thank you all for coming. It is my honor to host what I think is a very important meeting between the members of the Andean coalition and my country. I wanted to visit with the leaders face to face. I met President Pastrana before; it's good see him again. I have talked on the phone to some of the leaders. I want to assure the leaders here that our Nation looks forward to working with you, particularly when it comes to trade and commerce.

I want to assure the leaders that Plan Colombia means more than just the country of Colombia—I know that's of concern to the President of Ecuador—that we've got plans for all the countries in the region. And it's not just on helping to fight drugs. It's on making sure that the economies remain strong, that the infrastructure for education is in place. It is in our nations' interests that we cooperate together.

And so I appreciate the leaders for being here. It is my honor to host this discussion. I look forward to a very frank and honest exchange of areas where we can cooperate and, if there are some problems, areas that we can work together to solve the problems.

So thank you all for coming. *El honor es mio.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:51 p.m. at the Loews le Concorde Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Andres Pastrana of Colombia and President Gustavo Noboa of Ecuador. Prime Minister Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru and Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, Mireya Moscoso of Panama, Hugo Banzer of Bolivia, and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela also participated in the discussions.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Central American Leaders and an
Exchange With Reporters in Quebec City
April 20, 2001

The President. I want to thank the Presidents from some of the Central American countries for coming here. It's my honor to say, once again, hello to the President of El Salvador, the President of Panama, and the President of Honduras. Thank you all very much. I look forward to wide-ranging discussions on the benefits of trade, the need for us to continue to think about how best to have in place measures that

will help in the case of future natural disasters, ways to continue to cooperate on issues of trafficking of people and arms and drugs.

So I look forward to a very fruitful discussion. I'm honored you all are here. *El placir es mio.*

I'll try to answer a few questions. Sandra [Sandra Sobieraj, Associated Press], have you got something?