

We have consulted frequently, as friends and neighbors, over the past six months as we have sought to advance a vision of growing partnership aimed at increasing prosperity, greater economic convergence between our two economies, raising living standards, and ensuring the security of both societies. Our commitment to this fundamental agenda, and to the importance of our partnership, is stronger than ever. We

will continue our close and productive dialogue in the months and years ahead as we take full advantage of the great opportunities before our two nations.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this joint statement.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by President Vicente Fox of Mexico in  
Monterrey  
March 22, 2002

*Senor Presidente*, Marta, *Gobernador*, distinguished guests, Laura and I thank you for this dinner. And thank you for inviting us to Monterrey, a city that is home to so much of Mexico's industry and enterprise and a city that embodies Mexico's prosperous future.

Monterrey has hosted a number of U.S. Presidents over the years, *mi papá*, President Clinton, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When Presidents Camacho *y* Roosevelt met here in April of 1943, they affirmed our two nations' World War II alliance and agreed to closer economic cooperation. Today we meet with a similar purpose. We affirm our shared struggle against terror, and we work to promote the great alternatives to terror: prosperity and freedom and hope.

President Fox, I deeply appreciate your friendship and counsel, especially since September the 11th. And the people of the United States are grateful for your visit to Ground Zero in New York to honor the victims. And the world appreciates Mexico's support for the international coalition against terrorism. The terrorists have declared war on civilization itself, and the civilized world will defeat them.

It wasn't all that long ago that Laura and I used to live right next door to Mexico. During that time, I saw the steady emergence of a more confident and more hopeful nation. I saw the strong and growing ties of culture and trade and kinship between our countries. Mr. President, your election symbolized these changes and has reinforced them. You're a true patriot with a compelling vision for a stronger and more prosperous Mexico.

I tell the people of my country that a strong and prosperous Mexico is good for the United States. We're working well together, and I am confident our important work is just the beginning. We will build on the success of the North American Free Trade Agreement, to expand the benefits of trade and markets to all of our people. We can build on our political cooperation to make real progress on drug trafficking, environmental protection. And we will build a border that is more open and more secure, and we will confront the issue of migration in a spirit of mutual respect.

The Mexican proverb tells us, *Tenemos mal los momentos, es cuando se conocen al los amigos*.

*Senor Presidente*, the United States knows who our friends are, and your enduring friendship allows me—causes me to say, *muchas gracias*. Today, we have a relationship of unprecedented closeness and cooperation. By continuing to work together, we can improve the lives of the people in our two nations, in our hemisphere, and in our world.

Mr. President, I offer a toast to you, your gracious wife, and the great friendship between our two countries.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey. In his remarks, he referred to President Fox's wife, Marta Sahagun de Fox; and Gov. Fernando Canales of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## The President's Radio Address *March 23, 2002*

Good morning. This week I'm traveling in Latin America, visiting three strong American allies—Mexico, Peru, and El Salvador—to reaffirm the central importance I place on American relations with the rest of our hemisphere.

Our country's future is closely tied to the success and security of our closest neighbors. Problems like drug trade and poverty produce terrible consequences for all our countries, and prosperity in our hemisphere will produce profound benefits for all our countries. The United States is strongly committed to helping build an entire hemisphere that lives in liberty and trades in freedom.

The NAFTA trade agreement is a model for the world. NAFTA has created jobs and lifted lives in Mexico and Canada and the United States. During NAFTA's first 7 years, 15 million jobs were created in the United States. Our trade with Mexico now averages more than \$650 million a day. And that's why our border is one of the busiest in the world, and keeping trade and traffic moving freely is essential to America and American jobs.

Yet, we must also prevent our terrorist enemies from using the openness of our society against us. Even our welcoming country must be able to shut its doors to

terrorists and drugs and weapons at our own borders. So America, working closely with Canada and Mexico, has set a goal: We are working for a common border that is open to commerce and legitimate travel and closed to drug trafficking and terror. We want to speed the movement of legal goods and people across the border and stop the illegal movement of goods and people. And we will use the most up-to-date technology to achieve this goal.

This week I saw some of that technology at work on a visit to a border near El Paso, Texas. X-ray machines are being used to thoroughly screen cargo more efficiently than ever before.

During my visit to Mexico, President Fox and I announced an agreement to move toward a smart border between our countries. Through close cooperation and advanced technology, we'll make our shared border more open and more secure. We'll work with the Mexican Government to identify individuals who pose threats to North America before they arrive here. We will share technology to inspect traffic on cross-border rail lines and at major ports of entry. We will make sure that people with legitimate business who travel regularly across the border can cross easily, so border authorities can focus on greater