

Statement on the Paris Club Agreement To Reduce Iraq's International Debt

November 21, 2004

I congratulate the Iraqi Interim Government and the Paris Club of creditor nations for today's agreement to reduce dramatically Iraq's international debt. The Iraqi people have an historic opportunity to build a free and democratic Iraq after more than two decades of political oppression and economic devastation under the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein. The Paris Club agreement represents a major international contribution to Iraq's continued political and

economic reconstruction. I encourage non-Paris Club creditor nations to agree to comparable debt reduction for Iraq.

The Paris Club leadership deserves particular thanks for its efforts in making this agreement possible. I also commend Secretaries Powell and Snow and Special Presidential Envoy James Baker for their tireless efforts in working with creditor nations to reach this agreement.

The President's News Conference With President Ricardo Lagos of Chile in Santiago

November 21, 2004

President Lagos. My good friend President Bush, Laura, members of the President's delegation, members of my administration, authorities, friends: We're very pleased, for the third time this year, to meet with President Bush and to be able to continue in this way with a modern, mature relationship which our two countries have been able to achieve historically.

As I was telling you, you're not the first George Bush to come to La Moneda. His father was here when we worked in order to consolidate our democracy. But you're the first President to come here at the dawn of the 21st century. And as a consequence, we must use all our energies towards a future agenda, an agenda in which most of the time we will be in agreement; sometimes we won't. But that's life, and that's what a more mature and a richer agenda can do for you.

Our area of cooperation is extremely broad. We share essential values which make our ties stronger. We want democratic societies that are pluralistic, in which

the capacity for enterprise will be an opportunity for many—open societies. As we've said over the past few days, economic growth and trade are incompatible with terrorism and incompatible with corruption. For that reason, the decisions we're making at this APEC meeting.

Today too we have reviewed the progress of the free trade agreement between Chile and the United States. After 9 months of enforcement, this agreement has led to major results. Our shipments to the United States have increased by 27 percent. The shipments from the United States to Chile have increased by 25 percent. And the free trade commissions of both countries continue working in order to be able to fulfill the obligations we still have outstanding and, at the same time, to accelerate the removal of tariffs.

Today, for us in Chile, 1,350 companies are sending to the United States over 1,350 products, which ties in directly with the

creation of jobs here in Chile. Trade, therefore, equals more and better jobs. More and better jobs consolidate a democracy.

And we have other fields of cooperation. And that's why we spoke about the English language and how important it is to be able to foster through our ministries the learning of English. As a country, we wish to be a bridge. We want to be a bridge and a platform in the flows of international trade and the flows in the Asia and Pacific region.

We also spoke about Latin America. We spoke about the importance that our commitment in Haiti has and the reasons why we are present in that country and why we need the cooperation of many to be able to move Haiti forward. We want there to be elections in Haiti, but this requires the conditions for elections, so that there is a possibility of good governance in the long term. We've also pointed out that the political reality shows itself in many areas where they feel that progress is not reaching them. In the Americas, we need to work within our governments so that progress reaches those who need it most. And we definitely believe that economic progress and social progress are basic.

And the President was kind enough to talk to us as well about issues of international peace. We have very closely followed the position of President Bush on the situation in the Palestine and the prospectives of consolidating a state there with a democratically elected government as a way for Palestinians and Israelis to be able to live together in peace.

And, why not say this as well: We've agreed in today's meeting on the need to push forward the negotiations for the Doha round in the WTO. There we need to lend all our efforts for that international forum to be able to reach rules for freer, fairer trade and thus be able to cement the futures of our countries.

And so we have agreement on bilateral issues, regional issues, and modestly speaking, multilateral issues. And that, therefore,

is the reason why we have so much ahead of us. And for all of that, your visit here today is a very welcome one, and we Chileans are happy to have you with us. You are welcome, sir.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much. Laura and I are pleased to be here in Chile, and we thank the President and Mrs. Duran and the people of this fantastic country for the wonderful hospitality.

I'm honored to stand with the President of this great nation. I congratulate President Lagos on hosting the APEC Leaders' Meeting and on helping to ensure its success. You did a really good job.

Chile is a remarkable country. Chileans are a good-hearted people who treasure their freedom. They're committed to democracy. The people of this country understand the importance of economic freedom. Modern Chile insists on the rule of law by ensuring the basic rights and freedoms of its people. The prosperity and progress that grow from this conviction is important. It's important for Latin America, and it's important for the rest of the world.

The United States and Chile are partners in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing our hemisphere. President Lagos and I agreed that the surest path to prosperity is through free and fair trade. Success of our free trade agreement is a model for other countries. Exports have risen dramatically in both our countries, and both the Chilean people and the people of the United States have benefited. And through the establishment of free trade in the Americas, we are committed to a future in which every free nation in the hemisphere can share in the benefits of open markets and in the creation of new jobs.

The friendship between our two peoples is deeper than the ties of commerce. The United States and Chile also share a strong commitment to human freedom. Today President Lagos and I discussed ways to strengthen democratic institutions throughout the Americas and around the world.

I appreciate his advice. I enjoy listening to his wisdom. Chile plays a leading role in the Community of Democracies, a caucus of democratic nations from every corner of the world whose representatives meet regularly to support the advance of freedom. Chile will host the next ministerial meeting of the Community, and we look forward to those discussions, which will examine ways to spread the benefits of liberty.

The President and I also reaffirmed our determination to fight terror, to bring drug trafficking to bear, to bring justice to those who pollute our youth, to bring greater security and stability to our hemisphere. Chile has been a leader in the efforts to strengthen security initiatives among the nations of the Americas, and I appreciate your leadership, Mr. President.

Your nation has expanded joint military exercises and security cooperation with key regional partners. Chile has sent 600 troops to support peacekeeping operations in Haiti, and we thank you for that strong contribution. Chilean soldiers have also made important contributions to peacekeeping efforts in Cyprus, in East Timor, and Bosnia. These are the actions of an ally of the United States, a good citizen of Latin America, and a friend of liberty.

Along with my fellow citizens, I look forward to a future of even stronger and closer relations between our two countries in the years ahead.

Thank you for your hospitality.

Trade Relations With China/U.S. Deficit

Q. President Bush, good afternoon. China has a very close rapprochement with Latin America, a lot of investment in this region. And in your second Presidency, are you going to do anything so you don't lose your influence in this region? And second, many business people are worried if you're going to be doing anything about the fiscal deficit in your country during your second term.

President Bush. First, China is a growing country. Today we heard from Hu Jintao about the phenomenal growth rates that he expects for his economy, and that's positive. I think it's helpful for there to be universal prosperity. China represents great opportunities for Chile and the United States. And we look forward to working with China. We've got a lot of trade with China, and we want to continue to have good trading relations with China.

We got a lot of trade in the hemisphere. We got a free trade agreement with Chile. NAFTA is a strong driver for prosperity in our own neighborhood, and we'll continue to advance free trade throughout this hemisphere. I, frankly, don't view trade—China's actions and the actions of the United States as zero sum. I view it as a positive development.

Secondly, at the meeting today people expressed concern about the value of the U.S. dollar, and I reiterated the fact that my Government has a strong dollar policy. And the best way to affect those who watch the dollar's value is to make a commitment to deal with our short-term and long-term deficits.

As far as our short-term deficit goes, I'll present a budget that continues us on the path to reducing our deficit in half over a 5-year period of time. We're in the fourth year of—first year of—we finished the first year of a 5-year period to reduce the deficit in half. Congress is working on the appropriations bill that meets those targets. I look forward to signing it when they come back and finally finish the package in early December.

A long-term deficit issue really relates to unfunded liabilities when it comes to Social Security and Medicare. In my recent campaign, I made it clear that I think it's very important for us to address those long-term unfunded liabilities. For example, in Social Security, I talked about the need for personal savings accounts for younger workers as a part of a solution. Frankly,

the Chilean model serves as a good example for those that are going to be writing the law in the United States.

And so my commitment to the international world is that we'll deal with the short-term deficit and the long-term unfunded liabilities, so that people can then take a look at our dollar in terms of fiscal austerity in Washington.

Press Secretary Scott McClellan. The first question from the American press will come from Finlay Lewis of Copley News Service.

Temporary-Worker Program

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Your administration recently received a letter from 21 or 22 Members of the House raising skeptical questions about your guest-worker program. Now, you met with President Fox earlier today, and I'm wondering how much—specifically how much political capital—that you're so proud of—you're going to spend on trying to overcome the built-in resistance to that plan. Specifically, what kind of steps are you proposing to take to sell it to the Congress?

President Bush. Finlay, I am proud of my political capital. That's what you get when you win an election, and in the course of that election, I talked about immigration reform. I think it's important for our country to recognize that people are coming to our country to do jobs that Americans won't do, and therefore, I think a program that recognizes the desire of some to come to America to work and the desire of some in America to employ them makes sense. It makes sense not only for our economy; it makes sense for border security. We'd much rather have security guards chasing down terrorists or drugrunners or drug smugglers than people coming to work. And so therefore, I think a guest-worker program is important, and I look forward to working with Congress on it.

I get letters all the time from people that are trying to steer me one way or

the other when it comes to legislation. But I'm going to move forward. In the letter, I noticed that they said, "Well, this is because"—they're objecting to the program because it's an amnesty program. It's not an amnesty program. It's a worker program. It's a program that recognizes, however, that if somebody wants to become a citizen in the United States, they can get a line—in line with the people who have done so legally. I think it's necessary. I think it's an important piece of legislation. I look forward to working it. You asked me what my tactics are. I'm going to find supporters on the Hill and move it.

Iraq

Q. President Bush, good evening. Conservative calculations say that the Iraqi war has left many dead. This action has led to enormous protests all over the world. This week we saw them in Chile. You stated that you like to hear the wisdom of President Lagos. At any point did Chile say no to this invasion—Chile did say no to this invasion. Who was right and who was wrong? And how can we change this negative image of the White House that exists in large parts of the world right now?

President Bush. President Lagos didn't agree with my decision, and I respect that. He's still my friend.

Secondly, whether people agree with my decision or not, there are two things that they've got to agree with: One, the world is better off with Saddam Hussein not in power; and secondly, it is important to succeed in Iraq. It's important to develop a democracy there. I fully recognize some do not believe that a democracy can take hold in Iraq. I strongly disagree. I believe not only democracy can take hold in Iraq; I believe a democracy will take hold in Iraq.

I noticed today that the elections are on schedule for January^{*} the 30th. Think how far that society has come from the days of mass grave and torture chambers to a

^{*} White House correction.

day in which they're going to be voting for a President. Prime Minister Allawi, the current leader of Iraq, is a strong, capable democrat. He believes in the possibilities of the people of Iraq, and he knows that a free society will unleash those possibilities.

And so the United States of America will stay the course, and we will complete the task. We will help Iraq develop a democracy, and the world will be better off for it. Free societies don't attack each other. Democracies listen to the aspirations of their people, not feed hatred and resentment and future terrorists. And what we're doing is the right thing in Iraq, and history will prove it right.

Press Secretary McClellan. Mark Silver from the Chicago Tribune.

Legislation To Restructure the Intelligence Community

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. With the intelligence reform bill apparently failing, how confident are you that Secretary Rumsfeld is not partly responsible for that? Is there something more you, personally, could have done? And what does this say about your ability to achieve your own legislative agenda in the next 2 years?

President Bush. I was disappointed that the bill didn't pass. I thought it was going

to pass up until the last minute. So I look forward to going back to Washington to work with the interested parties to get it passed. I understand they're back into session to see if they can't get the bill passed, and I look forward to working with Members of the Senate and the House to get it passed.

It's very clear I wanted the bill passed. I talked to key Members of the House, as did my Vice President. And we'll continue working with them, and hopefully, we can get a bill done. I saw the Speaker today said that the matter wasn't complete; it wasn't over; it wasn't final—that we have a chance to get a bill. And therefore, when I get home, I'm looking forward to working it.

Thank you, sir.

President Lagos. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 8:10 p.m. at La Moneda. In his remarks, he referred to Luisa Duran de Lagos, wife of President Lagos; President Hu Jintao of China; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. A reporter referred to President Vicente Fox of Mexico. President Lagos spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia in Cartagena, Colombia
November 22, 2004

President Uribe. Mr. President, Mrs. Laura Bush, Lina Maria, members of the delegations of the U.S. and Colombia, friends from the media, citizens of the United States, and my fellow citizens of Colombia: Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, welcome to the historic city of Cartagena de Indias, an expression of this Colombia: full of possibilities, with many problems to re-

solve, and with citizens who are happy, who are joyous, and who have not been made bitter by terrorism and the poverty that it has brought with it. Thank you, President Bush, and thank you, Mrs. Bush, for honoring us with your visit. We greatly appreciate the support of your Government and of the U.S. people.