

Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Peru *October 10, 2006*

Presidents George W. Bush and Alan Garcia underscored the strong relationship between the United States and Peru, and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening democracy and expanding free trade in the region as a means of improving the well-being of all citizens by securing freedom and delivering the greatest possible economic benefits to the largest number of people. They pledged to continue working together toward these and other shared objectives.

The two leaders agreed that democracies must strive to improve basic services for all citizens, and emphasized the importance of expanding health and education as a means of empowering citizens with the tools to fully participate in society, providing opportunities for economic growth and social development. They further concurred that democracy and democratic governance are the right and responsibility of all, and that an educated, engaged citizenry is the foundation for strong democratic institutions. They also agreed that all citizens should have the ability to participate fully and fairly in a modern economy, under the protection of the rule of law.

Both stressed the central role of initiatives such as the mutually beneficial U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (PTPA) in strengthening bilateral ties while leveling the trade playing field, spurring job creation, and reducing poverty and inequality. In this regard, President Bush reaffirmed his commitment to securing congressional approval of the PTPA as quickly as possible. Both Presidents noted that domestic

capacity-building programs, such as President Bush's Center for Education Excellence in Teacher Training and the Poverty Reduction and Alleviation Program initiatives, and President Garcia's Sierra Exportadora and "Internal FTA" programs, ensure that the opportunities derived from free and open markets accrue to the broadest number of Peruvians.

Presidents Bush and Garcia reaffirmed their strong commitment to protect their people and the hemisphere from the depredations of transnational terrorist and criminal organizations, pledging to promote speedy extradition of drug cartels' members. Among the many ways our countries work together to combat the scourge of narcotrafficking, based on the principle of shared responsibility, are Peru's comprehensive efforts against drug trafficking and illegal coca cultivation and U.S. programs that provide infrastructure and training to develop a police presence east of the Andes and alternative development to people in former coca growing areas, giving them hope for a sustainable, legal livelihood to provide for their families.

The Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to a strong bilateral relationship and to promoting prosperity and social justice for all people of the Americas.

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

Remarks in a Discussion on School Safety in Chevy Chase, Maryland
October 10, 2006

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you all for coming. In many ways, I'm sorry we're having this meeting. In other ways, I know how important it is that we're having this meeting. The violence that has been occurring in our schools is incredibly sad, and it troubles a lot of folks, and it troubled me and Laura. And so I asked Margaret and Al to host a gathering of concerned citizens, the purpose of which is to come up with best practices and just shared experiences so that others might know how to react—to prevent and react to inexplicable and—violence that is hard to imagine.

All of us in this country want our classrooms to be gentle places of learning, places where people not only learn the basics—basic skills necessary to become productive citizens but learn to relate to one another. And our parents, I know, want to be able to send their child or children to schools that are safe places. And the violence we've seen, this is upsetting to a lot of people, and I know it's upsetting to the professionals who are with us. But rather than be upset, it's best for all of us who are responsible for helping folks not only cope but to prevent action from taking place. It's best to be proactive. And that's what this meeting is. And so I want to thank you all for joining.

I got a firsthand report on one of the panels from Laura, who said that—I think if I could summarize your words, it was, like, really interesting and very important. And so I thought what I would do is ask Al and Margaret to begin this session and maybe hear from some of the folks here, and then, if time permitting, hear from you all out in the audience.

Again, I want to thank Margaret and Al for setting this up, and really thank you all for coming and taking an interest. I know we got people from all around the

country, and it's—this is a nationwide effort to help people who are responsible protect our children.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. Thank you. Mr. President, thank you for asking Margaret and I to host this important conference. We've had some good panel discussions, as you've already heard already. You've met some of the panelists that we've invited back. And just for our audience, again, we've asked Dr. Marleen Wong, Craig Scott, Fred Ellis, and Sheriff Jeff Dawsy to help us speak with the President about this important issue.

[*At this point, Attorney General Gonzales continued his remarks.*]

The President. I like the Secret Service too, Art. [*Laughter*]

[*Art Kelly, former police chief, New Bedford, MA, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me ask you a question, Al—not you, Chief, but—well, I can ask you too. I presume out of this there will be a series of best practices that you will share with principals and schools districts that explain, for example, what people could look for to determine whether or not there's an early warning sign, and then how to respond.

Attorney General Gonzales. Exactly.

The President. Okay, good. Thanks, Chief.

[*Attorney General Gonzales made further remarks, and Jeff Dawsy, sheriff, Citrus County, FL, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Is there an opportunity to share, between sheriffs around the country, how they're dealing with this issue? Does it make sense to have the National Sheriffs' Association contact members, ask for stories, practices, and then condense