

to Andres Mauricio Penate Giraldo, Director, Department of Security Administration, and Minister of National Defense Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia. President Uribe also referred to ELN, the National Liberation Army. A reporter referred

to President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela. President Uribe spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Discussion on the United States Afro-Colombian Outreach Program in Bogota

March 11, 2007

Well, Mr. President, thank you very much. Laura and I, as well as Secretary of State Rice and our Ambassador, are honored that citizens from your country have come to share with us stories and concerns that will better enable our Government to help. And the reason I say that is because the best foreign policy for the United States is to help people realize their full potential. That can be done through education, jobs.

The President and I had a long discussion this morning about issues that will help create jobs and facilitate the flow of trade, for example, all aiming at helping the people in our respective countries realize God-given potential. And so we come bringing the greetings of the people of the United States. Our Ambassador has briefed me on some of the programs that the taxpayers of my country have helped fund. But we're really interested in hearing your stories.

And Colombia is a fine democracy. And the true test of a democracy is for every citizen in that country to be able to feel the full promise of society.

And so we thank you for coming. And, Mr. President, why don't we—we can go around the table, and I'm interested in hearing the different stories about the lives of some of your citizens.

Shall we start? How about you, doctor? Do you want to start?

[At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; the discussion continued, however, and no transcript was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. at Casa de Narino. In his remarks, he referred to President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia and U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William B. Wood.

Remarks Following a Tour of Labradores Mayas in Iximche, Guatemala

March 12, 2007

The President. You know I—Mariano, when I gave a speech in the United States, I talked about you. And Mrs. Bush and I have been looking forward to meeting you because you—

Mariano Canu. So have I.

The President. —you represent people who dream, people who work hard, and people who make wonderful products.

And there's two things I want to share. One, that USAID, which is funded through the generosity of the American people, is helping people like you all throughout the

region to realize your dreams, because we believe that—we believe in the dignity of every person. And we want people to realize their God-given potential. You have proven that if just given a chance, you and hundreds of others can succeed, and that's what we want.

Secondly, free trade is important for a lot of people. It's important for our country.

Mariano Canu. It's a gateway for us.

The President. It's a gateway. It creates jobs in America just like it creates jobs here.

And so we thank you for your wonderful hospitality. We loved being with your families.

Mariano Canu. And we thank you, too, all so much for all the support you've given us, from USAID, from the Guatemalan Government, from the President. We're very, very grateful.

The President. Thank you, sir. *Gracias. Que Dios les bendiga.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. Participating in the tour was Mariano Canu, cofounder, Labradores Mayas, who spoke in Spanish and had his remarks translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Guatemala City, Guatemala March 12, 2007

President Oscar Berger Perdomo of Guatemala. Dear friends, welcome all. On behalf of my Government and on behalf of the people of Guatemala, I am pleased to welcome President George W. Bush, his wife, and his distinguished delegation in our country.

We celebrate that President Bush decided to include Guatemala in his tour throughout Latin America. We welcome you with affection in this multiethnic and plurilingual country, where—[inaudible]—cultures live together, with strong features of modernity, and where, after a lengthy and painful conflict that divided us during 40 years, we are, with determination, following the path of reconciliation, in search for building a plural, democratic, tolerant, and participatory society.

Our historic relationship with the United States of America, at times troubled, date far back. We are pleased to confirm that in recent decades this relationship matured and is today characterized by a further

interaction that are respectful and broad in scope.

We share values, including, of course, representative democracy and social justice. We also share interests that grew last year with the entry into force of the free trade agreement between the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic on the one hand, and the United States of America on the other hand.

And we would be remiss if we do not recall that at present it is estimated that approximately 10 percent of our population live in the United States of America, upon the integration of the labor markets of both nations.

As is the case in every mature relationship, once in a while differences of opinion arise, for example, with regard to the issue of migrants, in particularly those who have been deported without clear justification. But as is also the case in every mature relationship, what brings us together exceeds by far those differences. We value that relationship, and we shall make effort