

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:16 p.m. at Hacienda Xcanatun. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon; Governor Patricio Jose Patron Laviada of Yucatan, Mexico; and Mayor Manuel Jesus

Fuentes Alcocer of Merida, Mexico. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Calderon. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion With Training, Internship, Exchange, and Scholarship Program Recipients in Merida March 14, 2007

The President. Thank you all for joining us. One of the best things America can do is help people realize their dreams. The best way to realize dreams is through education.

I'm so happy that you all have joined me to share with me your experiences from one of our most effective programs, which is a program all aimed at improving the human condition. I'm proud of the citizens of the United States who show great concern for citizens in our neighborhood. And I thank you for coming to share your experiences.

Victor, would you like to start? I mentioned you in *un discurso en los Estados Unidos* about the benefits of this program. I understand you went to Bettendorf Community College—Scott Community College? Okay. Well, tell us, Victor, your story.

Victor Lopez Ruiz. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to express my deepest appreciation for this opportunity. Thank you, Mr. President, for sharing my story in your speech last week. Your words fill me so happy. And I have the encouragement to keep working in my community. I want to express my gratitude, as well, to Becas CASS and USAID for selecting me for this scholarship in 2004. I received an associate degree in international business and trade at Scott Community College, Bettendorf, Iowa.

And finally, I would like to thank everyone that supported me and helped me for

this opportunity, my dreams come true, especially my family. I had to face many challenges to get an education, but I learned that with right attitude and a lot of effort and commitment, everything is possible.

At the age of 12, I had to leave my community to be able to study high school. I faced several obstacles, including the fact that I did not speak Spanish, because my language is Tzotzil. Now I speak three languages. I had to work to support my education. This is how I was able to study. I still continue fighting for my dream today, which makes me value them even more.

I really enjoyed my time in the U.S.A. I lived with a nice family for the first year. We had a hard time trying to communicate to each other, but quickly I felt like one of their family. I still talk with them, and although I miss my Mexican food—[laughter]—I thought I would only be eating hamburger and pizza. [Laughter] My American family introduced me to delicious food, and I gained weight. From the U.S.A. culture, I learned to value organization, civic responsibility, and respect and tolerance, to be able to work with others.

I did an internship in a coffee production company in Bettendorf, to use the skills that I was learning in commerce and administration. These same skills have helped me to start a small, family-run Internet cafe and bakery in Comitán, Chiapas. I also volunteered with two associations; one is a

local coffee company made up of indigenous people—coffee growers. They assist with financial management and human resources, assist them in possessing the certificate, and serve as a translator. I am also continuing my education in bachelor degree in accounting at *Universidad Autonoma de Chiapas*.

I want to invite Mexican young people to come together and commit to their community and our country. Education is the only means to improve our quality of life and achieve peace, social peace in the entire world.

Once again, thank you for this scholarship program. I hope the U.S.A. Government continues to support this program so that other young people can have the same opportunity that I have had.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much, Victor. What was the name of the family in Bettendorf?

Mr. Lopez Ruiz. Peter and Mary Shaffer.

The President. Well, I thank them. I hope they feel good about the fact that they helped you. There's a lot of American families that have great compassion for people around the world. And thank you for sharing the story.

Marcela, you went to Texas?

Marcela Ruiz Esparaza. I went to Texas. Good morning, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. Being a small-business owner is more than just a job or as a way to take a living; it's a true calling in life—the power of having an idea, taking a risk, and starting a small business that fulfills a need in the marketplace, and that creating jobs is truly magical. In Mexico, there exists a very strong entrepreneurial spirit, just like in the United States, where men and women from all over the country are ready to engage their God-given abilities, work hard, and improve the life of their families.

I have dedicated my life to helping business men and women in the State of Aguascalientes live their dreams and start their own small businesses. My center, CE INNOVA, was started in 2001 and has since helped over 300 small businesses start and prosper, which has resulted in the creation of hundreds of jobs and improved the lives of countless families.

A key factor in the CE INNOVA SBDC success was having the opportunity to participate in a training program offered by the *Universidad Autonoma* of Guadalajara and the University of Texas at San Antonio, and supported by USAID. The diplomatic training program shared a small-business counseling and training best practices from the 1,100 centers from U.S. small-business development network. This training not only helped us for better assist the entrepreneurs of Aguascalientes, but it also linked us with counterparts in the U.S. and helped us support a growing Mexican association of SBDC, now led by the *Universidad de*—[inaudible].

On behalf of the many business men and women that we have helped, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the American people for supporting us. I am very proud of the work of CE INNOVA SBDC and the Mexican Small Business Development Center Network are doing here in Mexico to grow the small-business sector, create jobs, and improving the life of its community.

Thank you very much.

The President. Very good. Thank you all very much; thanks. We'll eat a little breakfast now, where we can continue our discussion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:43 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Merida. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa in Merida

March 14, 2007

President Calderon. Good morning, Mr. President, dear friends from the media. I thank you for being here in this press conference. I would like to thank very sincerely President George Bush for visiting our country and for dedicating almost 3 days to his visit in Mexico.

I am very pleased to inform you that President George Bush and myself, we're fully satisfied for how fruitful this meeting has been for both countries. As leaders of sovereign nations, we have talked in a respectful environment and a cordial environment about very diverse and complex issues of our bilateral agenda. We coincided in sharing our core responsibility, which now, more than ever, happened to be a shared responsibility. We reiterate our commitment with democracy, with the defense and respect of human rights, the promotion of free trade, with the rule of law, security, sustainable development and, in particular, our fight against poverty.

From this platform of understanding, we have covered in detail each of the issues of our bilateral agenda. I would like to express my gratitude to President Bush that we have talked so openly, with the sincerity and respect of both countries that are not only neighbors, but they are pursuing to do what true friends should do.

We have talked, for example, about the strengthening of a task force that will be directed to the transition of full trade of sensitive products such as corn and beans. We talked about the need to cover the phenomenon of migration as a factor of prosperity for both nations, orderly migration process. And we acknowledged the effort that President Bush and his administration is doing in order to promote within the Congress a comprehensive migratory reform that will acknowledge the rights of the migrants and workers, that would allow

orderly and legal programs for temporary jobs, and would allow the reunification of family ties.

We have expressed our concern for protecting and guaranteeing human rights of those who cross the border and, above all, about the enormous relevance of generating in Mexico opportunities that the citizens need for their development.

We shared the need of having a safe border that will close the gates to drugs, arms, and terrorism and that will open its doors to trade, prosperity and trade. Our border should be a tightening and closing point; the border should bring us together and not separate us. For this, we are considering the possibility of establishing new cross points and border bridges that will speed up the transit of goods and people. Both Presidents have agreed to coordinate in a better way our actions in order to confront organized crime in both sides of the border.

Mexico and the United States are nations that are joined together in the pursuit for better levels of well-being for its people. We do have the means, and, in this meeting, we have seen the political will in order to reach shared goals. I'm fully convinced, then, from this visit on, we will be able to start a new stage of the relationships that take place between Mexico and the United States.

President Bush. *Senor Presidente, gracias. Buenos dias.* Laura and I have had a fascinating trip, and our final stop was a really good one, Mr. President. Glad to be back in Mexico. This is an especially beautiful part of your wonderful country. The hospitality was very generous, and the meals were quite good. [Laughter] *Estoy lleno.* [Laughter]

Over the past 2 days, the President and I have had a very—a series of friendly and