

in Lima as it is in Los Angeles, in Bogota as it is in Boston; where the opportunity for people to realize dreams is just as real in Panama City, Panama, as it is in Panama City, Florida. [Laughter]

And the vision I have for our hemisphere includes a free and democratic Cuba. [Applause] Thank you. Sit down. Thank you.

Audience member. Viva Bush! [Laughter]

The President. I'm not through yet. [Laughter]

In Havana, the long rule of a cruel dictator is nearing an end. As Cuba enters a period of transition, nations throughout the hemisphere and the world must insist on free speech, free assembly; they must insist that the prisoners in Cuba be free, and ultimately, we must insist on free and competitive elections. [Applause] *Sientese.* [Laughter]

I appreciate all you're doing to help make the vision of a free and prosperous Americas possible. That's why I've come to thank you. As business leaders who invest in new products and trade with your neighbors, you add to the vitality and dynamism of this region, and that helps our

country. As scholars, people who study how to advance freedom and peace and prosperity, you've helped people understand the benefits of free trade, and I appreciate what you're doing.

I ask you to do one thing more, and that is to make sure your voices are heard to Members of the United States Congress. You don't need to worry about these three; don't waste your time. [Laughter] But there are people who need to hear from you. I would ask you to tell them that the free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, and Panama are essential to our economy. I would ask you to remind them they are essential to our security, and I'd ask you to tell them that they're important for our moral interests.

Thank you for giving me a chance to come by. I appreciate you. *Que Dios los bendiga.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at the Radisson Miami Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba.

Statement on Representative Ralph S. Regula's Decision Not To Seek Reelection October 12, 2007

Ralph Regula is a distinguished public servant who has dedicated his life to helping the citizens of Ohio's 16th Congressional District and our Nation. As a sailor, teacher, and legislator, he has worked tirelessly to make America stronger.

While serving for over three decades in Congress, Ralph has returned weekly to his family farm and never lost sight of the issues that matter most to the people of Ohio. He has long had a commitment to creating jobs, strengthening schools, sup-

porting small businesses, and protecting Ohio's natural treasures. As the longest continuously serving U.S. Representative in his State's history, Ralph will retire with the respect of his peers and the appreciation of his constituents.

Laura and I are grateful for his service and appreciate his friendship. We wish Ralph, Mary, and the entire Regula family all the best.

The President's Radio Address *October 13, 2007*

Good morning. This is an historic time for our Nation's economy. Last week, we learned that September was America's 49th consecutive month of job creation—the longest uninterrupted period of job growth on record. And on Thursday, we learned that the American economy set a new record for exports in a single month. Millions of American jobs depend on exports. More exports support better and higher paying jobs, and to keep our economy expanding, we need to keep expanding trade.

This week, I traveled to Miami to discuss the importance of trade and to call on Congress to pass new free trade agreements. In January of 2001, America had trade agreements in force with three countries. Now we have agreements in force with 14 countries, including 7 in Latin America. And Congress now has an opportunity to increase America's access to markets in our hemisphere by passing three more free trade agreements in Latin America with Peru, Colombia, and Panama.

These three agreements will expand America's access to 75 million customers. These 75 million customers are the equivalent of the populations of California, Colorado, Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, and Massachusetts combined.

The first of the new Latin American trade agreements that my administration negotiated is with Peru. This agreement would level the playing field for American businesses and workers and farmers. While almost all Peruvian exports to the United States now enter duty-free, most American exports to Peru face significant tariffs. The free trade agreement would immediately eliminate most of Peru's industrial tariffs, as well as many of its barriers to U.S. agriculture exports, and make American products more affordable and more competitive in that country.

The second of the new Latin American trade agreements that my administration negotiated is with Colombia. Colombia is now our fifth largest trading partner in Latin America and the largest market for U.S. agricultural exports in South America. The free trade agreement with Colombia would immediately eliminate tariffs on more than 80 percent of American industrial and consumer exports. It would provide significant new duty-free access for American crops, and for the first time in history, U.S. companies would be able to compete on a level playing field.

The third of the new Latin American trade agreements that my administration negotiated is with Panama. This agreement will immediately eliminate tariffs on 88 percent of our industrial and consumer goods exports to Panama. It will increase access for American farmers and ranchers, and it will open opportunities for American businesses to participate in the multibillion dollar project to expand the Panama Canal.

As we work to pass these trade agreements with nations in Latin America, we'll also work to pass a landmark free trade agreement with an ally in the Far East, South Korea. This agreement would open up one of the world's most powerful economies to more American goods and services exports. This agreement is projected to add more than \$10 billion to America's economy. And like our agreements in Latin America, this agreement would strengthen our relationship with a democratic partner in a critical part of the world.

I know many Americans feel uneasy about new competition and worry that trade will cost jobs. So the Federal Government is providing substantial funding for trade adjustment assistance that helps Americans make the transition from one job to the next. We are working to improve Federal job training programs, and we are