

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Leaders of the Union of South American Nations in Port of Spain

April 18, 2009

Good morning, everybody. I just want to say very quickly, I'm very grateful for the opportunity to meet with my colleagues from the south and participate in the meeting. UNASUR is doing some excellent work in their efforts in the region on things like energy and security. I have a lot to learn, and I very much look forward to listening and figuring out how we can work together more effectively. So

hopefully, the meeting itself will go more smoothly than getting you guys in to take pictures. *[Laughter]*

All right? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Leaders of the Central American Integration System in Port of Spain

April 19, 2009

Well, good morning, everybody. I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to meet with the leaders of Central America. Obviously, we have a long history of relations between the United States and Central America, that is a critical partner on a whole range of issues. We have the leadership here—democratically elected—and provided a lot of important information during the course of this summit.

But obviously, when you're in a group of 36, it's more difficult to focus just on the regional issues. So this gives me an opportunity to hear

more directly about both challenges and opportunities in the region. So I'm very grateful that they've taken the time to meet with me, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about how the United States can be an effective partner with all the countries represented.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:18 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference in Port of Spain

April 19, 2009

The President. Hey, guys. You guys have a seat. Thanks. This is nice. This is a nice view, huh? Oh, it's beautiful. Did you guys go out last night, by the way? *[Laughter]* Chuck Todd *[NBC News]*, did I see you on the cruise ship? *[Laughter]*

Q. That wasn't me.

The President. All right. Well, we just concluded a very productive summit. And I want to thank the people of Trinidad and Tobago for their wonderful hospitality and their gracious welcome. I want to thank Prime Minister Manning and First Lady Manning, his Gov-

ernment, for the hospitality they've shown me and our entire delegation.

This summit's been held at a time of great challenge and great opportunity for the United States and the Americas. The consequences of a historic economic crisis are being felt across the hemisphere, putting new pressure on peoples and governments that are already strained. Migration to and from each of our nations has serious implications for all nations. The safety and security of our citizens is endangered by drug trafficking, lawlessness, and a host of other threats. Our energy challenge offers us a chance to unleash our