We're also committed to deepening our cooperation throughout the hemisphere in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS, responding to natural disasters, and making sure the benefits of globalization are felt in even the smallest of economies. These goals are at the heart of the Third Border Initiative that we have launched with the countries of the Caribbean.

We're committed to protecting the hemisphere's natural resources. That's why I'm committed to using the Tropical Forest Conservation Act to help countries redirect debt repayments toward local projects that will protect biodiversity and tropical forests. As the program demonstrates success, I'm prepared to work with Congress to boost the funding.

We're committed to making education a center piece of our economic agenda because learning and literacy are the foundations for development and democracy. The United States will sponsor the creation of Hemispheric Centers for Teacher Excellence. These centers will provide teacher training for improving literacy and basic education, both in person and over the Internet.

And finally, we will sponsor the creation of the new Latin E-Business Fellowship Program. This will give young professionals from throughout the Americas the opportunity to learn about information technology by spending time with United States companies. It will empower them with the skills and background to bring the benefits of these technologies to their own societies.

On the day I became President I talked of liberty as a seed upon the wind taking root in many nations. For over two decades, our hemisphere has been fertile ground for freedom. So many men and women have left the shadow of oppression and fear. And for coming so far, this is not the time to grow timid or weary. Freedom is still our best weapon against tyranny and want. In so many places in this hemisphere liberty has been won. Now the blessings of liberty must be extended to every life.

When we reach this goal by our unified efforts, we will inspire the world by our example. Together, let us go forward to build an age of prosperity in a hemisphere of liberty. Together, let us use this Summit of the Americas to launch the century of the Americas.

Juntos podemos. Juntos lo haremos. God bless the Americas, and God bless her people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. in the ballroom at the Hilton Quebec. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada. The President also referred to the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998, Public Law No. 105–214.

The President's Radio Address

April 21, 2001

Good morning. As you hear this I am in Canada for the Summit of the Americas, joined by leaders of 33 other democratic nations. Only one country in the Western Hemisphere is not represented because that country, Cuba, is the only one that is not yet a democracy.

Democracy's progress in our part of the world is not total, but it is remarkable. We live in a hemisphere defined by the ideas and aspirations of freedom. Some 800 million people live in the Americas; 11 million of them live under dictatorship.

We are pleased that many countries in the Americas joined us in passing a resolution this week at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights; they have called upon Cuba to respect the rights of its citizens. We know that for the people of Cuba their day of freedom will come.

The future of our country is closely tied to the future of our hemisphere. Many Americans trace their roots to other parts of the Americas, ties that have enriched our culture. Many American businesses are finding new markets and opportunities in the Americas, which creates jobs at home and promotes economic growth abroad. And all Americans benefit when our closest neighbors are peaceful, stable, and enjoy stronger economies.

The forces of democracy in our hemisphere are strong, but they are threatened by poverty and illiteracy and the drug trade. So at this summit we are discussing a very practical agenda to strengthen democracy. We must tear down the barriers of ignorance

and illiteracy that limit the ambitions of so many children in our hemisphere and feed their frustrations.

We will work with our neighbors to find ways to give all our children quality schools, because learning and literacy are the foundations for development and democracy.

We must make new efforts to confront the problem of illegal drugs. Our country is committed to reducing the demand for drugs at home, and we must help other countries fight the supply of drugs at their source.

And we must renew our commitment to free trade. The people of Canada, Mexico, and the United States have benefited greatly from the North American Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA has created good jobs in all three nations. Now we must extend those opportunities to all with a free trade agreement for the entire Western Hemisphere. This will be good for American workers from farmers and ranchers to high-tech entrepreneurs. It will also be good for the poor in other countries, increasing their wages and opportunities. This is an agenda that stretches far beyond our borders.

But when I return to Washington tomorrow the most pressing business concern, some long overdue reforms here in our own country. Early next week my plan to reform our public schools is expected to come up for debate in the Senate. It is the best chance we have had for meaningful education reform in a generation, and we must not waste it.

Education reform must be a bipartisan effort. I have reached out to Members of Congress in both parties and we have achieved a broad consensus on major reforms. Yet the goal here is not just to pass legislation; it is to pass meaningful legislation. And some principles cannot be compromised. The final bill must have strong accountability for our schools, accountability developed by States and local jurisdictions. And for parents with children in failing schools, we must offer options. No parent should be left powerless and no child left helpless in a system that is not doing the job it is supposed to do.

There is a lot going on in Washington and the world—a summit, a tax relief debate, major education reform. But few things are as important as giving all our children the tools of learning. I hope you will support my education reform plan. And I hope you encourage your Senators to do the same.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:15 a.m. on April 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Vicente Fox of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters in Quebec

April 21, 2001

President Bush. It's an honor for me to be with my friend, a friend of the United States, President Fox. He's a strong advocate of trade, and he's a strong advocate of good relations. Today I've decided that the first state dinner I will have as President of the United States will be with my friend Vicente Fox. We will have the state dinner in early fall, hopefully the month of September, depending upon our schedules. I look forward to a continued dialog on a lot of issues that concern our countries, a lot of issues that concern our hemisphere, prior to the dinner. And of course, we look forward to welcoming you, sir, to Washington on that day.

President Fox. Yes, sir. Well, on my side, just to say that, again, we meet, and we meet always to keep the programs going, to keep the followup on the issues that we have been discussing, and I can say that we're working with speed, that we're moving ahead, and that issues like water that we——

President Bush. Yes.

President Fox. ——have created back in San Cristobal, Mexico, is running along and the same—other issues, like migration, like the rest—excellent. And right now, here in this meeting in Quebec, the main concern, I think, is, to all of us is, how do we move with sufficient speed ahead on the trade agreement of the Americas which, as we had the opportunity to see today, everybody is in favor of it, and now our common responsibility, joint responsibility, is to structure a solid, solid project so that it's going to be