

internally and that will benefit our entire population, all our productive sectors, including the less advantaged sectors, so that they may export to the world and to the United States in particular.

We see the free trade agreement as one of our tools in our fight against poverty and also a tool for us to strengthen equality. Also, however, it is a tool that will help us achieve security through democracy and to give our population a road, a goal, and an aspiration in terms of economic development in the country.

We see our role as a country in terms of helping strengthen democracy and achieving friendship without threat in our region. And in this regard, Peru will continue to work towards the democratization of Latin America. As I said, it's a comprehensive democratization that we are looking for. We are looking to strengthen the options that our populations have in participating in the benefits of modernization and democratic civilization everywhere in the continent.

And one issue that we need to work on is a full eradication of the threat of drugs. And this is a commitment that we share with the United States. It's a commitment that will be strengthened and revised. And at some point, we will propose a high-level meeting on this topic in order to relaunch the fight against drugs in terms of offering other alternatives, such as alternative development, and the free trade agreement is one of these tools. And the goal is to allow the poorest sectors, the farmers in the Andes, to have access to the buying power of the U.S. market and other markets in the world.

In the relationship between the United States and Latin America, there have been several missed opportunities in the 20th century. There was an opportunity that was put forward by President Roosevelt in the '40s, with his proposal. There was also the Alliance for Progress, proposed here by the United States, by President Kennedy. And now we have a third possibility involving—or increasing world trade and the use of free trade as a tool to fight poverty. And it is an opportunity that Latin American countries must take advantage of this time. What could have been done almost 50 years ago with the Alliance for Progress is something that we can

do now, thanks to the technological and computer revolution that we are experiencing. And this is a way also to reach the poor in our countries and give them access to the world market.

And finally, I want to say that I'm a leader who belongs to a party that is a popular party, that believes in social justice and fights for sovereignty in our country. However, I recognize the opportunities that this time offers us in terms of our economies, and I believe it is important for our peoples to have specific and concrete gains in terms of the economy, education, and health. And I believe that this free trade agreement that we have been referring to is a very important tool in its regard.

And we have told the President that even though we are coming from a more modest position, we believe that with our leadership, we can stand side by side with the U.S. and make contributions in order to strengthen democracy and peace in the world and social justice among nations and also within our societies.

And I want to thank the President for his hospitality. I look forward to continuing to work together, and I hope that we will see the President soon in Peru. And thanks again for your invitation. Thank you a lot, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

President Bush. *Muchas gracias, señor.* Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Garcia Perez 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.

Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Peru *October 10, 2006*

Presidents George W. Bush and Alan Garcia underscored the strong relationship between the United States and Peru, and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening democracy and expanding free trade in the region as a means of improving the well-being of all citizens by securing freedom and delivering the greatest possible economic

benefits to the largest number of people. They pledged to continue working together toward these and other shared objectives.

The two leaders agreed that democracies must strive to improve basic services for all citizens, and emphasized the importance of expanding health and education as a means of empowering citizens with the tools to fully participate in society, providing opportunities for economic growth and social development. They further concurred that democracy and democratic governance are the right and responsibility of all, and that an educated, engaged citizenry is the foundation for strong democratic institutions. They also agreed that all citizens should have the ability to participate fully and fairly in a modern economy, under the protection of the rule of law.

Both stressed the central role of initiatives such as the mutually beneficial U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (PTPA) in strengthening bilateral ties while leveling the trade playing field, spurring job creation, and reducing poverty and inequality. In this regard, President Bush reaffirmed his commitment to securing congressional approval of the PTPA as quickly as possible. Both Presidents noted that domestic capacity-building programs, such as President Bush's Center for Education Excellence in Teacher Training and the Poverty Reduction and Alleviation Program initiatives, and President Garcia's Sierra Exportadora and "Internal FTA" programs, ensure that the opportunities derived from free and open markets accrue to the broadest number of Peruvians.

Presidents Bush and Garcia reaffirmed their strong commitment to protect their people and the hemisphere from the depredations of transnational terrorist and criminal organizations, pledging to promote speedy extradition of drug cartels' members. Among the many ways our countries work together to combat the scourge of narcotrafficking, based on the principle of shared responsibility, are Peru's comprehensive efforts against drug trafficking and illegal coca cultivation and U.S. programs that provide infrastructure and training to develop a police presence east of the Andes and alternative development to people in former coca growing areas, giving them hope for a sustainable, legal livelihood to provide for their families.

The Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to a strong bilateral relationship and to promoting prosperity and social justice for all people of the Americas.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this joint statement. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks in a Discussion on School Safety in Chevy Chase, Maryland

October 10, 2006

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you all for coming. In many ways, I'm sorry we're having this meeting. In other ways, I know how important it is that we're having this meeting. The violence that has been occurring in our schools is incredibly sad, and it troubles a lot of folks, and it troubled me and Laura. And so I asked Margaret and Al to host a gathering of concerned citizens, the purpose of which is to come up with best practices and just shared experiences so that others might know how to react—to prevent and react to inexplicable and—violence that is hard to imagine.

All of us in this country want our classrooms to be gentle places of learning, places where people not only learn the basics—basic skills necessary to become productive citizens but learn to relate to one another. And our parents, I know, want to be able to send their child or children to schools that are safe places. And the violence we've seen—this is upsetting to a lot of people, and I know it's upsetting to the professionals who are with us. But rather than be upset, it's best for all of us who are responsible for helping folks not only cope but to prevent action from taking place. It's best to be proactive. And that's what this meeting is. And so I want to thank you all for joining.

I got a firsthand report on one of the panels from Laura, who said that—I think if I could summarize your words, it was, like, really interesting and very important. And so I thought what I would do is ask Al and Margaret to begin this session and maybe hear from some of the folks here—and then, if time permitting, hear from you all out in the audience.