
U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere

By

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I thank the subcommittee for providing me the opportunity to discuss our policy in the Western Hemisphere. As you know, we have just completed a very successful second Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile [15-19 April 1998], building on the agreements reached at the first Miami Summit held in December 1994. These summits, and the many intervening meetings that took place that set the stage for Santiago, addressed a wider range of issues, in greater detail, than any regional group has ever attempted.

The substance of the Santiago Summit reflects the fundamental principles on which this Administration's policy toward Latin America is based: the promotion of democracy, justice, and human rights; free trade and economic integration; the eradication of poverty and discrimination; a greater commitment to and investment in education and lifelong learning; a concerted multilateral fight against drugs; and the improvement of law enforcement and judicial reform.

In Santiago, President Clinton articulated the new reality in the Americas—the march of freedom, prosperity, peace, and partnership among our nations. He also warned that these precious benefits must be extended to all if this new reality is to permanently take root.

At the Miami Summit in 1994, the heads of government of the democracies of the Western Hemisphere—which is to say all of the countries of the Western Hemisphere except one—committed themselves to the strengthening of democratic institutions and the protection of human rights throughout the hemisphere.

There is no question that these efforts have borne fruit. Recent elections in the hemisphere have been among the most fair in history, and voter participation has reached unprecedented levels in some countries. Democratic elections and peaceful transfers of power have become the norm; and the replacement of one constitutionally elected leader by another is now commonplace in countries where it was once an unrealized ideal. There will be a number of important and closely contested elections in the next few months in Paraguay, Colombia, and Venezuela. We intend to monitor them very closely, along with other members of the international community.

Democracy, however, is not only about elections. Many nations have taken steps to reform their judicial systems, and many have passed laws strengthening human rights. There is a growing trend away from outdated accusatorial, written legal traditions to more modern, oral proceedings which serve citizens far better and more expeditiously. Numerous programs are underway to improve the administration of justice, the training of police, and the effectiveness of criminal investigations. And progress has been impressive, if uneven, in the field of human rights.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR) has marked a number of achievements in the last few years, establishing close links with national Human Rights Commissions in member countries; creating working groups on the rights of migrant workers and on prison conditions; conducting seminars on jurisprudence; and providing support for the National Committee for Truth and Justice in Haiti in its investigations of human rights abuses.

Another achievement of the summit is the establishment of a Special Rapporteur at the OAS to protect and defend the freedom of the press. This Rapporteur will draft an annual report on the status of freedom of expression in the Americas. This report will be reviewed by the Commission in its plenary session, for approval and inclusion in its Annual Report to the OAS General Assembly.

In terms of hemispheric instruments, the "Washington Protocol" of the OAS, providing for the suspension of any member-state whose government is ousted by extra-constitutional means, came into force in September 1997. The OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) has been extremely active, providing support to electoral agencies and deploying election observer missions to numerous countries. It has also worked with a number of countries on programs to modernize and improve legislative institutions and processes.

The fight against corruption has been similarly impressive. The Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, a direct result of the Miami Summit and the first of its kind in the world, has been signed by 23 OAS member states. In another hemispheric effort, governments have approved the Inter-American Program for Cooperation in the Fight Against Corruption. At the national level, many governments have passed or strengthened legislation against corruption and many have approved codes of ethics for public officials. Further efforts are planned. The summit governments have committed themselves to greater transparency by requiring asset disclosure statements from senior public officials.

A Common Challenge: The Threat of Narco-trafficking

Possibly the greatest threat to stability and durability of democracy in the region, however, is that of illegal narcotics. President Clinton observed in Santiago that "drugs are a problem for all of us and all of us must work together to attack both demand and supply." The nations of the hemisphere have begun to come together to confront this danger with a comprehensive strategy against drugs.

The scourge of the illegal narcotics trade is a problem that respects no national borders; it therefore requires a comprehensive international counter-drug strategy. In Santiago, the summit partners launched a counter-drug alliance for the hemisphere, with agreement on a common anti-drug strategy to guide our counter-drug efforts; a coordinated action plan to combat money laundering; and a convention against illicit firearms.

All 34 countries of the hemisphere have now ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. All 34 have also agreed to a common counter-drug alliance, negotiated within the OAS Inter-American Commission on Drug Abuse Control (CICAD). This is a detailed 42-point statement of common policies and commitments, accompanied by a comprehensive implementation plan. What we have learned conclusively since Miami is that although domestic and bilateral efforts are critical in the fight against drugs, a multilateral approach is the logical next step. The aim is to have in place a genuinely multilateral approach to drugs, with a set of quantifiable goals by which we can accurately measure our progress.

This approach is intended to cover all facets of the drug trade: reduction of cultivation, interdiction of drug traffic, demand reduction, and money laundering.

Reduction of cultivation relies on a combination of law enforcement and alternative development. The greatest success has been in Peru, where drug eradication efforts have disrupted the coca market and alternative crop development has helped to create replacement incomes. Estimates are that Peruvian coca production has dropped by almost 40%. Bolivia and Colombia are working on similar programs. Despite a great increase in cultivation in Colombia, there has been a net reduction of at least 10% in coca cultivation in the Andes as a whole.

Interdiction of traffic has been an area of strong multilateral cooperation, based on the sharing of information on detection, monitoring, and other matters.

Money laundering. The Miami Plan of Action called on all states to agree on a coordinated response to combat money laundering. This led to the Buenos Aires communiqué, which outlined a plan of action concerning legal, regulatory, and enforcement matters. In addition, CICAD and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) have been active in developing anti-money laundering initiatives involving training, technical assistance, and mutual evaluation.

Demand reduction. Many summit countries are taking steps to confront the problem of drug abuse, emphasizing education, treatment, and rehabilitation, and strengthening laws against illegal drug use. In particular, the U.S. has expanded demand reduction cooperation with Mexico. In the United States, the problem of consumption is paramount, and the proposed U.S. counter-drug budget for 1999 is the largest in history.

The Promise of Economic Integration

Latin America's commitment to economic integration, no less than its commitment to the strengthening of democracy, provides unprecedented opportunities to advance the welfare of our own nation. Latin America and the Caribbean has been the fastest-growing market for U.S. exports, reaching \$134 billion in 1997. During the last half of 1997, our exports to that region surpassed our total exports to the European Union. In the second half of 1997, Mexico overtook Japan as our second-largest market—only Canada exceeds it in total volume of trade.

Latin America and the Caribbean have a combined GDP of \$1.5 trillion, nearly 500 million consumers, with a demonstrated commitment to growth, trade, and economic integration. There have never been more favorable conditions for the achievement of our goals in the hemisphere: the growth in U.S. trade has been the engine driving our growing prosperity and full employment, and the markets of the Western Hemisphere will be vital to the continuation of that trend.

FTAA by the Year 2005

In Santiago, we formally launched negotiations for the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), as recommended by the hemisphere's trade ministers in San Jose, Costa Rica, on March 19. We believe that the U.S. achieved all our major objectives for comprehensive negotiations that will lead to an integrated market of nearly 500 million consumers. Those objectives include:

- Establishing Miami as the center for negotiations for the first three years of the negotiating process. This is logical; Miami is the hub for U.S. trade with the region. Panama and Mexico City will be the future venues.

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- Ensuring U.S. leadership in the negotiations, with the U.S. Government co-chairing the process with Brazil during the crucial closing period of the negotiations.
 - Establishing a first: a committee to address the concerns of civil society groups, such as labor, environmentalists, and academics, in the FTAA process.
 - Creating nine negotiating groups that play to the strengths of the U.S. economy, including agriculture, market access, services, and intellectual property rights.
 - Recommitting all FTAA countries to make concrete progress by the year 2000.
 - Setting June as the month for Vice Ministers of Trade to commence work in the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC), with each of the negotiating groups to meet before the end of September.

Preparing for the 21st Century: New Emphasis on Education

A major theme of the Santiago Summit was education. In today's interconnected global economy, education is the only route to lasting, inclusive growth. There is no more fundamental step we can take toward the eradication of poverty than to provide our children with the educational background they need for the new millennium. Regrettably, our hemisphere has not always received a passing grade. On average, children in Latin America receive only seven years of schooling. Primary schools are woefully underfunded; some teachers supervise up to 150 students. This contributes to extreme disparities of income and thus to widespread poverty. As the President said at the opening of the summit, "Poverty throughout the hemisphere is still too high, income disparity is too great, civil society too fragile, justice systems too weak, too many people still lack the education and skills necessary to succeed in the new economy."

In Miami, we made the commitment to provide every child at least a primary education by the year 2010. We have now further committed ourselves as a hemisphere to attaining 75% attendance at the secondary level. Summit governments intend to honor these goals. With funding from state and federal governments for U.S. schools, and from USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank for schools throughout our hemisphere, we intend to put more teachers in the classroom, improve curricula, link students to the Internet, and expand vocational training. Education is the linchpin upon which all other advances depend.

The Road from Santiago

Follow-up to the agreements reached at the Summit of the Americas will be rigorous. Chile, along with the U.S. and Canada as the hosts of the past and future summits, will form a troika to lead the implementation process. Governments will bear primary responsibility for implementation, meeting through the mechanism of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG). The SIRG will meet two to three times a year to evaluate progress, complemented by the expertise and resources of organizations of the inter-American system—the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan American Health Organization, and the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Rule of Law

A vital area in which much work remains to be done is that of law enforcement and judicial reform. Despite some recent improvements, and the best intentions of the hemisphere's leaders, this facet is still a weak link. Where police are honest, hard working, and courageous, their work can be undone by overworked, underfunded, understaffed, or corrupt prosecutors and judges. Enforcing the law is undermined if conviction and imprisonment cannot be achieved and upheld. The United

I wish to make two points regarding the Administration's proposed increase in Haiti ESF from \$70 million to \$140 million for FY 1999. First, the increase is not a reflection of our satisfaction with the Haitian Government. Rather, the increased assistance will flow through grass-roots non-governmental organizations in the poorest, most vulnerable sectors of Haitian society. Second, the increase advances U.S. interests in a stable, democratic, and prospering Haiti. Our proposed funding will enhance stability through training programs for the Haitian National Police, the long-term guarantor of stability. Such training includes the ICTAP [Inter-national Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program], counter-narcotics training, and the participation of Haitian-American Creole-speaking police officers in the UN civilian police mission who have impressed Congressional visitors to Haiti with their savvy effectiveness.

However, Haiti's forward momentum has recently been slowed by interlinked disputes involving separation of powers and electoral issues, the first critical test in the development of Haiti's young democracy. While we and Haiti's many international friends are frustrated by the duration of this dispute, we are encouraged to see Haitian leaders debating and negotiating in a democratic, peaceful manner. Secretary Albright underscored the importance of quickly resolving this dispute when she met with Haitian leaders last month in Haiti. It will take time for Haitians to overcome a legacy of mistrust and violent solutions to political problems as they perfect the process of negotiation and compromise, but Haiti's democracy will be strengthened as a result. Looking ahead, we wish to lead international community efforts to ensure that Haiti's parliamentary and local elections projected for later this year are free, fair, transparent, and broadly inclusive.

Haiti has come a long way since the restoration of democratic rule in 1994. Haitians enjoy unprecedented freedom of expression and association, lively and independent media operate with virtually no governmental restraint, and Haiti's first civilian police force is gaining steadily in competence and public trust. Haitian counter-narcotics capabilities are improving, and Haitian authorities have seized about 1,000 kgs [2,205,000 lbs.] of cocaine so far this year. The use of Haiti as a narcotics transshipment point appears to be declining after a sharp rise in 1997. Haiti's first privatized enterprise, a flour mill, was sold to a U.S.-Haitian concern and should soon be operational. A U.S. cellular telephone provider recently completed a licensing arrangement.

Let me mention a few areas of particular interest:

U.S. efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the Western Hemisphere have yielded great success over the last two decades. But in places like Mexico, Colombia, and the Caribbean, democratic governments are facing serious threats from drug cartels, in the form of political violence, corruption, and money laundering.

To recap, our Latin American policy aims to promote free trade and economic integration, with the FTAA in place by 2005; to attack poverty and discrimination through education, with universal primary school attendance by 2010; to build a comprehensive hemisphere-wide counter-narcotics plan, aimed at decreasing production, interdicting the traffic, and reducing demand; and promoting democracy and respect for human rights.

The Santiago Summit addressed itself to this issue at length, calling for the creation of a justice studies center to permit judges, magistrates, prosecutors, and legal educators to share their expertise and thus strengthen the fundamental appreciation for the importance of an independent judiciary.

States Government and the international financial institutions have initiated a wide variety of aid, public awareness programs, and alternative dispute resolution.

Our increased assistance will help alleviate migratory pressures and show Haiti's poor a tangible link between democracy and economic enhancement. We propose to focus additional resources on rural areas where the bulk of Haiti's poor reside. It will help build democracy at the grass-roots level, improve infrastructure in secondary cities and rural areas, and will also be used for education, microenterprise lending, and environmental reconstruction.

Recent history has taught us that conditions of instability, non-democratic rule, and poverty in Haiti are invariably accompanied by waves of undocumented migrants seeking haven on U.S. shores and that such migration exacts a steep price—in 1994 alone, we spent \$400 million dealing with Haitian migration. These funds did nothing to advance the goals that the Haitian people and we share—stability, democracy, and economic growth. In contrast, an investment of \$140 million in the future of Haiti seems a prudent and worthwhile endeavor.

Support for the peace accords that brought an end to 36 years of civil conflict in Guatemala has been the focal point of our policy and our financial contribution to that country. The shocking recent murder of Bishop Jose Juan Gerardi, who has long defended the rights of all and stood for national reconciliation, was a great tragedy. It is unclear at this point whether his murder was politically motivated, nor do we believe that any competent authority knows who was responsible. The Government of Guatemala has announced the appointment of a special commission to oversee the investigation. At their request, the FBI has dispatched several agents to Guatemala to assist with their investigation. We deplore senseless violence of this kind, and we intend to closely monitor the case.

Let me reassure you, Mr. Chairman, that our policy toward Cuba remains firm. Our goal is to promote a peaceful transition to democracy and respect for human rights. We do this through four essential elements: pressure on the Cuban Government through the embargo and the Libertad Act; development of a multilateral effort to promote democracy; support for the Cuban people consistent with the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) and the Libertad Act; and enforcement of measures to keep migration safe, orderly, and legal. We also work to protect the legitimate interests of U.S. citizens whose property has been expropriated in Cuba.

There has been much commentary and scrutiny of recent diplomatic overtures toward Cuba by summit governments. It is no understatement to say that the policies of the Cuban Government were strongly criticized at the Santiago Summit. In the closing session, Brazil's President Cardoso eloquently called on Cuba to "take steps toward democracy . . . so that tomorrow we could say that our America is one democratic country." In a true display of agreement and support for his strong words, he received a standing ovation. Steps necessary to bring Cuba back into the community of democratic nations of the hemisphere are unambiguous. It is the regime of Fidel Castro that repeatedly denies the people of that island nation the hope, promise, and reward of living in an open and democratic society.

In his remarks at the conclusion of the Santiago Summit, President Clinton spoke of our commitment to forge an agenda that will strengthen our democracies, reduce trade barriers, and improve the quality of our people's lives. He added that too many of our citizens have not yet seen their own lives improved despite the progress made. The press, in its reporting on the summit, tended to focus on two primary issues: the importance of the launching of the FTAA and the need to address the unfinished business of attacking social inequality and eradicating poverty. We compliment them for getting it just right. The nations of the hemisphere must now address themselves to realizing the promise of the original commitment, and to securing a second stage of reforms aimed at bringing the benefits of freedom and free enterprise to ordinary citizens throughout the Americas.