



Connecting *the* Americas:

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR
THE AMERICAS: A LATINO PERSPECTIVE**

A project of the Hispanic Council on International Relations, Partners of the Americas,
National Council of La Raza, and the Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation



NEXOS: EXPANDING THE LATINO VOICE IN U.S. FOREIGN AID TO THE AMERICAS*

NEXOS is a collaborative public education campaign that aims to promote the informed participation of Latinos in the shaping of U.S. Foreign Assistance and U.S. Foreign Policy toward the Americas. U.S. foreign policy decisions are directly linked to Latino concerns about immigration, trade, economic prosperity, democracy, and human rights. This nexus between domestic and international concerns makes it important that Latinos expand their involvement in international issues.

HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Hispanic Council on International Relations (HCIR) is the only nonprofit, non-partisan national organization solely dedicated to representing U.S. Hispanics' concerns on foreign affairs issues. The current membership is a mix of U.S. Members of Congress, state and local elected and appointed officials, business leaders, community activists, and distinguished scholars. www.hcir.org

Partners of the Americas was founded in 1964 as the "people-to-people" component of President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. As the largest volunteer-based organization in the Western Hemisphere engaged in community development and training, Partners has grown to 60 partnerships linking 45 states



*This project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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and the District of Columbia with 31 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. www.partners.net

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic constituency-based organization, serving Hispanic groups throughout the country. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NCLR annually reaches more than a million Hispanics through a formal network of "affiliates" – more than 250 organizations serving 40 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia – and a broader network of 30,000 groups and individuals nationwide. www.nclr.org

Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation grew from the success of the Hispanic Link News Service and in 1995 was established to provide Hispanics with opportunities to pursue journalism careers and educate the general population – nationally and internationally – on issues relevant to U.S. Hispanics. The news service was created in 1980. It syndicates articles of interest to Hispanics through the *Los Angeles Times* Syndicate and publishes *Hispanic Link Weekly Report*, a national newsweekly that reports on Hispanic issues.

For more information or to find out how to become involved in NEXOS, please contact:

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C O N N E C T I N G T H E A M E R I C A S

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	
Foreword by Eduardo Gómez	1
Agenda	3
Opening Remarks by Frank Gómez	4
Speakers' Commentaries	
DR. EDUARDO GAMARRA	7
Moderator	
REMEDIOS DÍAZ OLIVER	9
Hispanic Business Opportunities in Latin America	
AMBASSADOR AMBLER MOSS	14
The Future of Free Trade in the Americas: A Political Perspective	
J. ANTONIO VILLAMIL	22
Economic Trends for U.S.-Latin American Relations	
CARLOS CASTAÑEDA	32
U.S. Media Coverage of Latin American News	
Conclusion by Benjamin Escárcega	35
Participant Biographies	37

C O N N E C T I N G T H E A M E R I C A S

FOREWORD

EDUARDO J. GÓMEZ

RAND, WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE

As a growing Latino community that is actively present and influencing the U.S. economy, it is important that we periodically take two steps back and reevaluate our position in the Western Hemisphere. Addressing these issues in Miami, Florida – considered by many to be the gateway to the Americas – would be the ideal scenario. Thanks to the Hispanic Council on International Relations (HCIR), and our collaboration with the Partners of the Americas, the National Council of La Raza, and the Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation, we made this happen. I am happy to state that this is one of many events to which HCIR is committed as we turn to another century of greater Western Hemispheric economic cooperation, growth, and opportunity for the U.S. Hispanic community.

On Friday, February 23, 2001, with the help of colleagues at the North-South Center at the University of Miami, HCIR organized a very informative discussion on the progress that U.S. Hispanics have made in fostering greater Western Hemisphere trade and business relations. Along with leaders in the Miami community, entrepreneurs, local academics, and community leaders, the conference titled **“Business and Economic Outlook for the Americas: A Latino Perspective”** addressed three primary issues of concern for U.S. Hispanics: the status of our free trade relations with Latin America; the major institutional and domestic impediments to greater economic integration; and the extent to which the media and its coverage influence this process. This highly informative discussion addressed the outcomes and political process of greater economic integration not only from a U.S. and international news perspective, but from the perspective of a vibrant Hispanic community that continues to play a vital role in nurturing local business and making free trade arrangements work – e.g., NAFTA and MERCOSUR.

Our appraisal of the U.S. Hispanic communities' influence on international trade relations comes at a propitious moment. More than ever, our economic relations with Mexico are deepening – especially due to the recent transition of power – while the rest of our trading partners in the Americas are pressing for greater free trade with the U.S. Hispanics are in a key position to lead and contribute to this initiative by working with elected officials, the private sector, the media, and academics. As Hispanics assume more prominent roles in international affairs, and in organizations such as the U.S. State Department and USAID, we will surely have a positive impact on greater trade and political relations with our counterparts in Latin America.

In what follows, several participants of the Business and Economic Outlook Conference discuss how we as a Hispanic community can influence our economic ties with Latin America. As you will note, all of the participants agreed that our community will continue to play a vital role in forging greater business and economic relations in the Americas while standing as a positive role model within the U.S. and abroad.

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR THE
AMERICAS: A LATINO PERSPECTIVE**

University of Miami Faculty Club

Miami, Florida

February 23, 2001

8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

PANELISTS

FRANK GÓMEZ

Chairman, Hispanic Council on International Relations

Opening Remarks

DR. EDUARDO GAMARRA

Director, Latin American and Caribbean Center

Florida International University

Moderator

REMEDIOS DÍAZ OLIVER

President, All American Containers

Hispanic Business Opportunities in Latin America

AMBASSADOR AMBLER MOSS

Director of the North-South Center, University of Miami

The Future of Free Trade in the Americas: A Political Perspective

ANTONIO VILLAMIL

CEO, Washington Economics Group, Inc.

Economic Trends for U.S.-Latin American Relations

CARLOS CASTAÑEDA

Publisher, *El Nuevo Herald*

U.S. Media Coverage of Latin American News

OPENING REMARKS

FRANK GÓMEZ

CHAIRMAN, HISPANIC COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Good morning. On behalf of the Hispanic Council on International Relations and the Partners of the Americas, I thank you for joining us for what will certainly be an informative and timely discussion of new realities in the Americas as they relate to our nation's Hispanic communities. We are honored by your presence.

This is the right time to meet; Miami is the best location; the North-South Center is the best venue; and the Partners and the Council are the most appropriate institutions to explore and promote stronger ties between our neighbor republics and Latinos in the United States.

The time is propitious, for we enter a new millennium with a new administration in Washington which appears to be "hemisphere sensitive." A week ago, two former governors of Mexico and the United States met in Guanajuato. Besides bilateral issues, they took up the Free Trade Area of the Americas, an initiative that during the past election year was stalled but which is likely to re-emerge as a top priority for hemisphere leaders. Heads of democratic states will meet at the III Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, April 19-21.

We must remind ourselves that Mexico, already our second-largest trading partner, will become number one within a decade. And in a few years, we will have more trade with Latin America than with Europe and Japan combined. And we have more trade with the Caribbean and Central America than with the much vaunted MERCOSUR countries.

Also, after a decade of promising reform and advancement, Latin America and the Caribbean face new economic, political, and social challenges. The reaffirmation of democratic principles, the strengthening of still fragile democratic institutions, transparency in governance and business, and addressing the plight of the less fortunate are mutually dependent, interrelated issues that are essential to continued progress and hemispheric cooperation.

Miami is appropriate, because, as we say in Spanish, “*podría dictar cátedra,*” or, “it could give classes.” Miami is vibrant today in large measure thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens and their capacity to relate to our neighbors. To mention just one example, CAMACOL, the Latin Chamber of Commerce, long ago created the “Sánchez to Sánchez to Smith” award. It recognizes the potential and value of business connections from Latin America and the Caribbean – through Hispanic entrepreneurs to mainstream companies.

The North-South Center is an appropriate venue because it was the creation of a visionary son of Miami, the late Congressman Dante Fascell. Headed by Ambassador Ambler Moss, to whom we refer as an “honorary Hispanic,” the Center is a beehive of intellectual inquiry, discussion, and encounter. Two weeks ago it convened a standing-room-only conference on Plan Colombia. We are grateful for the Center’s hospitality.

The Partners of the Americas, through a grant from the Agency for International Development, actively seeks increased Hispanic involvement in its programs. This forum is part of a series in selected cities entitled *NEXOS: Expanding the Latino Voice in U.S. Foreign Aid to the Americas.*

This is the era of the non-governmental organization (NGO), and in the Americas, the Partners have been there for more than a quarter century. NEXOS is also supported by the National Council of La Raza and the Hispanic Link Journalism Foundation. A description is in your packet. The South Florida Partners are linked to Antioquia, Colombia, a key part of a pivotal country in our hemisphere. We thank them for their support.

The Hispanic Council on International Relations, now six years old, has quickly established itself as a credible institution that gives voice to Hispanics interested in foreign affairs. Your seminar packets contain further information about the Council, so I’ll not elaborate here.

I remind you of our title: “A Latino Perspective.” It is past time for our voices to be heard in myriad arenas, from policy formulation to diplomacy, and from trade and investment to economic

development. For we represent more than 36 million Hispanic Americans – about the same as the population of Argentina and more than that of Canada. We have purchasing power in excess of \$460 billion and operate some 1.5 million businesses that generate more than \$200 billion in revenues. Hispanics in high-technology firms, in finance and trade, in international organizations, and in NGOs have much to offer to the inter-American equation.

We meet at a time when Latin American and Caribbean governments and peoples have taken note of and begun systematically to reach

out to our leaders and our organizations. In the last administration, four of the Council's founding members were in pivotal positions as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs; Ambassador to

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the Organization of American States; Deputy National Security Affairs Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs. The person who held the last position, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, is with us today. The Council will surely see some of its members and close friends emerge in key positions in the new administration.

With this background, I close by thanking our sponsors for their generous support of this seminar:

- ◆ Juan Santaella, President, Valcorp Securities of Miami
- ◆ Willy Alexander and Adolfo Martinez, Hamilton Bank
- ◆ Sam Verdeja, Publisher, *Hispanic Magazine*
- ◆ Jennifer Young & Nelly Saleh, Partners of the Americas

I am pleased to introduce our moderator, Dr. Eduardo Gamarra, Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University.

MODERATOR

DR. EDUARDO GAMARRA

DIRECTOR, LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTER
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Good morning. Thank you very much for the invitation to moderate this panel of distinguished Latinos and “honorary” Latinos. I know that one of the discussions we should have is if we should describe ourselves as Hispanics or Latinos – or whatever else we want to call ourselves. Some of the things that Mr. Gómez was saying are particularly relevant to this group, especially because we are in Miami. And of course, the most significant issue is the question of free trade in the Americas.

A particularly important position played by Miami is in securing the Secretariat for the first three years of the FTAA during which negotiations started. These negotiations ultimately led to what we call a “bracket text” as the Secretariat moved to finalize this proposal. We are now entering a new phase in which we expect in the next couple of years to result in an actual agreement. It will be the first hemispheric-wide negotiated agreement that many of us expect to see as a full-fledged Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005.

In this sense, I think many of the people on this panel will play an important role, including *El Nuevo Herald* and the North-South Center. As many of you know, Antonio

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... there is a tremendous opportunity and need for Latinos to have a greater national leadership role.

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Villamil, for example, served in the previous Bush administration as well as in the local Bush administration, and in the local community

(Florida). Most of us who live in Miami are very familiar with Remedios Díaz Oliver, who has been President and CEO of All American Containers, Inc., and has a long record of community activism as well. I say this largely because there is a tremendous

opportunity and need for Latinos to have a greater national leadership role. Something that is very interesting is that Cuban Americans, in particular, have already taken a significant leadership role, having, some would say, perhaps a disproportionate amount of influence in terms of foreign policy-making. This is something that many other Latino communities in this country have not been able to achieve.

Therefore I think, as a non-Cuban, that the example we have before us of Cuban Americans involved in foreign policy issues is one worthy of emulation and one that most of us need to consider very seriously, even though we may disagree on issues. And of course, that's part of the American democratic process – being able to disagree not only about domestic policy, but also about foreign policy issues.

I hope that in the course of this morning, we are going to have a very lively and informative discussion about a

number of issues: trade and its significance, immigration, and narcotics. I hope we won't have too much of a discussion on narcotics. It is crucial for us to understand the role democracy plays in Latin America and the challenges this democracy faces. I'm hoping that this panel will examine the ways in which we as Latinos in this country can influence the promotion of these issues in democracy and foreign policy. So, I am pleased to introduce our first panelist, Ms. Remedios Díaz Oliver, and ask her to discuss these key issues.

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HISPANIC BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

REMEDIOS DÍAZ OLIVER

PRESIDENT, ALL AMERICAN CONTAINERS, INC.

Thank you and welcome. It is my pleasure to be here with you this morning to discuss Hispanic business opportunities in Latin America. As a businesswoman and exporter in south Florida for the past 39 years, I have seen a multitude of changes in the economic development of Latin America. These developments have unquestionably brought a positive economic impact to us here in south Florida. I would like to take this opportunity to touch upon some of these changes.

During the past ten years we have observed many positive developments occurring in Latin America. The 1990s brought about the transfiguration of economic, political, and social reform. We have seen the following:

- ◆ Higher standards of living and a return to positive economic growth rates in most of the region
- ◆ Investments in and awareness of social programs that have brought about significant reductions in both fertility and child mortality rates
- ◆ A shift from dictatorships to democratic governments in almost all of the countries in the hemisphere
- ◆ The transition of power from one democratically elected government to another, for the first time ever
- ◆ Significant reductions in human rights violations
- ◆ And a message is being sent that no longer will dictators be permitted to have amnesty. Political standards must be set.

Recently, it has become apparent that Latin American countries are adopting business standards that parallel those of the United States. With that in mind, I will emphasize certain economic opportunities that have arisen.

I won't spend a great deal of time giving statistical data. However, to highlight a few indicators, the annual average growth rate in percent in 1999, for the Central American Common Market was 4.3%, CARICOM 4.0%, and NAFTA 4.2%. MERCOSUR, however, reported a negative growth rate of less than 1%. According to the statistics and quantitative analysis, the average growth rates in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) indicated a favorable development for investments in the region.

Government officials in Latin America understand the need for continued investment to strengthen their infrastructure. The governments of Central America, many of which have recently experienced several natural disasters in their countries, are especially needy in this area. Business specializing in design, development, and construction of bridges, roads, railroads, power plants, and so on, find themselves in an excellent position to expand their businesses in Latin America if they choose to do so.

An excellent resource for pending projects in Latin America is the Inter-American Development Bank. For those unfamiliar with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), it is dedicated to the financing of social and economic development programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Bank has a vast array of business opportunities for the suppliers of goods and services from each of its 46 member countries. In 1999 alone, IDB loans resulted in the award of some 6,000 contracts for civil construction projects, the supply of goods and equipment, and the provision of consulting services. In the same year, roughly \$7.8 billion was disbursed to contractors as a consequence of the Bank's lending program.

The telecommunications industry has experienced extensive growth in this area. For many years this industry had been under the control of the Latin American governments. Recently, we have seen the opening of the telecommunications industry to outside

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competition due to the privatization measures in these countries. As previously stated, due to recent natural disasters in some of

..... these countries, there is an immediate need for telephone hard lines. But even more interesting is the conversion from hard

Economic growth is a direct result of political stability.

..... lines to wireless communication. For example, in Venezuela, 60% of telephone users prefer cellular phone service to hard line telephones.

Another area where great growth is all but guaranteed is in the computer industry. Computer sales should do well as more and more Latin Americans connect to the Internet. Businesses having to do with computers or the Internet through such areas as training, networking professionals, and service technicians, just to name a few, can expect growth in this market.

Of course, these opportunities are all dependent upon the ability to communicate well with our millions of potential customers in Latin America. In this age of facsimile and high-speed Internet access, it is imperative that we be able to communicate, not only verbally, but also in written form.

Where does Latin America stand politically? We have seen a new president elected in Mexico. His programs should bring a new era of political cooperation between the United States and Mexico. Manufacturing in this country is growing significantly due to NAFTA and other trade agreements.

Despite witnessing dramatic changes, Latin America still faces the Colombian guerrillas, uncertainty in policies adopted by the democratically elected president of Venezuela, and the continuation of a criminal and obsolete dictatorship in Cuba. However, the majority of countries are looking to establish a political environment that is conducive to welcoming foreign investors. Economic growth is a direct result of political stability.

In south Florida, where Hispanics are an important economic factor, we have observed the number of opportunities grow

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throughout the years. The bridge to the Americas is strengthening, and during this new millennium, we will integrate our knowledge and communication abilities in ensuring that Latin America will be an essential part of the U.S. economy.

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On a side note, I recall that during the late 1962 or early 1963 period, a group of exporters and freight forwarders formed an organization called the Asociación de Freight Forwarders y Exportadores Latinoamericanos (AFELA). I was appointed as the president, and our job was to help our businesses, exchange credit information, develop new sales techniques, marketing research, and so on.

Those were the hard, old times! However, we were the leaders of a new economy for south Florida – visitors coming to Miami instead of New York or New Orleans, bringing their families and their dollars, Miamians going to San Pedro Sula, Managua or Caracas, Buenos Aires or Panama to sell machinery, raw materials, pharmaceutical or cosmetic products, technology services, and even bottles.

We accomplished a difficult task, replacing European suppliers with American-made products. We have also seen Hispanics going to Central and South America to invest in several industries, creating jobs and opportunities for all.

We witnessed a new beginning when Cubans in Miami welcomed other Hispanics joining us in this area. Nicaraguans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans joined us in the Magic City while Colombians, Spaniards, Chileans, Panamanians, Argentineans, and others felt that this was also their home. The impact that was created and will continue in the years to come is based on mutual respect and understanding, speaking the same language, and believing in the same ideals. We are confident that Hispanics will find an ally in the new Bush administration.

And finally, Hispanics have contributed to, and will continue to improve, relations between the U.S. and Latin America, generating new businesses and being instrumental in creating opportunities in health care and education, manufacturing, tourism, etc. This will definitely bring a better understanding and a more solid business climate between the U.S. and our Latin neighbors, and more importantly, respect for our friends and allies.

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.....

Hispanics have a very important place in U.S. history. There is no doubt that progress and success with our neighbors will be brought about by many of those who were wisely described by William Alexander, President of the Congress of Hemispheric Chambers of Commerce, as "the Sánchez to Sánchez to Smith." Good luck and let's work together for a better and friendlier hemisphere.

DR. GAMARRA: It gives me great pleasure now to introduce Ambler Moss. Ambassador Moss, of course, is very well-known in the community and nationally. He is best known for his crucial role in securing the Panama Canal Treaties in the 1970s. He has been crucial to the University of Miami in its efforts to promote its role in educational services – and with the important role the North-South Center has played in the last decade-and-a-half in promoting better relations between the United States and Latin America. In particular, Ambassador Moss has been very active in the promotion of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). I have heard his thoughtful comments many times, and every time Ambassador Moss is going to say something about the FTAA, I pay great attention because he spends much time in Washington, D.C. and in south Florida thinking about these things. I think this connection is essential to those of us interested in this topic.

THE FUTURE OF FREE TRADE IN THE AMERICAS: A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

AMBASSADOR AMBLER MOSS

DIRECTOR, DANTE B. FASCELL NORTH-SOUTH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Thank you very much. I really appreciate your kind remarks, Eduardo. I'm very happy to say that the North-South Center and the University of Miami have had great relations with and have great respect for Dr. Gamarra and Florida International University's Latin American and Caribbean Center. In fact, in the back of the room I've left copies of the North-South Center's blueprint offered to the new Bush administration as a coherent, sensible policy for Latin America. One of Eduardo's colleagues collaborated on that effort as well, so we work together on all these things.

.....

...quite obviously the Free Trade Area of the Americas is going to be very good for the Latino communities – I use the plural because it will be good for all of them throughout the country, whether they are in Florida, Texas, California, or anywhere else.

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I'm supposed to talk today about the political importance of the Free Trade Area of the Americas. I'll leave the economics to Antonio Villamil, who is one of the greatest experts in this town, and who is one of the greatest economists in this country on these issues. But first of all, as you've heard Remedios Díaz Oliver put it very succinctly, quite obviously the Free Trade Area of the Americas is going to be very good for the Latino communities – I use the plural because it will be good for all of them throughout the country, whether they are in Florida, Texas, California, or anywhere else.

There are tremendous economic opportunities in Latin America, and again I will leave this to Antonio Villamil to discuss, but there

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is an economic recovery going on in many Latin American countries right now – including in MERCOSUR. I was in

..... Washington yesterday, and
Of the \$300 million of trade within NAFTA, I spoke with the Brazilian
only about 1% of that ambassador about this.
represents trade through There can be no doubt
Florida, strangely enough. about the benefits for the
..... south Florida community,

particularly since we are right on the flight path. NAFTA largely benefitted Texas and California. Mexico is now the U.S.'s second-largest trading partner after Canada, having surpassed Japan in that capacity – but Florida is still behind. Of the \$300 million of trade within NAFTA, only about 1% of that represents trade through Florida, strangely enough. So we have to do more about that. Governor Jeb Bush has worked very hard leading large delegations to Mexico and Brazil in order to promote NAFTA. Antonio Villamil works constantly on this, and *El Nuevo Herald* does a good job of bringing it to our attention. NAFTA is a good thing – and its support is one of the main recommendations we make in our policy report. I think that this is one of the things that HCIR should get behind. All of us need to keep this in mind when talking to our friends, our legislators, and anyone else who will listen.

I will start with two
important messages.
First, the U.S. needs to pick itself up and get moving on free trade by passing fast-track authority for the U.S. President; otherwise, the U.S. will have no credibility when

I will start with two important messages.
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President Bush goes to Quebec for the III Summit of the Americas. Second, and something that will be of particular interest to this community, is the issue of pushing hard to establish the headquarters of the Free Trade Area of the Americas here in Miami – which has been described as “that Latin City which is

closest to the United States.” Miami is special and unique, and we should capitalize on this.

Let me clarify what fast-track authority is. This doesn't mean the authority to negotiate. The Executive Branch, the President of the United States, and the U.S. Trade Representative can negotiate anytime they want, and they can negotiate anything they want. But, when they have a piece of paper, a document, or a trade agreement which has to be sent for approval by both houses of Congress, which is the way trade agreements work, there is a

procedural fast-track authority. This means that

you send it to the Congress and all they can do is say yes or no, instead of going through all the red tape of sending it to various Congressional

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In Latin America, when the Latin American trade negotiators see the U.S. coming along without fast-track authority, it undermines the credibility of this country enormously.
.....

committees. Without fast-track, the process takes entirely too long to complete. It's simply a procedure of sending it to Congress for approval or rejection.

In Latin America, when the Latin American trade negotiators see the U.S. coming along without fast-track authority, it undermines the credibility of this country enormously. They think, “If we do negotiate an agreement with the U.S., will they be able to follow through on it? Will they be able to get the agreement approved?” The Latin American negotiators are very aware of how the U.S. Congress works, and how the founders of our Constitution, in their wisdom, built in a constant tension between the Executive and Legislative branches which often complicates policy-making. This is never going to be solved in our time. When President Bush goes to Quebec, he will not have fast-track by then, but he must nevertheless have a credible plan and assure others that fast-track will be forthcoming. That is an absolute necessity.

Aside from that, the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas are going very well. Eduardo said that there is now a bracketed text, which means there is a text of the FTAA agreement with all the differences in brackets. The differences are

considerable, but at least they are there and identified. You can see them and read them, and if you go into the website of the United States Trade Representative (www.ustr.gov), you will see an outline of all the U.S. positions on all the nine negotiating groups and the three special committees. So, the work is being done, and it has been taking place in Miami at the site of the FTAA headquarters. Hundreds of negotiators have been working patiently in the negotiating groups to get that text ready and to make progress by the year 2005. There is some talk of accelerating the process and having the FTAA ready by 2003, but I think that is illusory. The Brazilians have been quite clear that they don't want it before 2005, and I think that's a big stumbling block right there. Whether it's 2003 or 2005, there is a very good prospect that a lot of the differences that currently exist in the text can be overcome. But to get there, of course, the U.S. has to have fast-track authority to do it.

I would say that the fast-track authority should be broader than simply the FTAA, because the U.S. has undertaken to engage in bilateral agreements with Singapore and Chile. The Chile negotiations, as Antonio pointed out to me, are actually scheduled

<p>.....</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Business Roundtable pointed out that of the one hundred thirty free trade agreements which have been negotiated in the world, the U.S. is a part of only two of these agreements. Mexico is part of at least 28, and the European Union is part of 27.</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>to take place right here in Miami. The U.S. has been behind in negotiating all these agreements. Earlier this month, on February 9, The Business Roundtable put out a report called, <i>The Case for U.S. Trade Leadership: The U.S. is Falling Behind</i>. The Business Roundtable</p>
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pointed out that of the one hundred thirty free trade agreements which have been negotiated in the world, the U.S. is a part of only two of these agreements. Mexico is part of at least 28, and the European Union is part of 27.

The United States, consequently, has been falling behind while other countries are signing up for free trade agreements with each

other, and U.S. business has lost out. A famous example is when Canada signed a free trade agreement with Chile – after the free trade agreement was reached, an important electronics contract switched from Southwest Bell in the U.S. to Nortel in Canada simply because there was an 11% price differential advantage that the Canadians had. The contract switched and the Canadians got the contract. This is a perfect example of how U.S. business is falling behind while not following the example on free trade. This doesn't make any sense for us.

There are two big sticking points with fast-track, and these have to do with labor and environmental standards. There must be a deal made, with some good political roles and good negotiating skills to resolve this. This can't be an impasse that will hold this initiative back forever.

Therefore, the prospects of what can happen with a Free Trade Area of the Americas are very important. This is one of the crucial things of importance for this country, and one of the things that will make or break the

success of the next Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. I think it is very lucky that this date is already on the calendar as the new U.S. administration comes in. If the date had not already been on the calendar, there probably

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Now these expressions of interest and good will have to be followed up with some solid content because Latin Americans are not going to be fooled with happy words. They want to see some substance and content, and the U.S. has to be prepared to put that forward.
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wouldn't be a Summit because no U.S. president wants to have to scramble to put together a policy so quickly. The fact that the Summit is already on the calendar obliges the U.S. to get its act together, because there will be 33 faces looking down the table at President Bush to see if he is projecting a new, complete, and coherent policy toward the Americas.

The interest is there, and as Remedios said, this is good news. The first expressions of the Bush administration certainly have shown that it wants to take an interest in the hemisphere. That is very welcome. The first visit the new President made was to Vicente

Fox. The last two presidents have first gone to visit their Canadian friends, opting to first go north and not south. So, I think the signs are good. Now these expressions of interest and good will have to be followed up with some solid content because Latin Americans are not going to be fooled with happy words. They want to see some substance and content, and the U.S. has to be prepared to put that forward.

In that sense, I want to urge people to speak to decision-makers and legislators, anybody's ear you can get, because the FTAA is a

.....!... very crucial thing for the United States. The purpose, in keeping with the spirit of this meeting, is that the Latino communities are the ones

The question is, "Where will the site of the FTAA headquarters be?"

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that will certainly benefit most by opening all those doors, by nailing down the deals, and quickly reaching an agreement.

Now on to the next topic: FTAA headquarters. There was much discussion about this at the San José trade ministerial meeting in 1998. The question is, "Where will the site of the FTAA headquarters be?" Miami, of course, is vying for it, and there are also about eight or nine other countries all pushing for it. Everywhere from Kingston to Montevideo, somewhere in Brazil, and Buenos Aires in Argentina want to have the FTAA headquarters. As a result, a big compromise was struck that it wouldn't be in any of those places permanently. It was agreed that it would start off in Miami, then sometime in 2001 it would move to Panamá, and then it would end up in Mexico City. When the FTAA charter expires, the issue has to be revisited.

Eventually, some place will be the permanent headquarters of the FTAA. This could, as economic integration continues, end up being akin to the "Brussels of the Americas." Why did the European Union headquarters end up in Brussels? Well, it is quite simple. It couldn't have been in Paris because the Germans would have objected, and it couldn't have been in Germany because the British would have objected. Probably it was everyone's second

C O N N E C T I N G T H E A M E R I C A S

choice because it was neutral, with good food, easy communication with other parts of Europe, and so on. It's the same situation here. We can have it if we work for it.

I have personally been working with Katherine Harris on this, and a lot of others in the community are also working on it. We can have it here if we work for it. The people of Miami are very representative of the

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Caribbean people, among all these different places vying for the FTAA headquarters, feel comfortable here.

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Americas and the Caribbean. As I said earlier, Miami is kind of a Caribbean city. I have a good friend, Monseñor Walsh, who is at the archdiocese here. He has a theory called "the Caribbean ten percent rule for south Florida." He says that no matter what island you're talking about in the Caribbean, no matter if it is English-speaking or Spanish-speaking or French-speaking, whether it is democratic or authoritarian, ten percent of it is here already! Caribbean people, among all these different places vying for the FTAA headquarters, feel comfortable here. And they know that politically it would be difficult for them to decide on any one particular place in the Caribbean. Also, Mexicans are going to have trouble with the capital being in Buenos Aires, and so are the Brazilians, and so forth. I don't need to get into all these differences, but I think we have a very good shot at being the "Brussels of the Americas" because this is not, in the Latin American mind, a gringo place. This is not the same as sticking it in Washington, D.C., or someplace identified with the U.S. It is neutral ground. It's a place where everybody calls home, and everybody feels comfortable here.

What can we do to get the FTAA headquarters? I think, first, the U.S. has to have the leadership position to get the whole FTAA moving forward. Second, we need to be realistic. Governments are very stingy about the FTAA. The FTAA headquarters here in Miami, prior to its proximate migration to Panama, has been treated very stingily in many ways. It hasn't had the facilities and the resources that it needs. If we're going to have the FTAA

headquarters here, and I have spoken with Alberto Ibarguen* about this as well, the community is going to have to come up with material support. The community must offer nothing less than the land and the building for the official FTAA site. This is something we need to start working on right now. Somewhere in this community, we need to get our act together properly and show that we really want the FTAA sight to be here. The material benefits for the Latino communities here, for the entire Miami community, and for this country in general, of having the "Brussels of the Americas" in Miami, would be so absolutely obvious that I don't need to go on endlessly about it. We need to think about this and we need to get to work on it, because it could happen. I think this is something that HCIR could take on and promote.

..... I suggest two lines of endeavor for HCIR. The first is to push for fast-track authority. I think the Latino community will have a lot to say about this. This is absolutely critical. The second is that HCIR should promote Miami as the most feasible place to

The material benefits for the Latino communities here, for the entire Miami community, and for this country in general, of having the "Brussels of the Americas" in Miami, would be so absolutely obvious that I don't need to go on endlessly about it.

..... have the permanent headquarters of the FTAA - to make it literally the capital of the Americas in terms of economics, trade, and immigration. The benefits for all would be great. Thank you very much.

DR. GAMARRA: Thank you very much, Ambassador. I am now going to ask Antonio Villamil to join us. He is CEO of the Washington Economics Group here in Miami, and a Doctorate recipient from FIU. I always introduce him as my colleague because he used to work with me at the Latin American and Caribbean Center. I know he will have some very interesting things to say to us about the FTAA.

* Publisher of the *Miami Herald*, and member of HCIR

ECONOMIC TRENDS FOR U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS

J. ANTONIO VILLAMIL

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE WASHINGTON ECONOMICS
GROUP, INC.

Thank you very much Dr. Gamarra, my good friend. I would like to commend the leadership of the Hispanic Council on International Relations, FIU and the Latin American and Caribbean Center with Dr. Gamarra, as well as the North-South Center with Ambassador Ambler Moss for the tremendous leadership they provide to our communities.

There are a number of fundamental factors that suggest improving U.S.-Latin American economic relations in the early years of the new millennium. However, there are significant challenges to overcome if we are to create Pan-American economic opportunities for all citizens of the Americas from Canada in the north to Argentina and Chile in the south. To address this I will first talk about what I call the "pull" factors which are leading to increased hemispheric relations, and then I will discuss the "push" factors which are pushing us away from improved relations.

"PULL" FACTORS LEADING TO IMPROVED U.S.- LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The following are fundamental and critical factors that are improving economic relations between the United States and Latin America, and the Caribbean:

First, the globalization of the production function and borderless transactions due to technological advancements:

The biggest pull factor bringing us together into improved hemispheric relations is the fact that the markets are demanding

it. The globe is becoming integrated. Remedios Díaz Oliver talked to us about the business opportunities that exist in the Americas. In reality, as we say in economics, the production function of business has now become fully integrated and globalized. Today, we do business on a global basis. People sometimes think, "Well, let's talk about international trade in a separate sector of the U.S. economy." In reality, we are all in a global marketplace. We have the Internet, we have wireless communications, we have fast-moving transportation. Globalization is here and businesses are becoming global in scope.

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The biggest pull factor bringing us together into improved hemispheric relations is the fact that the markets are demanding it. The globe is becoming integrated.
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No longer can we say we are insular relative to our business activities. The businesses and the leadership in the U.S. and in Latin America are pushing us toward

economic integration. Globalization of production is a key factor which is driving us toward improved hemispheric relations, especially on the economic and trade sides.

Second, the recent political, economic, and free market reforms in the top economies of Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina – the "Big 3" in Latin American Affairs:

As Remedios Díaz Oliver mentioned, there have been significant improvements in economic, political, and free market reforms and market openings in many of the countries in Latin America, especially among the Big 3. That is another big pull factor. Remember that, as experts on the region, we can't just talk about Latin America in general. We need to talk specifically about the opinion leaders in Latin America and the countries that influence decision-making in the Americas. Relative to North America and all of Latin America and the Caribbean, obviously the Big 3 are Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina. These are the three countries that have significantly improved both their political and economic reforms. These Big 3 are providing a major pull factor in improved hemispheric relations.

I always say, and Ambler and I have discussed this many times before, that the U.S. needs to get together with Brazil and there will be FTAA very quickly. Brazil is one of the top ten economies in the world, and one of the things we hope to see in the new administration will be improved relations with Brazil. Mexico is a key aspect of North American and Caribbean-based relations, but let's not forget the giant to the south: Brazil. If we improve our relations with Mexico and Brazil, and of course with Argentina with which we already have excellent relations, the whole movement toward improved economic relations in the hemisphere will be strengthened.

Third, the growing strength of the U.S. Hispanic population, including the growing number of elected officials, U.S. government policy-makers, and business executives:

The third pull factor is the fact that we have America's leaders throughout the hemisphere. Not only should we talk about American citizens, but also "Citizens of the Americas" as leaders of the hemisphere. The global leadership is not only the U.S. Hispanic population that is growing in strength, including many of its public leaders who espouse to improve hemispheric relations. It is also people like Ambassador Ambler Moss, who is fully multilingual and a person of the global economy, and a leader in our community and in our nation. And like him, we find many throughout nearly every state and community in the U.S.

So, there is growing Hispanic muscle, if you will, in the U.S. as well as

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So, there is growing Hispanic muscle, if you will, in the U.S. as well as the global leadership of many individuals who may not be of Hispanic descent but who truly are "citizens of the world" or "citizens of the Americas."
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the global leadership of many individuals who may not be of Hispanic descent but who truly are "citizens of the world" or "citizens of the Americas." These people are providing significant leadership. One example is Paul O'Neill, the Secretary of the Treasury. He was the CEO of Aluminum Company of America

(ALCOA). He took a sleepy aluminum producer to a major, efficient, 21st century multi-national company with diversified and integrated production around the world. Paul O'Neill would be a leading player in FTAA and in financial discussions with the rest of the Americas and throughout the world. He is not Hispanic, but

..... these are the kinds of things I am talking about. In other words, the U.S. is changing toward people who have global views, and an Americas view. I think that is a very key factor.

The reason for doing NAFTA was not only economics, because Mexico was already a major trading partner of the U.S. at the time.

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Fourth, the overall success of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in promoting economic and political reforms in Mexico, and the advent of North American corporate entities:

The North American Free Trade Agreement has been a success. However, that doesn't mean there aren't some issues that need to be resolved. I was in the former Bush administration and I was very proud to be part of the Cabinet meetings regarding the NAFTA policy aspects.

The reason for doing NAFTA was not only economics, because Mexico was already a major trading partner

..... But it was also geopolitical, and there have been significant political changes in Mexico as a result of the NAFTA agreement.

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of the U.S. at the time. Now it is the second largest trading partner of the United States. But it was also geopolitical, and there have been significant political changes in Mexico as a result of the NAFTA agreement. Today, we have the advent of North American corporations that call themselves at home whether in Canada, the U.S., or in Mexico because of economic and trade integration. NAFTA has been a success. In spite of all the problems such as in Chiapas, and unequal income distribution, which needs to be resolved, most Mexicans would say that this is why they could vote for and change leadership toward Vicente Fox with a peaceful transition of power and without a *peso* crisis at the end of the *sexenio*. All of this has a lot to do with the political opening and

integration which has taken place among Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. on the people side, on the economic side, and on the trade side. So, NAFTA's success pulls us toward improved and increased hemispheric integration.

Fifth, the "Bush Factor":

The new President is strongly committed to improving hemispheric economic and trade relations. It is no coincidence that his first foreign trip was to Mexico and that the new United States Trade Representative (USTR), Ambassador Bob Zoellick, is a strong advocate of the FTAA and has stated that fast-track authority is a legislative priority of President Bush.

I spent fifty percent of my time since 1989 with the first Bush administration in Washington, with Governor Bush in Tallahassee, and most recently with the transition team on the policy side with the new President, George W. Bush. What I call the "Bush Factor" will be very important. People ask me, "Do you think this president is really committed to improving hemispheric relations?" We have to look at the actions he has taken. Look at Jeb Bush here in Florida. Look at former President Bush and his Initiative of the Americas. We have a friend in the White House who likes to see improved trade and hemispheric relations. The fact that he went to Mexico, as was mentioned by Ambassador Moss, is no coincidence – there's a reason for it. I heard some journalists say, "Well, maybe he went to Mexico because he knows that country and he doesn't know foreign policy." That he went to Mexico showed for a fact that he cares about Latinos and that he cares about hemispheric relations. He was the first major presidential candidate to visit Florida International University to give a discussion on hemispheric relations and why we need to work as partners. When you're in an election, FTAA sometimes is a case of "my eyes glazing over." People sometimes don't understand when you're dealing with statistics. There are no votes in the FTAA, NAFTA, and so forth, yet he still wanted to partner with our hemispheric neighbors.

And now, Ambassador Bob Zoellick, the new United States Trade Representative, is a very strong advocate for free trade and the

FTAA. The U.S. government is now starting to make a major push toward Chile and U.S. bilateral free trade. As Ambassador Moss said, the first round of negotiations will be right here in Miami starting at the end of March. We will see what happens because there has been some “beef” that has been put on the table already. We’ll see what happens with fast-track legislation, and we will see what happens in Quebec at the end of April. We have a long way to go, but believe me that the Bush administration is strongly committed to improving hemispheric relations because of what President Bush is all about, as well as his father, and Jeb Bush here in Florida. Fast-track will be a key legislative priority, at least from the point of view of the new administration.

“PUSH” FACTORS LEADING AWAY FROM IMPROVED U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

While “pull” factors are strong, there are a number of centrifugal forces pushing away from improved economic relations in the years ahead. How we, as partners, solve the “push away” of

..... these forces will determine the shape and discourse of the U.S.- Latin American economic relations. I think the Hispanic Council on International Relations should be commended for putting this forum together today, because we need to discuss this with all you here who are leaders of our community.

Sometimes when we talk about U.S.-Latin American economic relations, we talk a lot about Latin America, but we don’t talk much about the number one major economy in the world – the United States, which is a big part of the equation.

Among top “push” factors are the following:

First, a sharply slowing U.S. economy since the second half of 2000, if not corrected in the second half of this year, could begin to cause “creeping unemployment,” with a subsequent increase in protectionist sentiment:

Sometimes when we talk about U.S.-Latin American economic relations, we talk a lot about Latin America, but we don’t talk

much about the number one major economy in the world – the United States, which is a big part of the equation. We seem to have hit a wall in the second half of 2000. It has nothing to do with the change in the administration. This was starting all the way from the speculation regarding the equity markets and the irrational exuberance, as Greenspan said in 2000.

We have hit a wall regarding the economy, and it is sharply slowing in the U.S. This quarter we will probably see flat to negative growth in U.S. economic activity. Greenspan is now running hard to undo what he did in the last 12 months, which was raise interest rates. Now he is lowering the rates very, very quickly. You might say with hindsight that he should not have increased real rates the way he did. Well, hindsight is 20/20. I am not against Greenspan or the Fed, but the bottom line is that we're slowing. There's a manufacturing recession and an inventory correction going on.

Now the issue for us is whether this will be a "V-shaped" downturn, and whether the economy regains its strength as a result of easier monetary policy. Also of great importance is if Congress, in its collective wisdom,

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If the U.S. economy is not healthy, not only does it impact the economies of Mexico and the Caribbean Basin, who are major exporters to the U.S., but it also creates a protectionist sentiment in the United States.
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decides to give us a tax cut, which we need to improve economic performance. We need a tax cut for the long-term too, in terms of rewarding entrepreneurship. If we make it retroactive for this year, then an easier monetary and fiscal policy will help us out in making this a "V-type" downturn, so that we start coming out of it in the latter part of this year and in 2002.

Some economists are now talking about a "saucer-shaped" downturn, which means we go down and we stay down at the bottom for a while. If that starts to happen, we will have creeping unemployment. There will be a rise in protectionist sentiment and a rise of anti-immigration sentiment. If the U.S. economy is not healthy, not only does it impact the economies of Mexico and the Caribbean Basin, who are major exporters to the U.S., but it

also creates a protectionist sentiment in the United States. This makes it very difficult for the Bush administration, and for all of us who believe in free trade and economic integration, to put together a coalition toward improved hemispheric relations. This is because the American people then begin to say that unemployment is rising, and all of these imports are coming in, and immigrants are coming in, etc., etc. So, the health of the U.S. economy is a critical push-away factor at this time. We will need to get this resolved and hopefully make this a "V-shaped" type upturn. I think it will be, and maybe toward the end of the year it will begin to upturn again – but watch that curve.

Second, the economic and political troubles in the Andean Group (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela):

There is significant divergence in Latin American economic and political performance. Again, the average is not representative of central tendency, like we say in economics. We have the Andean Group, which is in real trouble. This could lead to an eventual "contagion" impact on the rest of the region, especially if the U.S. economy remains "flat" for a longer period than currently expected.

Mr. Castañeda, today I read in the Latin American news of *El Nuevo Herald*, which I always read and think is terrific, that President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela has decided that state banks will not charge interest "to the poor." This means they will get free loans with no interest. He went to Saudi Arabia and he found out that there is no interest on loans from banks in that country. But, they do charge fees. The Sandinistas tried to do that. They gave free loans with no interest and had hyperinflation. We all know what happened in Nicaragua – it was ten years of tremendous downturn. So, President Chávez is someone who worries me a lot and I'm sure who worries a lot of you. He's got a major economy and is a major provider of petroleum to the United States, and he is a key ally of the U.S. and is in a considerable position. Leadership in Venezuela is what is needed, and I am a little concerned about Mr. Chávez in power and some of the things he is doing there. And of course, a lot of Venezuelan middle class and professional groups are now here. You may have seen some of

the reporting that has called the Weston (Broward) area here the "Westonzuela," and the western Broward area, "Westernzuela." That may be good for Miami's short-term, in terms of people coming in and buying condos and doing business here, but certainly we need a healthy Venezuela to provide leadership in the Andean Group.

Colombia's civil war continues. Hopefully, President Pastrana will be able to put things together with the assistance of the U.S. It is a serious issue. Again, many Colombians are now making Miami their home. It is difficult to talk about free trade and open markets and improved hemispheric relations with these problems going on in this part of the world, in Colombia and in Venezuela in the Andean Group.

In Peru, Fujimori had a golden chance to build the institutions of democracy, and he blew it. He is now exiled in Japan. We don't know what is going to happen in Peru, which is a key Andean Group and Pacific Rim country for us in the Americas.

In Ecuador, the process continues of public marches and counter-marches. The tragedy of Ecuador, unfortunately, continues.

So, the Andean Group countries of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador are in some serious trouble. If this continues it can have a contagious effect on the rest of the Americas. If we have a case of a significant U.S. downturn, as well as increased problems in the Andean Group, then we will be talking about stabilization policies throughout the region as opposed to free trade and economic integration.

Third, there is only tepid support for free trade and bold Latin American initiatives in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The so-called "People's House," in turn, reflects the opinion of many U.S. citizens. In essence, the U.S. Hispanic community, business groups, and key internationally-oriented states such as Florida, Texas, California, and New York interested in improved Latin American relations need to develop a comprehensive grassroots campaign to inform Congress and citizens of the importance of hemispheric relations, Trade Promotion Authority

(TPA) for the President to complete the FTAA, and funding support for the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, USAID, and others.

Fourth, protected industries in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America are certainly not supportive of improved economic relations:

There are "winners" and "losers" in free trade. Agriculture and basic industries are a case in point. They are likely to resist efforts at open markets. These are key industries that will require significant worker adjustment assistance in order to gain their support.

Fifth, many countries in Latin America have yet to foster entrepreneurial capitalism, which could lead to a reversal of liberal economic reforms in many nations:

We see popular opinion turning in countries such as Nicaragua, Argentina, Venezuela, and others against free-market reforms. This is due to the failure, that must be corrected, to implement civil society measures leading to entrepreneurial capitalism and to a growing standard of living for all citizens.

CONCLUSIONS

I believe that "pull" factors leading to steadily improving U.S.-Latin American relations will "carry the day." However, there will continue to be "bumps and bruises" along the way. We are currently in such a period, with soft economic activity in the U.S. and

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U.S. Hispanics, given their multicultural and multilingual capabilities, can be key assets for enlightened U.S. policies toward the emerging markets of the Americas.
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many Latin American economies. Therefore, the U.S. Hispanic community and its leadership need to play a more active and constructive role in

improving the tone and substance of hemispheric relations. U.S. Hispanics, given their multicultural and multilingual capabilities, can be key assets for enlightened U.S. policies toward the emerging markets of the Americas.

U.S. MEDIA COVERAGE OF LATIN AMERICAN NEWS

CARLOS CASTAÑEDA

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News coverage of Latin America, or the lack of coverage, is an old topic of debate. Forty years ago, Senator Hubert Humphrey, in a panel discussing this issue at the Washington Press Club, also complained about the lack of interest of the Latin American Press in America. Mr. Humphrey said: "Looking at a list of foreign correspondents permanently assigned to cover the White House and the State Department, I just found one name: Carlos Castanda."

I am Carlos "Castanda."

Those were the days when James Reston, the respected editor and columnist of *The New York Times*, used to say, "Readers are able to do what would be necessary for Latin America *except read* about Latin America."

And, at the peak of the Cold War and Vietnam, the then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, alleged about Latin America, "Only Brazil is important in that part of the World."

Fortunately, times have changed. From the "exotic, erotic, and chaotic" coverage, as a Brazilian colleague used to define the American press newsgathering in Latin America, to what it is today, there has been a tremendous improvement. Most of the American correspondents covering the region speak Spanish and Portuguese, or were born in a Latin American country, and they speak the languages fluently. American correspondents have improved their personal backgrounds and have a better knowledge of Latin American politics and economic situations. This improvement has given them a more independent point of view, and they do not

reflect in their stories the position of American diplomats or businessmen, as it used to happen 15 to 20 years ago.

Although the square footage occupied by offices of the American media in Latin America has dwindled, today more correspondents are assigned to this area than in the early 1990's. A legion of

stringers and contributors are scattered in several countries. Brazil and Mexico are still the main focus of attention, but most of the media keep an eye on Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, and Argentina.

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..... Unfortunately, the echo left by the Reston statement regarding readers' lack of interest still resounds in many newsrooms. Most editors maintain a folkloric vision of this hemisphere. They are only interested in catastrophes, political violence, or drug traffic – these are the only topics, according to them, that deserve headlines, news space, or time in broadcasting networks. Also, readers have been nurtured to keep old stereotypes about Latin American countries and their people.

It is of utmost priority for the press to improve the quality of newsgathering. Latin America deserves more attention. Editors should understand how Latin American countries are becoming political and trading partners of the United States. Mexico and Canada are now the main commercial markets of the U.S.; Brazil and Mexico are

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They are only interested in catastrophes, political violence, or drug traffic – these are the only topics, according to them, that deserve headlines, news space, or time in broadcasting networks.
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..... among the 20 most important industrial countries of the world. And within ten years, as President George Bush said yesterday in a press

CONNECTING THE AMERICAS

conference, a free trade zone should be working at full speed in this hemisphere.

It is time for the press to take a more humble approach and listen to what the Latin American countries want to express and understand their political and economic roles as partners of the United States. It is

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.....

essential for readers and TV viewers to become aware of upcoming international and commercial trends. Writers and editors should be more immersed in understanding the different traditions and cultures that surround us, as well as the political and economic

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backgrounds of all Latin American countries. The press should broaden its vision to improve the perception of local and regional events, with less bias and greater understanding

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It is time for the press to take a more humble approach and listen to what the Latin American countries want to express and understand their political and economic roles as partners of the United States.
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of everything that is involved – that is, the press should be more “diverse.”

It is a challenge for the media on both sides of the hemisphere. If we fail, the Internet will fill the vacuum.

CONCLUSION

BENJAMIN ESCÁRCEGA

PROGRAM COORDINATOR, HISPANIC COUNCIL ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The panelists recognize the importance and necessity of a future Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and increased ties with our Latin American neighbors. The predilection to lead the Western Hemisphere into a future of increased prosperity for all on the basis of trade results from the undeniable recognition that market economies, under the guidance of virtuous leaders, have shown to be the strongest driver for human excellence. Fortunately, there are myriad forms of capitalism, and these can be applied to all sectors of society through increased hemispheric cooperation.

Such cooperation is inevitable as we embark on what, it is hoped, will one day be referred to as "the Century of the Americas." If we in the United States, by virtue of being the economically strongest and freest nation in the world, wish to expand our prosperity beyond our borders for the benefit of not only ourselves, but also of others, then it must be done under the responsible guidance of our nation's leaders. As was mentioned many times by the panelists, U.S. Hispanics are in the unprecedented position to help lead the United States, and the rest of the hemisphere, into the new era. We are at the threshold of going from being key participants in making the 20th century the "American Century" to being the drivers of the Century of the Americas. In this new era of globalization, facilitated by such fantastic technologies as the Internet, cellular telephones, satellite-guided global positioning systems, and Handheld Palm™ devices, we are reevaluating the meanings of the words "distance," "human connectivity," and "communication." Never before have we been so interdependent. Prepared U.S. Latinos, therefore, as well as culturally sensitive non-Latinos, as Antonio Villamil said, are needed to make this transition peaceful in the Americas.

Each of the panelists described key necessities for making this a venerable Century of the Americas. Frank Gómez rightly

stated that "the re-affirmation of democratic principles, the strengthening of still fragile democratic institutions, transparency in governance and business, and addressing the plight of the less fortunate are mutually dependent, interrelated issues that are essential to continued progress and hemispheric cooperation."

Remedios Díaz Oliver highlighted the crucial importance of a healthy political environment by affirming that "economic growth is a direct result of political stability."

Ambassador Ambler Moss expressed the geopolitical significance of the U.S. President having fast-track authority, or what is now called Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), by noting that "when the Latin American trade negotiators see the U.S. coming along without fast-track authority, it undermines the credibility of this country enormously."

Antonio Villamil highlighted the distinctive "push" and "pull" factors forcing the hemisphere's economies. He concluded with the belief that the pull factors will lead to "steadily improving U.S.-Latin American relations," and cited NAFTA and the new U.S. and Mexican administrations as examples.

Carlos Castañeda spoke of the increasingly-qualified journalists who cover Latin America, and recognized that improved coverage is a "challenge for the media on both sides of the hemisphere." He said the media must become more "diverse" and go beyond the limited coverage of "catastrophes, political violence, [and] drug traffic."

There are certain aspects that each of the panelists' visions share, including 1) the importance and value of the FTAA, 2) the value of U.S. Hispanics in relations with the rest of the Americas, and 3) the inevitable movement toward increased hemispheric interdependence and the need to harness the future of social, political, and economic relations.

As we begin this new Century of the Americas, let us take heed of the valuable insight and recommendations these recognized leaders have provided, and promote U.S. Latino leadership for responsible increased hemispheric cooperation for future generations.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

DR. EDUARDO GAMARRA

Dr. Gamarra is a Ph.D. professor in the Department of Political Science and Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University. He is the editor of *Hemisphere*, and author, co-author, and editor of several books including *Revolution and Reaction: Bolivia 1964 – 1985* (1988); three volumes of the *Latin America and Caribbean Contemporary Record*; *Latin American Political Economy in the Age of Neoliberal Reform* (1994); *Democracy Markets and Structural Reform in Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico* (1995); and *Entre la Droga y la Democracia* (1994). He has authored over 40 articles on Latin America, and has testified in the U.S. Congress on drug policy toward Latin America. His current research focuses on the political economy of narcotics trafficking in the Andean region and the Caribbean, democratization, and civil-military relations.

He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Pittsburgh, and has been affiliated with Florida International University since 1986.

REMEDIOS DÍAZ OLIVER

Mrs. Díaz Oliver is President and CEO of All American Containers, Inc., National President of the Hispanic Development Center for the American Cancer Society, Chairperson of the Carlos J. Finlay Society, and Former Director of the Little Havana Activities Center, Miami Children's Hospital, and American Hospital. She is actively involved in business and charitable organizations.

She has served on the board of directors at Avon Products, Inc., Barnett Bank (Bank of America), Florida Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Infants in Need, Hamilton Bank Foundation, and

Hispanic Heritage, and is Emeritus Director of U.S. West, Inc. (Q-West - Denver, CO). In 1988 she was appointed as a member of the Advisory Board - Trade Policy and Negotiations in International Policy for the President of the United States and was reappointed in 1991.

Mrs. Díaz Oliver holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Havana University and Havana Business College and a Doctorate in Education from Havana University.

AMBASSADOR AMBLER MOSS

Amb. Moss is presently Director of the Dante B. Fascell North-South Center and Professor of International Studies at the University of Miami. He is Counsel to the law firm of Greenberg Traurig in Miami. He was the founding Dean of the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Miami and held that position from 1984 to 1994. From 1977 to 1978 he was involved with the negotiation of the U.S.-Panama Canal Treaties and their ratification, and was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations. In 1978, he was appointed as Ambassador to Panama and member of the U.S.-Panama Consultative Committee where he served until 1982. He was appointed to the same Committee by President Clinton in January 1995. Previously, as a member of the career Foreign Service, he served in Spain, in the U.S. Delegation to the Organization of American States, and as Spanish Desk Officer in the Department of State.

Amb. Moss has received decorations from the governments of Spain, Panama, Argentina, and Catalonia, and received the Harold Weill Medal from New York University School of Law, and the U.S. Department of the Army Commander's Award for public service. Amb. Moss received his B.A. from Yale University in 1960 and his J.D. in 1970 from the George Washington University.

JOSÉ ANTONIO VILLAMIL

Mr. Villamil is CEO of the Washington Economics Group, Inc. He served as Director of the Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development Office of Florida under Governor Jeb Bush, and is currently Chairperson of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors and member of the board of directors of Enterprise Florida.

During 1989-1993 he served as United States Undersecretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs in the administration of former President George Bush. Most recently, he was appointed to President George W. Bush's Transition Advisory Committee on U.S. commercial and trade policies.

He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in economics from Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge, where he also completed coursework for the Ph.D. degree. In 1991, Florida International University awarded him, upon recommendation of the Graduate Faculty, a Doctor of Science degree in Economics (Honoris Causa) for "outstanding contributions to the nation in the field of economics."

CARLOS CASTAÑEDA

Mr. Castañeda is the editor and publisher of *El Nuevo Herald*. Previously, he spent nearly 25 years as editor-in-chief of *El Nuevo Día* in Puerto Rico and was managing editor for *Life en Español* in New York City. He has served as a consultant to more than 25 dailies throughout Latin America and is a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Society of Newspaper Design, and the Interamerican Press Association, where he has served as vice president of the Committee for Freedom of the Press.

Mr. Castañeda began his career in Havana, Cuba as a sports commentator. He later worked as a sports writer for *El Mundo*, one of the leading newspapers in Cuba. In Cuba he became editor and

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He holds a degree in Journalism from the University of Havana, and also attended the University of Missouri School of Journalism under a scholarship from the U.S. government.

FRANK D. GÓMEZ

Mr. Gómez is Director of Media Relations for Philip Morris Management Corporation, and is the Chairman of the Hispanic Council on International Relations (HCIR). He is a former career Foreign Service Officer, and was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. At the State Department he founded and was President of the Hispanic Employees Council and was Founder-President of the Coalition of Federal Hispanic Employee Organizations. In 1982, he was a founder of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. In New York, he founded the Corporate Advisory Board of the Coalition for Adoptable Children. He also was a principal force behind the creation of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA).

Mr. Gómez received five outstanding service awards in the Foreign Service, and was a Jaycees Outstanding Young Man of America. He has been honored, among others, by the Partners of the Americas, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Republican National Hispanic Assembly. In 2000 he received New York University's Outstanding Service Award.

A graduate of the University of Washington, he holds an MPA from George Washington University, completed a graduate fellowship at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and completed Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management's Advanced Executive Program.

EDUARDO J. GÓMEZ

Mr. Gómez is currently a Research Associate working at Research and Development's (RAND) Washington, D.C. office. His research focuses on the political economy of economic reform in developing nations. Recently his work has been on the design of political party systems and hard budget constraints in Brazil, with comparison to India, Russia, Hungary, and Argentina. He has completed several journal articles and book reviews in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, and *Comparative Studies in International Development*.

Mr. Gómez is Chair of the Latin American Studies Association's section titled "Decentralization and Sub-national Governance," and is Editor of their publication by the same name. He is Editor of the website publication for the International Studies Program at the American Political Science Association, and Referee for *Comparative Political Studies*.

He holds a B.A. and an M.A. in Government and Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Chicago, and is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Economy at Brown University.

BENJAMIN ESCÁRCEGA

Mr. Escárcega, formerly an HCIR Fellow, is now the Program Coordinator at the Hispanic Council on International Relations. In both capacities he has helped to plan and execute the series of forums around the country of which this report is part. He has taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in Kwangju, South Korea, and at the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Avanzados (CINVESTAV) in Mexico City.

Originally from Mexico City, he received his primary and secondary education in Tennessee. He is a dual-citizen of the United States and Mexico. He holds a B.A. in International Geography from Vassar College in New York, completed a semester of study at Denmark's International Studies (DiS) Program in Copenhagen, and graduated from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México's Centro de Enseñanza Para Extranjeros.

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