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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 8, 1990

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AND PRESIDENT PAZ ZAMORA OF BOLIVIA  
UPON DEPARTURE

South Portico

1:36 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: President Paz and distinguished members of the Bolivian delegation, it really has been a great pleasure to meet with you to discuss the issues of importance to both our countries. President Paz and I first met last September at the United Nations in New York, where I was addressing the General Assembly on making the world more secure and furthering our chemical weapons agreement. Last February, we joined with our fellow presidents from Colombia and Peru in Cartagena, where we agreed on the need to control a different type of chemical threat -- by securing strong international cooperation in the fight against narcotics trafficking.

Today, our conversations have been wide-ranging and, from my view at least, very productive. We've discussed the deep aspirations for democracy that we share for the entire hemisphere, believing that it one day will be the first totally democratic hemisphere in the world.

I am very sorry, Mr. President, that Barbara is not here. Right now, she and our son, Jeb, and our Chief of Staff John Sununu, are in Central America representing the United States at the inauguration of President Calderon in Costa Rica.

But, look, the United States has been very impressed, Mr. President, by the tough economic measures that have been taken in Bolivia over the past five years. A strong economy is one of the building blocks of a strong democracy. So our economic and trade discussions dealt with the improved investment climate in Bolivia and the advantages of open markets -- for both the United States and Bolivia. Alternative development are two key words -- alternative developments. Because we share your aspiration that the people will benefit from these bold economic measures that you have taken. And so it's in this total context that we're building a framework for the implementation of our assistance agreement with Bolivia.

President Paz, both in New York and Cartagena, emphasized the importance of development assistance to his country, something that the United States has long supported. This fiscal year, the U.S. will provide Bolivia with about \$88 million in economic aid. And with the approval of Congress, it is my hope that our assistance next year will increase substantially.

The United States has also been impressed by what Bolivia has done during the past decade to strengthen its democratic institutions.

But President Paz and I both know that the dangers facing democratic institutions -- one of the dangers is this whole concept of international narcotics trafficking. And so in Cartagena, we forged an unprecedented alliance against both trafficking and use, and today we're continuing to build on our comprehensive international drug control strategy on a number of fronts, by way of example. In the first four months of this year, Bolivia has eradicated more acres of illegal coca than it did all last year --

MORE

just in four months. In fact, if the current pace of eradication is maintained, Bolivia may be able to eliminate all coca grown within its border for illegal use. That would truly be a brave battle won in the war against drugs. And we in the United States should give total cooperation to this courageous President.

On the economic front, the United States and Bolivia will also sign an agreement creating a high-level trade and investment consultative mechanism, because we want to help Bolivia get the word out that Bolivia is a country that deserves and, indeed, needs more investment. And I told the President that I want very much to do my part -- we want to do our part to help.

Bolivia is making this progress because President Paz has wisely adopted an integrated strategy -- an integrated strategy of eradication, interdiction, and alternative development -- I stress that again -- to fight the cocaine trade. But we also realize that long-term success in the struggle depends also on the will of the people of the United States, to leave lives that are free from the temptation of drugs and to help those who are too weak to help themselves. The war against drugs is being fought in the Andes Mountains and Chaco plains of Bolivia, but it is also being fought in the schools and streets of the United States. And I am determined, Mr. President, to do my level best to reduce demand -- rampant demand -- in this country.

Mr. President, let me just assure you that you and your countrymen will not stand alone in the fight against cocaine, or in the drive for economic development. Because we do want what you want, and that is economic benefit for your people. So together, we're going to wage a strong fight. I look forward to continuing our relationship of cooperation and consultation.

And again, it was a great pleasure welcoming you to the White House. And might I say on a personal basis what a pleasure it was to meet those two fine sons of yours. Welcome, sir. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT PAZ: My dear friend, President George Bush, and esteemed colleagues and assistants and ministers, dear friends from North America and from Bolivia. A bit before arriving here to the United States, I received a very warm letter from President Bush where he pointed out that now, more than ever, we should make our America a common home. When I read this phrase, I became very emotional, but now after having visited the President here in the White House, these feelings have become a conviction.

Once again, I am convinced that you would like for us -- all of us -- to work jointly to make our Americas a common home. And a common home has to be taken care of. It has to be loved, it has to be nourished, and one has to help the weakest parts of the home, and among all of us, get results.

I think we are working in that spirit, Mr. President; I think we will attain it. I want you to be very certain that Bolivia, because of a sovereign decision of its people, is a full-time member working towards this common home. We are fervent allies, and we are ready to give you all of our efforts and all of our cooperation in a very clear way, in a very efficient way, to everything that would be of a common interest. And this is why I would like to thank you and express my appreciation, Mr. President, because we have found in you and your government a true understanding of what happens in our hemisphere and what happens between our relations and in Bolivia.

You have understood the sacrifice that has cost our people in these economic adjustments. You have understood the hope of growth and the hope of development that the Bolivian people feel. And you have understood the effort that the Bolivians are doing to contribute to this fight against drugs. And we are aware of this common responsibility that involves Bolivia also.

You have given me the honor of citing a couple of amounts of numbers of what Bolivia has attained a few minutes ago that are

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completely true. And I am glad that you have understood this to make a further contribution to what we call an alternative development which will carry forward along with efficient work in interdiction and prevention.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I thank you for mentioning my children. Well, I brought them to just come with me, to be with me, but also so that you could see this new youth that is growing in Bolivia. Thank you. And I know we're going to have very efficient results. And this is a new stage to our relationship. (Applause.)

END

1:50 P.M. EDT