

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Folder Title:

SOA [Summit of the Americas] - 1998 (Papers Prepared by State): Q and As

Staff Office-Individual:

Inter-American Affairs-Feinberg, Richard

Original OA/ID Number:

1521

Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:	Stack:
37	6	4	1	V

QUESTION AND ANSWER

ARGENTINA: UK'S ROLE ON ARMS TRANSFERS TO ARGENTINA

Q: What role does the UK play in U.S. decisions on arms transfers to Argentina?

A: Our decisions on arms transfers to Argentina or any country are national decisions taken on the basis of the criteria we have established. Among those criteria for Latin America are the strengthening of regional security and stability within the context of restraint, confidence building and transparency. In that regard, we take into consideration the positions and views of all states with legitimate security interests in the region, including those of the UK. We also consult on arms transfer issues with the UK and our other partners within the Wassenaar Arrangement on conventional arms exports, as they do with us.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CENTRAL AMERICA: IMMIGRATION - AMENDMENT OF NACARA TO INCLUDE OTHER GROUPS

Q: Your administration succeeded in getting legislation passed last year that granted amnesty to Nicaraguans and Cubans while making it easier for Guatemalans and Salvadorans to get permanent residence. When are you going to address the inequalities of that legislation and grant the same status to all, especially Haitians and Hondurans?

A: The Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) provides relief to many Central Americans who fled the violence of the last decade and established strong ties to the United States. The Department of Justice is developing regulations that, as I requested, will help to diminish the disparities in this legislation.

Legislation passed by Congress waives new, stricter rules for some groups while imposing them on others. I do support the provision of special relief to Haitians forced to flee their country because of persecution and civil strife and note that Congress is actively considering several proposals that would benefit this group. We are also trying to change some of the rules to ensure greater fairness for all persons, including Hondurans, who had pending cases when the recent immigration law took effect.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

GUATEMALA: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE ACCORD

Q: How would you rate Guatemala on implementation of the peace accords? Does the U.S. Government provide support for this?

A: The Guatemalan Government and people have made a tremendous effort to implement the December 1996 final peace accord. They have accomplished much. The demobilization of ex-combatants was carried out effectively, quickly and without incident. Approximately 200,000 members of the civilian defense patrols were demobilized. The military has also downsized, reaching the level mandated by the peace accords ahead of schedule. Guatemala has improved significantly its human rights performance and there is unprecedented openness and debate on key issues.

Great challenges lay ahead, particularly in meeting revenue and spending targets set by the accords. Confronting the twin problems of crime and impunity is essential as well. A lasting peace requires continuing political, judicial, social and economic change. No one thinks this will be easy. It will require as much courage and vision as that needed to end the civil war.

Of course, primary responsibility for peace accord implementation is with the Guatemalans. The U.S. Government, however, is proud to be part of this effort. We have pledged 260 million dollars for the 1997-2000 period to be used for accord implementation. We will continue to support Guatemala's transition -- not just financially but also by remaining engaged with the government, civil society, and the private sector to help them address the key institutional reforms necessary to assure the consolidation of peace.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STRENGTHENING MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Q: Why is the Summit process helping strengthen municipal and regional government?

A: Many of the hemisphere's nations are engaged in a major effort to decentralize government. We support that effort.

Q: What do municipal and regional governments lack in the region?

A: Public participation, financial transparency, and greater subnational government responsibility and resources are the ingredients for building effective and more accountable subnational government.

Q: Can you give us some detail on what we intend to do to help?

A: USAID is establishing a donor consultative group on local government. We anticipate that the IDB, World Bank, OAS, and other bilateral donors will cooperate in this effort.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

REFORM OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

Q: Is it true that during the Santiago Summit there was a strong feeling that the Inter-American system needs to be reformed?

A: All institutions must adapt to changed environments and needs in order to remain relevant. And certainly as we enter a new century, it is an appropriate time to conduct a thorough review of hemispheric institutions.

Q: Does the U.S. have any specific recommendations for reforming the Inter-American System?

A: The United States welcomes discussion about how to enhance the utility of the Inter-American institutions to make them responsive to the needs of all our people. Institutional change, however, must take place carefully with the widest agreement possible among participants.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SANTIAGO SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP

Q: How do you intend to implement the rather ambitious Santiago Summit Action Plan?

A: After the Miami Summit, our governments undertook a rigorous implementation process that taught us a lot about how to carry out hemispheric initiatives. We have learned that the best formula for success is to have a systematic process in which every government participates and is held accountable for its progress. While governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Santiago Action Plan domestically and internationally, they also have the support of the key institutions such as the OAS, IDB, and World Bank. The World Bank and IDB have identified more than \$44 billion in loans to support follow-up efforts in the next three years, and USAID plans to spend more than \$980 million in the next three years. We also look forward to the participation of individuals, civil society groups, and the private sector in this endeavor. This is a daunting challenge, but together we can succeed.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

OAS ROLE IN SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP

Q: What is the role of the Organization of American States in Summit follow-up?

A: The OAS is the hemisphere's representative political forum and, as such, is uniquely qualified to implement Summit mandates. The OAS has a solid record of supporting the follow-up efforts for the Miami and Santa Cruz Summits. For example, working through the Organization, governments negotiated the world's first anti-corruption convention and a hemispheric convention on the control of illegal firearms. We support a strengthened role for the OAS and the other hemispheric institutions -- the IDB, PAHO, and ECLAC -- in helping governments fulfill Summit objectives.

In the Santiago Action Plan, the leaders have given the OAS specific mandates to carry out, taking into account the comparative advantages the Organization has in specific sectors. We also ask the OAS to maintain the "institutional memory" of the Summit process, so that governments will be kept aware of their hemispheric commitments. We believe the OAS can also play a part, in collaboration with the Summit Implementation Review Group, in preparing the agenda for the next Summit of the Americas.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Q: Why are we helping strengthen civil society in the Summit Process. Don't we trust the democratic governments in the region?

A: The United States recognizes the value of citizen input into the democratic process beyond periodic elections. We support a strong initiative on civil society.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CAPITAL MARKETS

Q: Why is it important to strengthen, modernize and integrate hemispheric financial markets?

A: One of the key lessons of the financial instability in Asia is the importance of healthy financial systems. Latin America's progress on economic reform and the relative soundness of its financial sector helped shield it from the financial turmoil that swept through Asia.

We must persevere in our efforts to ensure that financial instability does not affect the countries of the hemisphere. Last December, our Finance Ministers completed the initial steps in this joint effort by pledging to work together to ensure sound macroeconomic policies, strong financial systems and transparent economic and financial data.

Heads of State of all 34 Summit countries have instructed our Finance Ministers to implement the Basle Committee's "Core Principles of Effective Banking Supervision." This will make our region the first in the world to do so. Fulfillment of this and the other items in the Ministers' action plan will help ensure that the hemisphere's financial system is transparent, efficient and sound.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Q: You called on the OAS to strengthen support for freedom of the press during your October 1997 visit to South America. Do you think the recent decision of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS to establish a "Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression" is likely to improve the climate for press freedom in the Americas?

A: Absolutely. We welcome warmly the decision of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to establish a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and we will support strongly the Rapporteur's vital work. I understand that the Commission will shortly select a full-time professional as Rapporteur and has defined a broad mandate: preparing annual and thematic reports on the state of freedom of expression in the Americas and serving an "early warning" function by bringing to the Commission's attention matters involving threats to freedom of expression. The key is the strong support for press freedom given by all of the hemisphere's 34 democratically elected governments.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CORRUPTION

Q: The U.S. signed the OAS Inter-American Convention Against Corruption in 1996. Do you intend to ratify it? How can we follow up and ensure that the Convention makes a difference in combating corruption?

A: Fighting corruption is essential if we are to consolidate democratic gains and promote sustainable economic growth in the Americas. The Summit initiative emphasizes the importance of ratifying the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, which entered into force in March 1997. The U.S. signed the Convention in 1996. In addition, governments also commit to the "Inter-American Program to Combat Corruption" developed at the OAS, two of whose elements are of particular importance: the drafting of codes of conduct for public officials, and the promotion of domestic legislation requiring senior public officials to disclose their personal assets and liabilities. Both developments, if achieved, would increase transparency and strengthen accountability.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

Q: Indigenous communities often feel left on the sidelines when decisions are taken which affect their daily lives. What is the Summit doing to change this? Is the OAS doing anything to improve the situation of indigenous populations in the Americas?

A: We firmly believe that indigenous communities must be active participants in the development and operation of all projects designed to ensure the fullest participation of indigenous people at all levels of society. We want also to emphasize the critical importance of education. As we strive to meet our goals, we want to ensure that all members of indigenous communities, regardless of gender, have access to educational opportunities. For its part, the OAS should continue examining the possibility of a declaration on the rights of indigenous communities.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

TERRORISM

Q: Terrorism was an agenda item at the Miami Summit. What has this Summit done about terrorism?

A: We are calling on all Western Hemisphere countries to become a party to all eleven international terrorism conventions, and to ensure that national laws address the threat of terrorism by criminalizing terrorist acts and creating procedures to extradite terrorists.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

HAITI: POLITICAL IMPASSE

Q: Why has the Haitian political impasse dragged on nearly one year, and what is the U.S. doing to end it?

A: Haiti's young democracy is attempting to work through and resolve complex separation of powers and electoral issues. In contrast to the Haiti of old where political disputes were settled through violence and bloodshed, Haiti's current leaders are engaged in peaceful negotiations. We continue to urge Haitian leaders to resolve the impasse quickly so that Haiti can move forward.

U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE

Q: What is the U.S. military doing in Haiti and when are they leaving?

A: Since April 1996, the Department of Defense has conducted training deployments in Haiti which provide military engineers, medical units and others with valuable real-world experience while completing humanitarian and civic assistance projects that benefit ordinary Haitians. These projects, which are mutually agreed upon by the U.S. and Haitian governments, include road and medical clinic renovations, the drilling of public wells, and provision of limited health care to Haitians. Over the past two years the number of U.S. military personnel has ranged between 400 and 550. Although these training deployments are not indefinite, we have no immediate plans for their termination.

INCREASED U.S. ASSISTANCE

Q: Is the U.S. proposing increased assistance? Why?

A: For fiscal year 1999, we propose \$140 million in assistance to Haiti, an increase over our present assistance of \$70 million. The increased assistance will be focused on the rural areas and secondary cities outside of Port-au-Prince, areas where the majority of Haitians live and where development is most lacking. Our strong national interest in Haiti's progress toward democracy, stability and economic growth requires our engagement, patience and, where necessary, our increased assistance.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PERU: POSSIBLE FUJIMORI CAMPAIGN IN 2000

- Q. It appears that President Fujimori in 2000 may run for what might be an unconstitutional third term. What can you say about this?
- A. The United States does not comment on individual candidacies in foreign elections. Our concern in Peru, as elsewhere, is simply that any elections held be free and fair and in accordance with established laws.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PERU: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

- Q. The U.S. Department of State's annual report on human rights documents significant human rights shortcomings on the part of the Fujimori government. Why does the United States continue to provide counternarcotics and other assistance to the Peruvian government?
- A. Peru's success in fighting illegal drugs, as well as its success in combating terrorism and reforming its economy, is recognized throughout the hemisphere. Such achievements, to be sustained in the long-term, must be supported by a strong democracy and respect for human rights. I hope that President Fujimori will make strong democratic institutions and respect for human rights a part of his legacy to Peru.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MODERNIZATION OF THE STATE AND LABOR MINISTRY REFORM

Q: What do you mean by strengthening the state with regard to labor?

A: Ministries of Labor can contribute to the hemispheric integration process by providing high-quality services to workers and employers that facilitate the operation of labor markets and allow the broadest number of workers to be in a position to benefit from the opportunities of hemispheric integration.

Q: What do Labor Ministries in the region lack?

A: Many of the Ministries of Labor of the region do not now have sufficient expertise or resources to carry out their functions effectively.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Q: Why should the United States care about Latin American infrastructure? We have our own infrastructure problems to worry about.

A: Infrastructure development and maintenance are crucial to economic growth and international trade. Safe, efficient transportation and telecommunications systems in Latin America will mean more U.S. exports and more U.S. jobs. We encourage the liberalization of infrastructure investment markets within the hemisphere, hoping to attract private capital and create more efficient trading opportunities for the United States and its Latin American neighbors.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Q: Why are we worrying about issues like science and technology when what the hemisphere needs are practical solutions to its many problems?

A: Cooperative sharing of science and technology and their practical application will enable the entire region to deal more effectively with El Nino and other natural hazards.

Q: How are we going to do this, through more academic research?

A: Through encouraging the growth of our communication and information industries, for example, we can create the potential to bring enormous amounts of knowledge to bear on the challenges that confront us. We believe that the development of a seamless, global "network of networks," which provides high speed communications links to every city, town and village, will foster economic growth, advance scientific knowledge sharing and dissemination, and improve the quality of life for everyone.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CHILE: CUBAN MARCH 20 MEASURES

Q: Why is the President taking these steps?

A: The President wants to build on the Pope's visit to Cuba by supporting the increased opening of religious freedom, expanding humanitarian assistance to the Cuban people, strengthening independent civil society, and helping the Cuban people prepare for a peaceful transition to democracy.

Reaching out to, supporting, and increasing contact with the Cuban people are all critical to our efforts to promote a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba.

The President has looked for steps that provide maximum benefit to the Cuban people, while not supporting the Cuban Government.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

COLOMBIA: GUERRILLA VIOLENCE, PEACE PROCESS

Q: What is the U.S. doing to help Colombia with its violent civil conflict? Is your assistance for counterinsurgency purposes? Are you involved in efforts for peace?

A: We condemn the guerrillas and the illegal paramilitaries who are waging a brutal war on Colombia's civilian population. We have also called on the Colombian government to ensure that its security forces rigorously respect human rights when conducting security operations. As I mentioned, our decision to grant a national interests certification will enable us to fully engage with the Colombian government in fighting narcotics trafficking and the violence it spawns. However, our assistance is for anti-drug purposes only. We support efforts to end the violence in Colombia and we are considering how we can best support international efforts to create a viable peace process. In this regard, we call on all Colombians to do everything they can to support the quest for peace.