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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

Notes for an address by the
Right Honourable Brian Mulroney,
Prime Minister, before the
Inter-American Press Association

Canada

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As the first Canadian Prime Minister to address an IAPA Convention, I want first to acknowledge the Association's historic role in the promotion and the defence of a free press throughout the hemisphere.

From the time of your foundation, more than 35 years ago, you have stood resolutely and courageously for this fundamental democratic tenet.

Some of your reporters have paid and continue to pay for their convictions with their lives. I pay tribute to your colleague Jose Carrasco Tapia who was brutally murdered in Santiago on the night of September 7.

You are, in a very real sense, the sentinels of freedom. As your own charter States, in a timeless declaration: "without freedom of the press, there is no democracy."

Throughout the hemisphere, you have outwitted and outlasted anti-democratic regimes on the right and on the left. It is in no small measure due to your courage and commitment that in the Americas, democracy is again ascendant.

Tancredo Neves observed after his election as President of Brazil: "There is nothing more noble than a nation that has the strength to reconstruct its own freedom."

Democracy and development -- that's what I want to discuss with you today from a Canadian perspective.

We have pursued a coherent and consistent policy of constructive internationalism.

We want to play a positive, realistic role in the affairs of an increasingly interdependent world.

With our neighbors and friends, the United States and Mexico, we share the riches and the resources of a continent.

With the countries of Central and South America and the Caribbean, we comprise the Americas, nearly one-fourth of the membership of the United Nations.

We place great importance in our membership in the Commonwealth, that remarkable family of nations; and in la Francophonie, that new family of nations.

These organizations represent more than our heritage from our mother countries of Britain and France. They also represent our national duality.

We have an immense partnership with the United States, enriched by shared values and common endeavours.

We have worked hard in the United Nations and other international organizations. We've earned our credentials around the world by what we stand for in the world.

We play an active role in the efforts of international financial organizations, the international monetary fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank to foster economic development and to create an atmosphere of understanding on the external debt issue that is so crucial in our hemisphere.

We are a member of the Atlantic community.

And you need look only as far as Vancouver harbour to remind yourselves that we are a Pacific Rim nation. Some of you also come from Pacific countries.

All of us come from the Americas, all of us have a vital and vested interest in the advancement of hemispheric relations.

We are the inheritors of the new world. From Amerigo Vespucci, the Americas have taken a name. From it, a world takes hope. For the very word is synonymous with liberty and opportunity.

This country has by the nature of our people always stood for tolerance, pluralism, and negotiated solutions. With us, honourable compromise is more than political brokerage, it is an indicator of strength, a way of life. Democracy is also a way of life with us.

From our perspective, democracy and development go hand in hand and we are greatly heartened by its resurgence in our hemisphere. There is a new aura of optimism in the Americas.

Consider the economic progress in Brazil and Argentina since the restoration of democracy in those two great nations -- the kind of progress which can enable these and other countries of the hemisphere to honour their obligations without forsaking growth.

Wherever we come from in the Americas, however we came to the Americas, we have elements of a common heritage of geography, history and culture and a common belief in democracy.

Parts of Vancouver Island, for example, were first charted by the Peruvian explorer, Juan Francisco Quadra. Quadra was among the first, but by no means the last Latin American whose life adventure brought him to Canada. Altogether, some 300,000 Canadians trace their roots to the region.

North and south in the Americas, we have much to learn about one another. The interest of Canadians in the hemisphere is not new. I refer not only to trade and investment flows, to banking and tourism, but to security, stability and solidarity.

To the security of supply, for example, of Venezuelan crude, which accounts for 40 per cent of our imported oil.

To the stability of the hemisphere, to the vouchsafing of our democratic and western values against the menace of terrorism.

To our solidarity in the war against drug abuse. In the southern part of the hemisphere, your governments are in the front line of that war. They are working to reduce the supply push, as we are working to reduce the demand pull.

North and south in the hemisphere, we have a lot to do with one another, more than many of us know.

The region is the second-largest area of direct Canadian investment, second only to the United States, valued at more than \$3 billion.

It is our fourth largest trading area, after the United States, the European Community and Japan. We do more trade with Brazil than with Australia, nearly as much in fact as with the entire Asean region.

Fifty-six per cent of all our exports to the region is in manufactured goods, and our strengths - in transport, communications, energy development, agriculture, mining and resources - are complementary with the needs of the region.

Our share of Latin American imports is about 2.5 per cent, double that in the Caribbean, compared with 1.5 per cent for Canadian exports worldwide, if you exclude the United States.

I think we can do better in your markets, and your countries can do better in ours. I'm talking trade here, and it's most appropriate that I do so today as the ministerial phase of multilateral trade negotiations begins in Uruguay.

In trade, our policy flows in two streams, in the multilateral negotiations in the GATT, and in the bilateral discussions we have undertaken with the United States. These two streams flow in the same direction; they are complementary.

It is absolutely essential for Canada that the multilateral trading network be reinforced, its rules strengthened and the opportunities for third world economies increased.

Our two-way talks with the U.S. will in no way inhibit trading relations with our other partners in the hemisphere and around the world.

Nearly eighty per cent of our exports, some \$95 billion last year, was with the United States. Our imports from the United States, nearly \$75 billion last year, represented some 72% of all Canadian imports. That two-way trading relationship, nearly \$170 billion a year, is the biggest in the world.

Whatever occurs between the world's largest trading partners, with a view to elimination of protectionist measures and reducing tariff and non-tariff trading barriers, is bound to have beneficial results for our other trading partners. We are not only a nation of free traders, we are a nation of fair traders.

We put the concerns of the agricultural sector on the agenda of the Tokyo Summit last May.

We're particularly concerned about the effects on farmers, throughout the hemisphere no less than in Canada, of the spreading agriculture subsidy war between the U.S. and the European Community.

In the Summit Group of Seven Nations, as in the G-7 group of Finance Ministers, in the IMF and the Paris Club, Canada is sympathetic to the concerns of our Latin American partners for a flexible approach to the problems of debt and development.

We know that management of the debt issue is the most daunting challenge facing many Latin American governments.

We know that Latin America's debt burden can be alleviated only through the kind of stabilization and non-inflationary growth we are beginning to see in Brazil and Argentina.

We know that, with an external debt of \$360 billion U.S., and counting every day, there's a financial time bomb ticking in the hemisphere.

We know that it threatens not only to undermine the stability of the international financial system, but our very way of life.

We believe in the north that the situation calls for flexibility in the re-negotiation and re-financing of debtor states loans.

We believe that in the south the situation has required drastic and difficult action, and severe sacrifices.

Having borrowed to grow, the developing nations must be permitted to contribute to the international economy. Canada is firmly on the side of an approach that allows the debtor nations ample time, flexibility and fairness in order to work out reasonable solutions to this problem.

Having taken the appropriate measures to control their debt, they must be permitted through trade to find renewed growth.

It's as simple and as complex as that. It's why we have supported the Baker initiative. And it's one reason why all of us attach so much importance to the meetings which begin today in Punta Del Este.

The Punta Del Este meeting marks the first time the GATT signatories have met in a developing country, and reminds us all of the important role Latin America plays in the world trading system.

We are pleased that Mexico is attending its first meeting of the organization, and expect it to add a strong voice for the interests of the hemisphere in the councils of the world trade organization.

Investment too has its role to play in the restructuring of the emerging economies and Canadian investors need no reminder of the importance of Latin America.

Our people have been Ambassadors for Canada throughout the hemisphere, from investors to industrialists, from missionaries to those Canadians who, in winter, worship the sun.

But I would equally like to point out Canadian financial participation in the region's modernization initiatives.

In Colombia, for example, we are co-financing a \$77 million hydroelectric generator project for Bogota.

In Grenada, our export development corporation, the Canadian International Development Agency and the banks are participating in a \$15 million parallel financing program that will give the Island a new telephone system installed by Northern Telecom. In Peru, Canada has financed the construction of an institute of technology and has provided technical expertise to that institute over the past eight years.

In official development assistance, Canada sends nearly \$200 million to the region each year. That aid reflects our confidence in the future of the Americas.

I know first hand of the immense potential, and the will to succeed, throughout the region.

The Commonwealth-Caribbean meeting in Jamaica last year resulted in Caribcan, a new economic and trade assistance program which has developed from the special relationship between the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada.

Canada's interest in the Caribbean is by no means confined to the Commonwealth States. We have closely monitored and we welcome the change of government, and the evolution towards democracy, in Haiti. We have, in Montreal, the third largest community of expatriate Haitians in the world, driven from their homeland by the brutality of the Duvalier regime, by the circumstance of poverty.

Canada stands ready not only to welcome Haiti to the ranks of free nations, we stand ready with economic assistance, which we're doubling next year to \$13 million. Again, I'm confident that democracy and development will go hand in hand.

We take heart from the growth of democracy in Central America, but are greatly concerned by the current polarization there.

In the past two years, Canada has sent observers to monitor elections in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, and in each case their reports were highly positive. But we are acutely aware of human rights violations in Guatemala and El Salvador, and this continues to be of great concern to us.

Equally, we are aware of grave civil rights violations in Nicaragua. We very much regret and strongly deplore the closing of the newspaper La Prensa, which is represented in this room but not available on the streets of Managua.

I invite the Sandinista leadership to recall the spirit in which their revolution was born. In that spirit, a bishop would not be barred from his pulpit, and a newspaper would not be banned from the streets.

Nor are we in favor of exporting revolution, any more than we approve of third party intervention anywhere in Central America.

Whoever the third party may be, and regardless of its legitimate interests in the area.

We regret the extension of East-West disagreements into the area, and we do not approve of any country supplying arms to any faction in the area.

This is why we support the Contadora initiative, thwarted though it may be, as the best instrument for reconciliation in Central America.

We know that only with development and peace can democracy prosper.

With development, the people of Central America will not turn to totalitarian prescriptions for their economic misfortune, when they can turn to democracy for hope.

Canada has received thousands of Latin American refugees, especially since the overthrow of the Allende government.

We await with impatience the restoration of democratic freedoms in Chile, a cradle of democracy in this hemisphere, where senseless violence by both the opponents and supporters of the present regime has caused yet another setback: Canada condemns this violence in the strongest terms.

But sometimes in North America, we overlook the enduring quality of democracy in South America.

This year of 1986 marks the centenary of the constitution of Colombia, and it is timely to remember the words of General Francisco de Paula Santander, a brother in arms of Simon Bolivar and later President of Colombia.

"If arms have given us independence," he said, "it is the rule of law that assures our liberty."

Sometimes in North America we overlook the history of Latin American democracy, which is continent wide and truly inspired.

Sometimes too we overlook that the founding fathers of your republics were children of the enlightenment.

They have bequeathed to the hemisphere and the world the principles of non-intervention in the sovereign affairs of other nations, and of adherence to the principles of international law.

In Canada, we share in that legacy.

And we will continue to promote that community of interest that has seen us work with many of your nations, enhancing the role of middle powers in the affairs of all nations.

This has been so since the founding of the League of Nations after one war, and of the United Nations after another.

In that sense, we are all heirs and trustees of the democratic traditions of the Americas.

We are all the spiritual descendants of those people indigenous to the Americas as well as those intrepid explorers who made their way across an ocean, seeking the Indian subcontinent, and found the Western hemisphere instead.

And we are all still seeking a new and a better world.

Thank you.