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WILLIAM J. CLINTON

XLII President of the United States: 1993-2001

Remarks at a Reception With President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil in Brasilia

October 13, 1997

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President and Mrs. Cardoso, members of the Brazilian Government, my fellow Americans, honored guests. Let me say, on behalf of all of us who are here, it is wonderful to be in Brazil, but it is especially wonderful for me. I have wanted to come here for a long time, and even more since Hillary returned from her fantastic visit here.

When President Cardoso made his state visit to the United States, I pledged to return the favor. And finally, the day has arrived, and I am in the City of the Sky, glad to be here. Thank you.

Brazil has haunted my imagination for over 30 years, since I first fell in love with your music as a young man. And Brazil has loomed large in my vision of the future of this hemisphere and the world since I became President. I come to Brazil to strengthen our partnership in a spirit of respect and equality, a partnership rooted in common values and common aspirations.

We have been friends in freedom for a long time. In 1824, the United States was the first nation to recognize Brazil's independence. In World War II, Brazil stood by America's side on the battlefields of Europe with a force of 25,000 troops to fight for liberty's survival.

Now, at the dawn of the 21st century, the freedom we cherish is ascendant. Every nation in our hemisphere but one is a democracy. Open markets are taking root. Cooperation and trade are expanding. We have an opportunity to make all the Americas a stronghold of freedom and prosperity, of peace and security, advancing our own well-being and serving as a beacon of hope to others.

With the largest populations and the largest economies in the Americas, sharing both the virtues and the challenges of our size and our diversity, Brazil and the United States both have a special obligation to lead this historic revolution now underway in the Americas.

I applaud President Cardoso, his Government, and the Congress for all you have done to put your country squarely on the path to prosperity, with difficult decisions on economic reform. I hope your reformers and our actions to balance our budget for the first time since 1969 will lay the foundation for a new burst of growth and opportunity throughout our region.

I hope we can work even more closely together to lift the lives of our people by creating new jobs through open markets and open trade, improving education to enable all our children to thrive, expanding access to modern technology to connect all our people to the information age, combating drugs and organized crime, protecting the wonders of our shared environment, and helping our neighbors throughout the hemisphere to resolve their conflicts peacefully.

Already, Brazil has given so much to the United States. You have given us artists like Candido Portinari, whose murals hang in our Library of Congress in Washington; innovative writers like Jorge Amado; and explorers from Alberto Santos-Dumont, the father of aviation, to the Brazilian astronaut who will soon come to NASA to train for the international space station. You have given us athletes, from the magnificent Pele to the World Cup champions who made Los Angeles feel like Rio for a day.

And no matter what language our people speak, you have given us all reason to sing, from the *batucada* of Bahia to the *bossa nova*, from the rhythm of *samba* to the rock of *tropicalismo*, from the quiet *choro* to the lively *forro*. In Brazilian music, many influences come together to form something wonderful and unique. In the same way, the rich diversity of your people and the American people make both our nations special and strong.

Both of us have a long tradition of welcoming immigrants from distant shores who want to build a better life for their children. We share a belief that we can live together and learn together, work together and grow together, no matter what our color, our creed.

In a world where nations are still torn apart because some people fight over their differences when they should respect, accommodate, even celebrate them, Brazil and the United States have a special ability and a special responsibility to show a better way.

Mr. President, as we reach for the future, America reaches out to Brazil with a hand of friendship and a pledge of partnership. We share a vision of a better tomorrow. When I first met you shortly before you were inaugurated President, I said to myself, there is a person who can imagine the future. I hope we will build it together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:22 p.m. in the Brasilia Room at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In his remarks, he referred to President Cardoso's wife, Ruth.

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