



PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DE LA REPÚBLICA
ENRIQUE BOLAÑOS GEYER

RALLY FOR FREE TRADE WITH GOVERNOR NOR BUSH

MIAMI, MONDAY 9TH MAY 2005

1. Governor Bush, my fellow presidents, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.
2. My colleagues and I are visiting the United States and the State of Florida at a crucial time for trade relations between our two countries.
3. In Nicaragua, the National Assembly is considering the CAFTA. In Washington, the US Congress is debating the Agreement.
4. In both countries there is much support for this vital agreement, so beneficial to the United States, to Nicaragua, and to the other parties.
5. Yet, there is also some serious opposition.
6. In Nicaragua, I am totally committed to gaining approval of this Agreement. It is a historic opportunity for Nicaragua to break out of the cycle of poverty, under-development and corruption.
7. I have high hopes that we will succeed in gaining the approval of our National Assembly.
8. Here in the United States, our friend President Bush also faces an important opposition. Many in the US Congress oppose the Agreement. Gaining the necessary votes will not be easy.
9. However, I feel confident President Bush will prevail. Why? Because this Agreement is so much in the foreign policy, national security and economic interests of the United States.
10. Few in this audience need to be reminded that not so many years ago, Central America was a serious foreign policy problem for the US.
11. Conflict, instability, militarism, radicalism, failed economies, and bad government plagued the region. Today, there is a freely elected government in every one of the six Latin American parties to CAFTA. There is peace in

the region, and some economic growth. We are all headed in the right direction.



12. But success is not guaranteed. Anti-democratic forces are still strong in some countries. Poverty still causes great suffering. Corruption weakens governments and the economies.
13. This Free Trade Agreement with the United States gives us tools to strengthen democratic institutions, stimulate faster economic growth and job creation, and accelerate the pace of modernization in our countries.
14. Clearly, these goals are also the goals of President Bush and of the United States—to support and strengthen democracy, to promote good governance, to fight corruption, and to encourage economic growth.
15. As you see, CAFTA is so clearly in the overall best interests of the US foreign policy and national security.
16. Besides, the CAFTA Agreement is economically advantageous to the United States, and to the State of Florida. You will gain the benefits of substantially increased trade between our region and the US. The unilateral benefits of the Caribbean Basin Initiative will be replaced by mutually opened markets.

17. I am aware that there is some concern, including here in Florida, about the modest increase in the sugar import quota given Central America.
18. Let me try to put the sugar issue into some perspective.
19. According to the American Farm Bureau, the US consumes nearly 8 million tons of sugar annually. Six million tons out of domestic production, and two million tons out of imports..
20. In the first year of DR-CAFTA, Central American sugar exports would total about 1.2% of US annual consumption. After 15 years —a decade and a half— Central American sugar exports to the US would represent some 1.7% of US consumption. The total dollar value of the increase in the Central American component of US sugar imports would be \$80 million when fully implemented after 15 years. I invite you to compare that tiny increase with the revenues to US sugar producers... more than \$2 billion.
21. Let's be honest. The increase in sugar imports allowed under the CAFTA is a very small one. It will have almost no measurable impact on sugar production in the United States. At the same time, according to the American farm bureau, overall US agricultural exports under CAFTA will rise by over \$1.3 billion annually.
22. Much of that \$1.3 billion in agricultural exports will flow through Florida, as well as the imports from our region.
23. Governor Bush, honored guests, we need to help each other in Washington. We can help each other in persuading Senators and Representatives from Florida and all the other states, to vote for CAFTA for mutual benefits.

697 Palabras