

**Remarks by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans at the Miami Herald Americas Conference**

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**[As Prepared For Delivery]**

Good morning. Thank you, Luis (Lauredo), for that kind introduction. Thank you to the Miami Herald and to Chairman Ibarguen for inviting me to speak today.

I am impressed by the number of businessmen and women who have traveled here today, not just from the United States but from throughout the Americas, to discuss the future of our global economy as we venture into a century of endless opportunities.

Just think how far we've come -- 10 or 15 years ago this would not have been possible.

Over the last decade, many more countries in the Americas have realized that democracy, free trade and liberalized investment climates are key to future economic growth and prosperity.

Their independent, unilateral reforms -- including tariff reductions, privatizations and a move toward more free trade agreements -- have resulted in an explosion of intra-hemispheric trade.

Even when faced with tough economic times, they have adhered to a policy of open markets, as Argentina continues to do, thereby earning the respect of their trading partners, and the support of international markets and the IMF.

New reforms will be cemented through the rapid completion of the FTAA and the successful launch of a new WTO round.

Latin America has demonstrated immense fortitude and persistence in staying the reform course despite economic setbacks. It is up to all of us now to demonstrate similar fortitude.

President Bush has demonstrated his commitment to open markets and free trade by moving forward on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and pursuing Trade Promotion Authority.

How did we get here? The end of the Cold War has opened doors, removed barriers, and unleashed a surge of energy, innovation and ideas all over the world.

This new beginning, born out of the pursuit of freedom, sparked the technological revolution, and it has not only changed the way we communicate and conduct business, but also has integrated our economies around the world.

Today, information flows instantaneously throughout the world with just the click of a button.

And the number of people who participate in the global market has exploded.

Freedom has been the cornerstone of America for 225 years, and we want to share it with our neighbors and friends around the world.

Back in 1804 a German Baron visited the United States and met with President Thomas Jefferson. During their visit, a newspaper setting on the President's desk caught the Baron's eye. Jefferson noticed his guest's curiosity and offered the paper to the Baron, who proceeded to scan its contents.

As the Baron read the newspaper, his eyes widened in astonishment and surprise. How could President Jefferson have a newspaper in his office that contained such personal criticism?

The Baron turned to Jefferson and asked rather matter-of-fact, "Why is this libelous journal not suppressed? Why do you not fine the editor or imprison him?"

Jefferson smiled and calmly replied, "Put that paper in your pocket, Baron. And if you ever hear the freedom of the United States questioned by leaders or people of other nations, show them this paper and tell them where you found it."

This freedom and liberty of which Jefferson spoke is a precious commodity. And it is America's greatest export.

The principles of democracy, social freedom, and political stability have penetrated the world.

This same freedom is at the heart of President Bush's trade agenda.

America's future growth and prosperity, as well as that of our neighbors, depends on how we develop and compete in foreign markets.

The freer the flow of world trade, the stronger the tides of human progress and peace among nations.

As in Jefferson's day, America is a trading state. In fact, nearly 161,000 jobs here in Florida depend on exports of manufactured goods. With export sales topping \$24 billion, Florida recorded the ninth-largest export total among the states.

Thanks to such efforts, I am pleased to say that today, the United States is the world's largest exporter.

More than 20 percent of the goods produced in the United States are exported, and more than 200,000 U.S. firms are involved in international trade. U.S. exports accounted for nearly one quarter of our economic growth during the past decade.

And with 78 percent of the world's gross domestic product and 95 percent of humanity outside our borders, we must continue to open foreign markets to American exports.

Trade is an integral part of the world's economic and social progress, -- we must continue to push forward. There is much work to be done; and let there be no mistake: the Bush Administration is committed to expanding free and open trade -- particularly in the Western Hemisphere.

The President's trade agenda is aggressive. It seeks to eliminate barriers to U.S. goods, farm products and services.

The President is also committed to keeping electronic commerce free of roadblocks, ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights, and the strict enforcement of our trade agreements.

But to achieve these goals and a successful trade policy that serves the interest of all Americans, the President needs Trade Promotion Authority.

Allow me to explain why this is so important. During my brief tenure as Secretary of Commerce I have already visited Russia, France, Canada, Sweden, Belgium and Argentina. And in the months to come I will return to Russia and Sweden, then on to Mexico and several other countries throughout South America.

As a matter of fact, I am beginning to feel like an export myself.

The key purpose of my trips is to ensure that all trading doors are opened as wide as possible, and I have seen first-hand that free trade works.

Free trade creates new jobs and new income. Trade liberalization is a key factor in the longest period of sustained economic growth in our nation's history. Exports fuel our economy, and their continuing expansion is essential to long-term prosperity.

We estimate that approximately 12 million U.S. jobs are now supported by exports, jobs that pay up to 18% more than the national average.

Exports are clearly beneficial, but imports are also crucial to our prosperity. Imports provide wider choices and lower prices for businesses and consumers; they sharpen competition and spur individuals and industries to higher performance. Moreover, imports create demand for exports.

But still, roadblocks remain, and we must continue to remove them, to allow for unfettered trade between our countries.

Consider two landmark trade agreements -- the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Uruguay Round. They have boosted the annual income and lowered the cost of purchases for an average American family by as much as \$2000 a year. That's real money for working men and women.

Since the inception of NAFTA in 1994, total trade among Canada, Mexico and the United States has more than doubled. NAFTA has created more choices at lower prices for consumers in all three of our nations. And it has created good jobs for our workers.

Now is the time to extend these benefits of free trade throughout the entire hemisphere.

President Bush is committed to the success of the U.S.-Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act-- to spur more development, employment, and trade opportunities throughout the region.

The President is also working to extend the provisions of NAFTA to Chile, and to renew the Andean Trade Preference Agreement Act.

The President strongly supports hemispheric free trade because it is good for America and good for our neighbors. We know that the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is vital to bolstering our global economy.

FTAA will create the world's largest free trade zone, joining together 800 million consumers and a market worth \$13 trillion that covers nearly a third of the globe from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

Trade Promotion Authority is at the top of President Bush's trade agenda so that America can lead the world in trade.

TPA will allow us to promote a global, regional and bilateral trade agenda and negotiate deals in the best interest of all parties.

It will help the United States complete negotiations on free trade agreements with Chile and Singapore, and will help build momentum in support of the FTAA, as well as launch a new round of global negotiations in Doha this November.

If Congress fails to pass TPA, American businesses and workers will be left behind. We are losing markets for our products, and income for our families, . and we will have let down those we serve.

For example, a number of countries have free trade agreements with Chile, placing their exporters at an advantage at the expense of American exporters.

Let me give you just one specific example. A Caterpillar tractor made in America and shipped to Chile is slapped with nearly \$15,000 in tariffs and duties. This same tractor, but made in Brazil, faces about \$3,700 in tariffs and duties. If that tractor is made in Canada and shipped to Chile, the tariff is ZERO.

TPA is critical for removing barriers to exports of goods, farm products and services made in America.made right here in Florida.

Around the world, there are more than 130 free trade agreements. The United States is a party to just two. Other countries are actively negotiating agreements to benefit themselves.

Our inaction hurts American businesses, farmers, ranchers and workers. It leaves them shut out of the many preferential agreements negotiated by our trading partners.

In short, without TPA, the United States has abdicated its responsibility to lead the world in free trade.

There are 6 billion people in the world today, and 3 billion of them live on less than \$2 a day. In 25 years, it is estimated that there will be 8 billion people in the world, and if we do nothing, an even greater proportion will live on less than \$2 a day.

Free trade offers the promise of a higher quality of life, not just here in the United States but around the world. It creates jobs and produces income. As it raises standards of living, it fuels a thirst - a demand - for greater political and social freedoms.

Free trade begets freedom and a higher quality of life. It's that simple.

It is time for the United States to fulfill our responsibility as a world leader, and lead the world in trade. TPA is an essential first step.

More than a decade ago, George Herbert Walker Bush had a vision of free trade for this hemisphere, and he explained it this way:

*"Territories may end at borders, but mankind's capacity for progress knows no bounds. Continents may end at water's edge, but human potential knows only those limits set by human imagination.*

*"The Americas' role in the world is not defined by geography; it is defined by its peoples and its ideals.*

*"We are approaching a new dawn in the New World. Our thinking must be bold; our will, resolute."*

The former President's words are just as on-point today.

I believe that this new generation of leaders has both the courage and the resolve to transform history. to unleash the power of free people and free trade across the globe.

The time for free trade throughout the Americas and throughout the world is before us. The time to act is now.

President Bush has pledged to seize this moment, to "lead toward a world that trades in freedom. Economic freedom creates habits of liberty. And habits of liberty create expectations of democracy."

Opening the doors of opportunity is essential for rapid economic growth.

We who live in free-market societies know that only when individuals are given a personal stake in deciding economic policies and benefiting from their success, . only when man is free to discover and create, . only when rigid government controls are abandoned, . only then can societies remain dynamic, progressive and, indeed, free.

My friends, every opportunity, every promise is still golden in this land.

The future belongs to the free.

Thank you again for having me today.

God bless you