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The president's news conference with President Cardoso of Brazil. (President Bill Clinton)(Transcript)

April 20, 1995

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated.

I am delighted to welcome President Cardoso to the White House. For many years he has been one of the great leaders of the Americas. Although he was only inaugurated in January, President Cardoso has been a fighter for democracy throughout his life. He opposed the forces of authoritarianism at great personal risk to himself. More recently, he led the battle for economic reform during his years as Finance Minister, to reduce inflation, establish growth, and help Brazil fulfill the tremendous promise of its people and its land.

Today the President told me about his economic and constitution reform efforts, which are essential to placing Brazil on the path of sustainable development. I have every confidence in the President's ability to strengthen Brazilian democracy and to advance the visionary economic reforms he began as Finance Minister.

Brazil played a key role in forging the historic agreement at last year's Summit of the Americas. Today, President Cardoso and I discussed how we could build on that success. We also discussed bilateral trade issues, and we reaffirmed our commitments to open our markets to each other's products. With 160 million consumers, Brazil is one of today's biggest emerging markets, and it offers great opportunity for Americans.

We know that one of the ways we will do this is to realize our common commitment to achieve a free trade area of the Americas by the year 2005. We have instructed Ambassador Kantor and Foreign Minister Lampreia to review trade relations between our nations,as well as those between the NAFTA and the MERCOSUR countries, to consider ways to expand the flow of goods and capital between our nations. One step will be the first meeting this June of the United States Brazil Business Development Council, which will bring together private sector leaders to increase investment and trade in both our nations.

On security issues, we had a very good discussion about the need to stand firm together against terrorism. We reviewed the effort by the Rio Protocol Guarantors to find a lasting solution to the conflict between Peru and Ecuador over their borders. Progress has been made in implementing a ceasefire, now we must find an enduring settlement. I

congratulate, again, President Cardoso on his outstanding leadership in helping to resolve this conflict. And the United States has been proud to have Americans working with Brazilians there to try to make sure we bring the conflict to a satisfactory conclusion.

Let me say that, finally, we also reviewed our common efforts against narcotics and money laundering. We agreed to begin a dialog on protecting the environment. U.S. aid funds will be increased this year to try to assist that effort in Brazil. And our governments will exchange ideas on reforming international financial institutions to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I must say, I was especially impressed by the ideas that President Cardoso and the members of his administration have shared with us on the changes we need to make in the international institutions so that we can get the benefit of the globally integrated markets that we all want to benefit from without having too much instability undermine the march to progress.

With our two great nations cooperating as never before, we stand at a moment of unparalleled opportunity. We must now seize it, and we will seize it. We will promote democracy. We will advance prosperity. We will do it together. In the months and years ahead, I look forward to working with President Cardoso to forge an even stronger partnership between our nations and our peoples. We should do it. It is in our interest to do it, and it is the right thing for our hemisphere and for the world to do it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Cardoso. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, it was a great honor to be received by President Bill Clinton today. I know that this is a day of grief for this country, and I take this opportunity to extend to all Americans the solidarity of the Brazilian people. To you, President Clinton, I convey a personal message of support and encouragement. Mr. President, I repeat what I said this morning: In my view, this terrorist act affects not only America, it affects all of us who believe in peace and democracy and in freedom for all.

During our meeting, I had a chance to express to you my personal friendship and the admiration that Brazil has for his permanent commitment to the cause of peace, prosperity, and democracy.

I had the privilege of meeting President Clinton during the Miami summit, his initiative that he revealed his statesmanship and his vision of a better future for the Americas.

Today, as we discussed the prospects for our hemisphere, I had the chance to assure him that the same spirit of cooperation that guided my

country during the: works of the summit will keep guiding us in implementing of its results.

I had also the chance to bring to the American people the message of a country that went through deep transformations and that today presents itself to the world as a solid democracy, a strong economy, and a vigorous and free society. This new country is a natural partner of the U.S., and I stressed to President Clinton that the time is right for the design of a new affirmative agenda that will bring our two countries even closer together.

And I must say that it was really highly impressive by the kind words by President Clinton and by the spirit in our discussions. We have so many values in common. We have a similar political will. We have the support of our people to work together in reaffirming our commitment to reforms, to bring to our countries better conditions of life, and to go ahead with democracy.

I would like to add, Mr. President, that Brazil will support also the effort under the umbrella of the Organization of American States toward democracy and the specific program you referred to, and that Brazil will be always open in discussing the international financial issues, and Brazil is ready to assume more responsibilities at the world level in order to go ahead with the programs of peacekeeping and to do the best of our effort to really keep a world of peace.

Already in this context of this new agenda, Ambassador Lampreia, as you said, and Ambassador Kantor are being instructed to prepare a study of trade relations between Brazil and the United States with the objective of improving the flow of goods, services, and capital between our countries. In this same area, we agreed that the first meeting of the Brazil-U.S. Business Development Council shall take place in Denver this June, cochaired by Ambassador Lampreia and by Secretary Brown, in bringing together private sector representatives. I am confident that this first meeting will be a very important opportunity to increase even further the economic relations between our two countries.

In the discussion of the main themes of the international agenda, I expressed to President Clinton my view that the same democratic values that had proven its strength with the end of cold war should now guide us in the effort of building a new international order. Democracy should be the cornerstone, not only inside each society but also among nations. This is the guideline that Brazil will follow in the meetings in which the revision of the San Francisco Charter will be discussed.

I also had the chance to express to President Clinton our long-standing commitment to the cause of nonproliferation and peace. This commitment has a very concrete translation in our decision to ratify and fully implement the Tlatelolco Agreement, and also in the creation of the Brazilian Space Agency. In our commitment by the executive branch to abide by the MTCR guidelines in the approval of the

Quadrapartheid Nuclear Safeguards Agreement.

The very positive working meeting that I had the privilege to hold this morning with President Clinton is only a first step taken toward the strengthening of a new relationship that built upon a solid base of shared values will be decisive to make real the dream of a prosperous, fair, and free hemisphere for all of us.

Thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Oklahoma City Bombing

Q. Mr. President, the bombing in Oklahoma City has left many Americans wondering if it can happen in the Nation's heartland, can it happen in their hometown. What can you say to calm these fears? And in particular, what can you say to the Nation's children, who have been terrified by seeing other children killed?

President Clinton. I would say, first of all, that we are working very hard to strengthen the ability of the United States to resist acts of terror. We have increased our efforts in law enforcement, through the FBI and the CIA. We have increased our ability to cut off money used for such purposes. We have increased our capacity to track the materials that can be used to destroy people. I have sent legislation to the Congress, as you know, that would increase this capacity even further. I have done everything I could and our administration has to bring home suspected terrorists for trial from Pakistan, from Egypt, from the Philippines, from elsewhere. We are moving aggressively. Today I have ordered new steps to be taken to secure Federal facilities throughout the United States.

I would say to the children of this country, what happened was a bad thing, an evil thing, but we will find the people who did it, and we will bring them to justice. This is a law-abiding country. And neither the leaders nor the citizens of this country will permit it to be paralyzed by this kind of behavior.

Mexican Financial Crisis

Q. I'd like to address this question to both President Cardoso and President Clinton. You both mentioned today the spirit of Miami, the economic integration of the Americas. Do you believe it's still possible after the collapse of Mexico?

President Cardoso. Should I answer in Portuguese or English? I will answer in Portuguese because it could be immediately transmitted to Brazil.

[At this point, President Cardoso answered the question in Portuguese.]

If you would like, I can make a very brief summary. I said that I believe that what happened with Mexico is not an obstacle to go ahead with the Miami spirit. The Miami spirit was a result of a long history of good relationship among our peoples. And we believe that the immediate reaction, patronized by President Clinton and then the international support to Mexico, was a good example of the necessity of still more alive spirit like the Miami summit did in order to solve problems and crises which can occur from time to time, but together, we will solve all these crises much more rapidly and much more energetically than alone.

President Clinton. I agree with that. I believe that, first of all, that the problem in Mexico has caused severe problems for the people of Mexico. It has also presented challenges to Brazil, to Argentina, indeed, to the United States. But look at the long run. The countries of our hemisphere are moving toward democracy, toward openness, toward free competition. The more we work together, the less likely it is that we will have future problems like we had in Mexico.

So, if anything, if there is any lesson to be drawn here, it is that we must work more urgently in these directions and more urgently to be strong together so that these events will not have the kind of shocking impact they had in Mexico.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Oklahoma City Bombing

Q. Mr. President, despite the horror of it all and the assumptions that may or may not be true, don't you think that it's time now to warn against hatred and violence against Middle Eastern stereotypes, just in case, since we do have strong laws in this country, I believe, against terrorism?

President Clinton. I would like to make, if I might, two comments with regard to that. Number one, I ask the American people not to jump to any conclusions. We have two missions now. One is search and rescue--search and rescue: We had a miraculous recovery of a teenage girl just hours ago, and we have six special teams from FEMA that will be on the ground today to continue this. The second is investigate. We

have 200--200 FBI agents on the scene and hundreds of other people all across America putting their best efforts behind this. Let us not jump to conclusions.

Then I would say, in response to your question, there were three Arab-American organizations which today condemned what was done. This is not a question of anybody's country of origin. This is not a question of anybody's religion. This was murder. This was evil. This was wrong. Human beings everywhere, all over the world, will condemn this out of their own religious convictions. And we should not stereotype anybody.

What we need to do is to find out who did this and punish them harshly. That's what we need to do. The American people should know that the best investigators in the world are working to find the truth. Let us support search and rescue and investigation and deal with the facts as we find them.

Bretton Woods Institutions

Q. I'd like to direct my question to both Presidents. After the Mexican crisis, both governments, Brazil and the United States, talked about the need for equipping international financial institutions of means to react in those circumstances. I would like to know what you have discussed in that regard. And to President Clinton, since the United States and the G-7 countries seems to continue to be in no position to increase of capital of the IMF, how can the G-7 countries achieve that objective without providing the money to the institution?

President Cardoso. Well, in fact--have discussed a little, that point, and it seems to us, I would say, that the time is coming to take some important decision in that area. It's not easy. You know, the Bretton Woods institutions are now approaching the 50th anniversary. So it's time to implement some changes. We are discussing these changes. I had some ideas. I presented to President Clinton these ideas which are not, you know, unexpected ideas. Everybody knows that it is important to--maybe to give more leverage to the IMF to act more promptly and to solve these emergency problems. I'm convinced that the G-7 will take the issue, and I am waiting for additional initiatives, and Brazil is--will be ready to cooperate in these kind of initiatives.

President Clinton. Let me say, I strongly believe that there must be some changes. And I urged the G-7 countries last year, when we met in Italy, to devote this year's meeting to reviewing the adequacy of the international financial institutions to meet the challenges of the present global economy.

Furthermore, if we expect the IMF and the World Bank to tell countries, "Look you must reform your economy; you must even be prepared to have the hard fumes that discipline sometimes brings in the

short run to help prosperity in the long run," then surely we must have some capacity to cushion the same countries that are prepared to make those sacrifices against unforeseen and dramatic adverse changes that the underlying economic circumstances do not warrant. So we are looking into that.

But I think that it is important for me as President of the United States not to commit myself at this early juncture to specific reforms until after I have a chance to consult with all the other countries with whom we should work, not just the G-7 countries but the emerging economies, the powerful countries of the future, like Brazil, who lived through this system and have very good ideas about how to change it.

Yes, Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News].

Oklahoma City Bombing

Q. Two things, sir. First, how concerned are you that this incident in Oklahoma will be seen by those who feel that the United States should not have the kind of far-flung diplomatic and military undertakings that it does, that this is the kind of thing that happens when a nation, as some would say, meddles in the affairs of others? And second, if you know anything about it, sir, there's a wire service report that the British Interior Ministry says that a possible suspect in this case is--is being, or has been returned to the United States.

Thank you.

President Clinton. First, let me say, I would hope the American people would draw exactly the opposite conclusion from this. Our future lies in an open society, a free economy, and the freeinterchange of people of ideas and goods. In that kind of world, we cannot withdraw from the world, nor can we hide.

Look what happened in Argentina. No one thinks the Argentines are out there meddling in the affairs of people throughout the world. No great country can hide. We have to stand up, fight this kind of madness, and take appropriate steps.

Moreover, I will say again, we do not know who the perpetrator is. Technology gives power to people to do this sort of thing. Look at what happened in Japan, where there was no outside influence, but a radical group within Japan, able to take a little vial of gas and kill large numbers of people, this having happened twice now.

So the lesson for my fellow citizens should be, we're going to stand with freedom-loving people throughout the world, like President Cardoso, who despise this sort of evil, and we're going to stamp it

out. And we're going to protect our people.

Now as to the second question. Let me say again, I was briefed last night at midnight, I was briefed this morning, early in the morning. I know what the status of our efforts are. They are intense and they are comprehensive. But I do not believe we should be commenting on an ongoing investigation. And at the appropriate time, the Justice Department will say whatever it is that should be said.

I can tell the American people, they would be very proud of the efforts which have been made in this area since it occurred yesterday morning. They have been awesome, intense, comprehensive, and dogged. But I will not comment on the specific aspects of the investigation until the Justice Department determines it's appropriate to do.

Brazilian Patent Legislation

Q. I would like to direct the question to both Presidents. If the Brazilian Congress does not approve the intellectual property bill before the deadline for the USTR to start a new phase of investigation on Brazil, what course of action does each of you intend to take?

President Cardoso. Well, you know, the Brazilian Congress is a sovereign Congress. It can take the time it believes is necessary to discuss a bill. As you know, Brazilians know, the Brazilian Government has a clear idea and is exposing its own ideas to the Congress--is insisting on the necessity of a bill to protect intellectual rights. Also for Brazilians, we're having at that point in time, there are many Brazilians who are urging, you know, the approval of this bill because they need to--to have their patents recognized across the world. And they have no possibility to ask the Brazilian Bureau to do it, because we don't have yet a law.

So I am convinced that the Congress will approve the bill as soon as possible. I'm expecting for this semester, the last vote in the Senate, and then back to the House--but the House has only one choice--assume that the Congress--that Senate added good things and then approve the amendments made by the Senate, or approve the law which has been already approved by the House.

So it's a matter of some--a couple of weeks or months, and this is important for Brazil, is not for United States. It is important for Brazil because we are integrating at the global level the economy, and we need to protect our own interests through this bill.

President Clinton. Well, as you know, we have certain laws in this country we have to follow. But I am absolutely convinced after this meeting today that the President wants to pass that legislation. And I agree with him that the main beneficiary of that legislation would not

be the United States or other nations trading with Brazil. It would be Brazil.

It is important that everyone in Brazil understands you are rapidly becoming not only a very great economy but a very sophisticated one. A product manufactured by Brazil is now going to be part of the space shuttle. You need--if you're going to be a high-tech producer of sophisticated and diverse products, you must have a strong patent law. Yes, it will protect our intellectual property, but more importantly, it will enable you to continue to grow your economy.

Rita [Rita Braver, CBS News].

Oklahoma City Bombing

Q. I know we're quite early on in the investigation on Oklahoma City, but Janet Reno has already said that the U.S. would seek the death penalty. I wondered if she did that with your concurrence. And also, if the United States should find that another country was behind this, should we expect military retaliation?

President Clinton. I must not and I must urge you not to speculate on who is guilty yet or what their connections are. That cannot help the course of the investigation. Let us wait and see what the facts are.

In response to your first question, she did say that with my knowledge and support. Just a few--oh, maybe in a couple of hours after this incident occurred, after we reviewed all the things that we could do to work on the search and rescue mission I asked specifically whether the crime bill we passed provided for capital punishment in cases like this. If this isn't an appropriate case for it I don't think there ever would be one. And I strongly support what she said.

We'll take--take one last question--

[At this point, a question was asked in Portuguese, and no translation was provided.]

Brazilian Infrastructure

President Cardoso. The point raised is that Brazil needs something like $70 billion in the coming 4 years just to enlarge its infrastructure, and we have passed a bill on services concessions. By the way, I was the author of the bill when I was Senator. It took 4 years to approve the bill. And now, what is required is a set of rules by the executive branch in order to clarify how to do it.

This is, at this point in time, we have a draft for this Executive order, and it is a matter of weeks and the Brazilian Government will approve these rules. And of course, the Brazilian economy is open to foreign investors through this mechanism of concessions--concessions law, but also, we are going ahead with our privatization program. As I said yesterday, the Brazilian-American Chamber of Commerce, we are ready to ask for more foreign capital in several areas.

It depends in some areas, yet from our constitutional reform, and we are moving fast in that direction. I expect for the next month the approval of the constitutional amendments as sent to' the Congress regarding economic order. As you know, President Clinton, constitutional amendments requires enormous debates at the Congress, and it takes time. To my view, what is going now on in Brazil is the Congress reacting very quickly because they are about to vote the first one of these amendments in a manner of maybe some days, and this will be a record. I am absolutely confident that the Brazilian Congress will approve what is needed for the Brazilian economic improvement.

That's all.

Oklahoma City Bombing

President Clinton. I agree with that.

Let me--we have to conclude. I want to make sure that I have been very clear on the question, Rita, that you asked. You asked, well, what if we find out someone did it affiliated with another country. I don't want anyone to assume that we are accusing anybody or anything today. We do not know.

On the other hand, let me reiterate what I said yesterday. Whoever did it, we will find out, and there will be justice that will be swift and certain and severe. And there is no place to hide. Nobody can hide any place in this country; nobody can hide any place in this world, from the terrible consequences of what has been done. This was an attack on innocent children, on innocent victims, on the people there in Oklahoma City. But make no mistake about it, this was an attack on the United States, our way of life, and everything we believe in. So whoever did it, we will get to the bottom of it, and then we'll take the appropriate action.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President's 94th news conference began at 12 52 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brazilian Foreign Minister Luiz Filipe Lampreia.