



**Prepared Remarks of Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales at  
Press Availability Following a Meeting of Central American Attorneys General**

**Cuernavaca, Mexico  
June 8, 2007**

Good afternoon

I would like to thank Mexico Attorney General Medina Mora for hosting this Summit, and all of the Attorneys General in attendance. I believe we have had very frank and productive discussions on some matters of great importance to all of our countries.

Protecting the safety of our citizens is perhaps the central mission of any government. Without basic safety and security, we cannot be free to enjoy the many blessings of liberty, democracy, and economic opportunity.

President Bush and I recognize that the safety and security of many Central American nations is threatened by transnational narco-traffickers, violent gangs and other threats. The United States faces these threats as well, and we're working hard to fight them.

That's why, as part of the follow up to his recent trip to Guatemala and other Latin American nations, President Bush is committed to collaborating on the development of a regional security and law enforcement strategy. At the Campeche Summit in April, El Salvador offered to initiate the work on such a regional strategy. And I believe all these efforts have been advanced by the success of this Summit.

Let me offer one example: In the United States, we have set up special national anti-gang task forces and a gang intelligence center to help us combat gang violence. Because we recognize that this is not a problem that stops at our borders, the United States has developed a comprehensive strategy to help combat the threat from transnational gangs. And we have launched partnerships with our neighbor countries to enhance law enforcement, crime prevention, and international coordination and training in the region.

Earlier this week we saw the kind of success this cooperation brings when a federal grand jury in the United States charged three leaders of the international gang La Mara Salvatrucha, or "MS-13," with a series of violent crimes. Cooperation between U.S. law enforcement agencies and the Civilian National Police of El Salvador was crucial to the success of this effort.

This indictment was supported by a far-reaching set of anti-gang initiatives that I announced while in El Salvador in February of this year. These initiatives involve unprecedented partnerships at the local, state, federal and international level.

Our record of regional cooperation also includes a successful summit on transnational gangs held in Los Angeles involving the Chiefs of Police for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras,

and Belize. And the United States has been providing training for police and prosecutors from the region – in fact, the 4th such anti-gang training is underway at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Central America this week.

Each of these steps is a testament to the commitment of the United States to join with its neighbors to face the problems of violent transnational crime and gangs in a collaborative and comprehensive manner. I commend my colleagues in law enforcement for their commitment to the fight against gangs and other violence, and for their courage in recognizing and addressing these problems.

The United States stands with all of our neighbors in our joined fight against violent gangs. We recognize that this is not just an issue for one or two countries; it affects the entire region, and so we must work together regionally. For all of our citizens, we must win this fight--and I believe that working together, as friends and partners, we will.

Thank you.

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