

**NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER
BERNARD LANDRY AT THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF THE REPRESENTATIVES AT
THE PEOPLES' SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
Monday, APRIL 16, 2001 AT 6 P.M.**

Introduction

Representatives of the Peoples' Summit of the Americas,
Distinguished guests and dear friends,

(Texte dans les quatre langues)

- ❖ Vous me permettrez d'abord de souhaiter la bienvenue et le meilleur séjour possible dans la capitale nationale du Québec aux représentants du Sommet des Peuples, venus de tous les coins d'Amérique et avec lesquels le gouvernement du Québec entend développer le dialogue.
- ❖ Primeiramente, gostaria de desejar as boas-vindas e realmente a melhor das estadas na capital nacional do Quebec, aos representantes da Cúpula dos Povos, vindos dos quatro cantos das Américas e com os quais o governo do Quebec pretende desenvolver um diálogo.
- ❖ Ante todo, permítanme dar la bienvenida y desear la mejor estancia en la Capital Nacional de Quebec a los representantes de esta Cumbre de los Pueblos , venidos de todos los rincones de las Américas, con quienes el gobierno de Quebec desea ampliar el diálogo.
- ❖ I would first like to extend a warm welcome and best wishes for a pleasant stay in Québec's National Capital to the representatives of the Peoples' Summit of the Americas, who have come from near and far and with whom the Québec government intends to engage in dialogue.
- ❖ It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome to the National Assembly representatives of the organizations participating in the Peoples' Summit of the Americas. Your presence here, several days before the official opening of the other Summit, which will assemble 34 heads of state from the Americas, reflects the importance that the government attaches to an event that will undoubtedly mark a turning point in the building of this new community spanning the Americas.
- ❖ Your gathering will provide an ideal opportunity to seal growing solidarity between organizations in civil society that promote democracy, justice and human dignity, to which all peoples in the Americas aspire. This exercise in solidarity, through which a veritable culture of peace is being built, must allow participants to assert themselves and carry out various projects and initiatives. This is what you began to do in Santiago and what you have decided to pursue here in Québec City by holding a second Peoples' Summit of the Americas, whose theme "Resisting Proposing Together" could become a rallying point for your group.

1. The Peoples' Summit of the Americas in Québec City and its significance for the government

- The Québec government has fully supported the holding of the second Peoples' Summit of the Americas since dialogue with civil society is deeply rooted in the Québec model of government.
- The holding in Québec City of this Peoples' Summit suggests that something is changing with respect to the dynamic of these major meetings of heads of state. From now on, such meetings cannot take place without formally involving representatives of civil society and according to procedures that have yet to be specified so that such participation occurs under the best possible conditions.
- The traditional model pertaining to trade negotiations has had its day and the holding of the Peoples' Summit will at least have made it possible to make significant advances as regards openness through broader access to the negotiating texts. We are indeed pleased by the decision of the Buenos Aires Ministers' Conference to make public the texts of the proposed FTAA.
- There is a consensus that the existing trade negotiation process is undermining democracy, to which must be added the shortcomings of the federal system, which does not allow Québec to participate directly in negotiations when its fields of jurisdiction are in question.
- Está claro que o sistema internacional como um todo sofre de um déficit democrático e o processo da Cúpula dos Povos tal como as iniciativas do Fórum de Porto Alegre em fevereiro passado constituem elementos de resposta para o preenchimento deste déficit democrático.

(Texte français)

(Il est clair que le système international dans son ensemble souffre d'un déficit démocratique et la démarche du Sommet des Peuples comme les initiatives du Forum de Porto Alegre en février dernier constituent des éléments de réponse sur la manière de combler ce déficit démocratique.)

(English text)

(The international system overall is clearly deficient from the standpoint of democracy and the initiatives of the Peoples' Summit, like those of the Porto Alegre Forum last February, offer a response to these shortcomings.)

2. Québec and the Peoples' Summit: a shared understanding on the diagnosis but differences of opinion on the solutions contemplated

- Quebecers generally favour free trade, since 50% of Québec's total output is exported and Québec society's level of prosperity is attributable, by and large, to vigorous international trade. The government bases its support for free trade on this situation.
- However, the government shares with officials of the Peoples' Summit certain viewpoints regarding the effects of globalization and freer trade, that is, the growing

gap in wealth between developing and other nations, respect for basic worker rights, and the primacy of environmental protection over investor rights.

- Differences of opinion may arise with respect to the solutions to be adopted in order to solve the problems at hand. If we are to respect basic worker rights and properly protect the environment, the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas must offer means of cooperation that foster the development of domestic policies in this field. If we are to pursue the proposed FTAA, we must proceed step by step to enable all of the partner countries to adopt transitional measures that will facilitate subsequent ones.
- As for other issues related to the international system's propensity to want to include everything in trade negotiations, we are in agreement. We must maintain the ability of governments to act and demand that they maintain all of their responsibilities in respect of legislation and the funding of public services such as health, social services, education and culture.

(Texte français)

(Sur d'autres aspects, touchant à la propension du système international de vouloir tout englober dans les négociations de commerce, nous nous rejoignons. Il y a nécessité de maintenir la capacité d'agir des gouvernements et d'exiger que les gouvernements conservent toutes leurs responsabilités de légiférer, et de financer les services publics tels la santé, les services sociaux, l'éducation, la culture.)

3. Key issues and government priorities in the wake of the Summit

- The Québec government will pursue its dialogue with civil society and encourage the efforts of parliamentarians who have assumed broader responsibilities with regard to follow-up in respect of international trade policy. The role played by the Committee on Institutions of the National Assembly will undoubtedly continue following the adoption on April 10 of a motion that strengthens the National Assembly's responsibilities in this realm.
- The government intends to pursue its cooperation policy in respect of the Americas launched when it proclaimed Québec's Decade of the Americas by fostering those projects most likely to help build our common future. The Office Québec-Amériques pour la jeunesse will have a key role to play in heightening awareness among young people throughout the Americas of the importance of hemispheric cooperation.

Conclusion

- ❖ Our vision of the future of the Americas is not confined to the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas. Québec is the homeland of a nation that is North American from the standpoint of geography and lifestyle and which, while its majority language and culture is French, is keenly aware of its attachment to the North American continent. We must further develop this feeling of belonging to the continent and I am convinced that this Peoples' Summit of the Americas will contribute largely to this goal.

- ❖ That is what I wanted to tell you before the Peoples' Summit begins. I hope that all the activities on your program will take place in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere so that, at the end of your discussions, you will be able to make a clear concerted declaration that will meet the expectations of your respective organizations.