

REMARKS BY CONGRESSMAN LES AU COIN
IMAGE NATIONAL CONVENTION
PORTLAND MARRIOTT - JUNE 5, 1981

I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU TODAY ABOUT SOMETHING THAT
CONCERNS ALL OF US, WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT -- THE
FEDERAL BUDGET.

IN HIS BUDGET ADDRESS TO CONGRESS THIS SPRING,
PRESIDENT REAGAN CALLED ON US TO HELP REDUCE FEDERAL
SPENDING. HE ASKED US TO TIGHTEN OUR BELTS, TO SACRIFICE
FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY.

OF COURSE, WE ALL WANT TO BE PATRIOTIC AMERICANS.

SO I'D LIKE TO TAKE A LITTLE POLL HERE.

HOW MANY OF YOU THINK ALEXANDER HAIG COULD TIGHTEN
HIS BELT A LITTLE? COULD HE DO WITHOUT THOSE TENS OF
MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN MILITARY AID TO EL SALVADOR, AND
GUATEMALA?

AND HOW ABOUT THE GENERALS OVER AT THE PENTAGON?

ARE THEY TRULY NEEDY? DO THEY TRULY NEED TO SPEND \$60 BILLION -- YES, YOU HEARD ME, \$60 BILLION -- AND THAT'S A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE -- TO BUILD MX MISSILES AND RUN THEM AROUND ON RAILROAD TRACKS UNDER THE DESERT IN UTAH AND NEVADA?

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS NO JOKING MATTER. WE ARE WITNESSING IN WASHINGTON TODAY A POLITICAL WATERSHED -- A FUNDAMENTAL REORDERING OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES. WE ARE WITNESSING THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL BATTLE OF OUR GENERATION.

LET US UNDERSTAND THIS AT THE OUTSET: THE DEBATE OVER THE FEDERAL BUDGET IS NOT AN ARGUMENT OVER NUMBERS ON A PIECE OF PAPER. A BUDGET IS A DOLLARS-AND-CENTS STATEMENT OF NATIONAL OBJECTIVES. IT IS A STATEMENT OF WHAT OUR POLITICAL VALUES ARE, OF WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE CARE MOST ABOUT.

WHAT ARE THE VALUES THAT OUR NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE US EMBRACE? AS ALWAYS, ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.

WHILE TALKING ABOUT SACRIFICE AND BELT-TIGHTENING, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS MANAGED TO FIND \$500 MILLION TO TAKE A COUPLE OF OLD NAVY BATTLESHIPS OUT OF MOTHBALLS.

BUT THEY'VE ASKED MIGRANT WORKERS TO TIGHTEN THEIR BELTS AND ACCEPT A \$72 MILLION CUT IN MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAMS, PLUS OTHER CUTS IN MIGRANT HEALTH, HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

THEY'VE FOUND ANOTHER \$20 MILLION TO START MANUFACTURING NERVE GAS. BUT THEY'VE ASKED HISPANIC AMERICANS TO ACCEPT A \$44 MILLION CUT IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION -- A PROGRAM THAT WAS ALREADY BADLY UNDERFUNDED AND MEETING ONLY A FRACTION OF THE NATIONAL NEED.

THE HUGE MILITARY BUILDUP CONTEMPLATED BY PRESIDENT PEAGAN -- OVER \$226 BILLION NEXT YEAR ALONE -- WILL COST ABOUT THE SAME AS TEN YEARS OF THE VIETNAM WAR. THIS MASSIVE EXPENDITURE WILL AFFECT ALL AMERICANS, BUT ESPECIALLY MEMBERS OF MINORITY GROUPS, AND ESPECIALLY YOU, AS MEMBERS OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY.

YOU MUST BE HEARD. HISPANIC AMERICANS WILL SOON BE

THE LARGEST MINORITY GROUP IN THIS COUNTRY. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HEARD. HISPANIC AMERICANS PAY OVER \$14 BILLION A YEAR IN FEDERAL TAXES.

AND YOU MUST BE HEARD NOW. THIS FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN PRIORITIES IS BEING PROPOSED AT A TIME WHEN HISPANICS ARE JUST BEGINNING TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS THAT HAVE KEPT THEM FROM THE AMERICAN ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM.

HISPANIC CONSUMERS HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLED THEIR BUYING POWER SINCE THE 1960s. HISPANIC EMPLOYMENT STATUS -- THE ABILITY TO GET AND KEEP GOOD JOBS -- SHOWED MORE IMPROVEMENT IN THE LAST DECADE THAN ANY OTHER SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION.

YET WE ALL KNOW THAT HISPANIC WORKERS STILL ARE CLUSTERED IN THE LOW-PAYING, LESS-SKILLED JOBS. THE BEST JOBS -- INCLUDING, SAD TO SAY, THE BEST JOBS IN OUR OWN GOVERNMENT -- ARE VERY RARELY HELD BY HISPANICS.

AND MANY HISPANICS CAN'T GET JOBS AT ALL. WHILE HISPANICS COMPRISE 5% OF THE LABOR FORCE, THEIR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS NEARLY TWICE THAT.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT: JOBS, MORE THAN ANY SINGLE FACTOR, ARE THE KEY TO SHARING IN AMERICA'S GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.

YET JOBS ARE A COMPLEX AND ELUSIVE COMMODITY. A GOOD JOB IS A RESULT OF MANY FACTORS. CERTAINLY A VIGOROUS ECONOMY IS ONE. BUT THERE ARE OTHER CONTRIBUTORS: EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING; EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL WORKERS; A SAFE, HUMANE WORKING ENVIRONMENT; AND A WHOLE NETWORK OF SERVICES LIKE TRANSPORTATION AND CHILD CARE THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO WORKERS.

WE MUST ADDRESS ALL THESE NEEDS AS WE SEEK TO REVITALIZE THE JOB MARKET IN THIS COUNTRY, AND BRING HISPANICS AND OTHER MINORITIES INTO IT.

YET IT'S CLEAR FROM THE WORDS AND ACTIONS OF OUR NEW ADMINISTRATION -- PAINFULLY CLEAR -- THAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS.

GEORGE ORTIZ OF THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION,
A JOB TRAINING PROGRAM THAT OPERATES IN CALIFORNIA AND

HERE IN OREGON, UNDERSTANDS THIS ALL TOO WELL.

HE SAYS: "MR. REAGAN SEEMS TO BE SURROUNDED LARGELY BY PEOPLE WHO SEEMINGLY ALWAYS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GOOD TRAINING AND WORK WHEN THEY WANTED IT, WHICH IS FINE, AS LONG AS HE REMEMBERS THAT NOT QUITE EVERYONE HAS HAD THAT EXPERIENCE."

HERE IN OREGON, THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION HAS TRAINED HUNDREDS OF FARMWORKERS TO ENTER OTHER OCCUPATIONS. THEY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN TRAINING AND FINDING JOBS FOR THESE WORKERS -- AND MORE IMPORTANT, THE WORKERS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL. ONCE THEY GET A JOB, THEY KEEP IT.

YET THIS PROGRAM AND OTHERS LIKE IT FACE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE IF THE ADMINISTRATION SUCCEEDS IN "BLOCK GRANTING" FEDERAL FUNDS FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THESE BLOCK GRANT PROPOSALS FOR WHAT THEY ARE: BUDGET CUTS BY SLEIGHT OF HAND. FIRST YOU HAVE A CATEGORICAL PROGRAM WITH ITS OWN POT OF MONEY.

THEN -- PRESTO! -- YOU HAVE A BLOCK GRANT, WITH A DOZEN PROGRAMS COMPETING FOR A SMALLER POT OF MONEY. NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T.

WE SHOULD REMEMBER, TOO, THAT MANY CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS WERE CREATED PRECISELY BECAUSE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WEREN'T MEETING THE NEEDS OF MINORITY GROUPS. PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES IS A LEGITIMATE ROLE FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IT IS NOT AN UNWARRANTED INTRUSION INTO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AS HAS BEEN SUGGESTED.

THE SUPPLY-SIDERS HAVE LOTS OF TRICKS UP THEIR SLEEVES. ANOTHER ONE IS CALLED "FREEING BUSINESS FROM BURDENSOME GOVERNMENT REGULATION." UNDER THIS BANNER THEY HAVE MOUNTED AN ATTACK ON PROGRAMS THAT SAFEGUARD WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY -- PROGRAMS THAT ARE CRUCIAL TO HISPANIC WORKERS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PLANS TO LIFT RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYERS WHO PAY PEOPLE TO DO PIECE WORK IN THEIR OWN HOMES. "COTTAGE INDUSTRY" MAY HAVE A QUAIN T RING TO IT, BUT WE KNOW THAT IT HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR TREMENDOUS PROBLEMS -- MINIMUM-WAGE VIOLATIONS, CHILD-LABOR

ABUSES -- ESPECIALLY AMONG UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS, MANY OF WHOM ARE HISPANICS. YET NOT ONLY ARE THESE RESTRICTIONS TO BE LIFTED -- THE LABOR DEPARTMENT'S ENFORCEMENT FUNDS ARE BEING CUT BACK.

THE ADMINISTRATION ALSO HAS TARGETED OSHA -- THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION -- WHICH HELPS ASSURE SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS IN OUR FACTORIES. HISPANIC WORKERS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN, CONSTITUTE A DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE SHARE OF OUR MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE. WHO WILL LOOK OUT FOR THEM?

AND WHAT OF THE PROPOSALS TO RELAX ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS? WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, WHO RISK EXPOSURE TO TOXIC CHEMICALS. REMEMBER THAT THE RATE OF HISPANIC EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE IS NEARLY TWICE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

OF COURSE, ALL THE JOB SAFETY PROGRAMS IN THE WORLD WON'T HELP THE WORKER WHO CAN'T FIND A JOB.

DESPITE LAWS THAT PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION, THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION CONCLUDED IN A REPORT THIS YEAR

THAT, "EMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO MINORITIES AND WOMEN ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH WHITE MALES." THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED CONTINUED VIGOROUS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS.

BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR APPARENTLY CHOOSES TO IGNORE THAT ADVICE. THE DEPARTMENT SOON WILL PROPOSE REGULATIONS TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE REQUIREMENTS FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS BY FEDERAL CONTRACTORS. I'M TOLD THAT THE NEW REGULATIONS COULD EXEMPT AS MANY AS 60% OF FEDERAL CONTRACTS FROM AFFIRMATIVE ACTION REQUIREMENTS.

OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ITSELF SETS A POOR EXAMPLE FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. ALTHOUGH OUR HISPANIC POPULATION IS NEARING THE 10% MARK, ONLY 4% OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ARE HISPANIC. THERE ARE NO HISPANICS IN THE CABINET, AND YOU CAN COUNT ON YOUR FINGERS THE HISPANICS WHO'VE RECEIVED TOP APPOINTMENTS IN THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION.

THIS RECORD IS SHAMEFUL, AND IT POINTS TO A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM: THE HISTORIC LACK OF HISPANIC INVOLVEMENT IN AMERICAN POLITICAL LIFE. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT GOES HAND-

IN-HAND WITH ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. DESPITE SOME STRIDES IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, HISPANICS STILL ARE BADLY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN CITY HALLS, STATE LEGISLATURES, AND IN CONGRESS. AND FEWER THAN 60% OF ELIGIBLE HISPANICS ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE.

THERE ARE HOPEFUL SIGNS. HERE IN OREGON, WE HAVE AN ACTIVE HISPANIC POLITICAL CAUCUS THAT IS WORKING HARD TO ENCOURAGE VOTER REGISTRATION AND HISPANIC POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

AND THERE ARE THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE IN WASHINGTON. KEY PROVISIONS OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT -- ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE PIECES OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION EVER ENACTED -- ARE UP FOR REAUTHORIZATION NEXT YEAR. THESE PROVISIONS HELP PROTECT MINORITY VOTERS FROM DISCRIMINATORY ELECTION PRACTICES, AND REQUIRE BILINGUAL ELECTIONS IN AREAS WITH SUBSTANTIAL NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING POPULATIONS. THIS LAW HAS BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR A NEARLY 30% INCREASE IN HISPANIC VOTER REGISTRATION IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, WITH A 44% RISE IN THE SOUTHWEST ALONE.

IMPRESSIVE FIGURES, YES, BUT THE TASK IS ONLY BEGUN. I HAVE COSPONSORED LEGISLATION TO EXTEND THESE PROVISIONS FOR ANOTHER TEN YEARS. I AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS -- YES, I'M A MEMBER, EVEN WITH A NAME LIKE AuCOIN -- WILL BE WORKING ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN TO HISPANIC AMERICANS.

BUT THE BIGGEST TASK RESTS WITH YOU -- IN YOUR JOBS, IN YOUR COMMUNITIES, IN YOUR CHURCHES, AND IN ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THIS ONE.

CESAR CHAVEZ ONCE SAID, "WE ARE LOOKING FOR A MIRACLE, A LEADER WHO WILL DO EVERYTHING FOR US. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN. THE PEOPLE HAVE TO DO THE WORK. ONE GREAT THING THAT EVERY PERSON HAS IS HIS OWN POWER, WHICH SOME PEOPLE CALL DIGNITY. . . WHEN WE ARE REALLY HONEST WITH OURSELVES, WE MUST ADMIT THAT OUR LIVES ARE ALL THAT REALLY BELONGS TO US. SO IT IS HOW WE USE OUR LIVES THAT DETERMINES WHAT KIND OF MEN (AND WOMEN) WE ARE."

THESE ARE TIMES OF TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE. BUT LOOKING AROUND THIS ROOM I FEEL CERTAIN THAT YOU ARE EQUAL TO IT.

TRIP FILE

TO: Les
FROM: Carol
RE: Background for IMAGE Speech, June 5

You will be addressing the national convention of IMAGE, an organization of Hispanic government employees, at a luncheon at the Portland Marriott on June 5.

You will be the keynote speaker. Head table seating is not yet final, but will include the IMAGE National President, David Montoya, and emcee Carmen Cruz. Our contact in Oregon has been Annabelle Jaramillo, the convention chairperson.

The luncheon program includes:

- Introduction of guests;
- Chapter presidents awards;
- Special award to Wesley Plummer of Dept. of Transportation;
- Your speech.

They've requested a speech of 20 to 25 minutes; they expressed special interest in economic and employment prospects for Hispanics. They estimate attendance up to 1,000. We'll see about that!

BACKGROUND ON IMAGE

National IMAGE, Inc., was founded in the early 1970s in Denver, and held its first national convention in 1973. It now has over 100 chapters in 33 states, including IMAGE de Oregon, the host of this convention. It is one of the largest Hispanic organizations in the country. IMAGE began as an organization of Hispanic federal employees, but has been expanded to include state and local government workers, and is now seeking members from the private sector.

Its goals are to develop and expand Hispanic employment opportunities, especially in government; to encourage training and advancement; and to foster communications among Hispanics.

CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

The convention will run June 4 to 7. The theme is "Unity Among the Americas: The Contribution of Hispanics." There will be the usual convention offerings: workshops, exhibits, receptions, etc. The morning of the 5th, there will be workshops on Assertiveness; the SBA & Hispanics; Reapportionment; Cuban Refugees; Bilingual Education; The Successful Hispanic; and Impact of Hispanics on International Affairs.