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**REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA,
CRISTINA FERNÁNDEZ DE KIRCHNER,
IN HER ADDRESS TO THE SEVENTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS**

Thank you very much.

Mr. President: First of all, I would like to thank President Juan Carlos Varela for the warm welcome he and his people have extended to this Seventh Summit of the Americas. I would also like to greet all the heads of state and government and heads of delegation who are here.

Well, it is not easy to speak after the address by the President of the Republic of Cuba, my friend, Commander Raúl Castro, but I sincerely believe that, after those remarks, it would be necessary for all summits – not only the Summit of the Americas, but all summits, all international forums, in which we are so keen to include, as we have done here, and with which I wholeheartedly agree, the words, ideas, and convictions of equity, of prosperity and of equality – to include sincerity as a topic. Because, without sincerity, we can address problems, we can describe them, but it is unlikely that we could identify the reasons why those problems arise. And I would like to address two or three specific matters, in response for the reduction of time that the President of Panama has so politely requested.

First, I would like to talk about the speech given by the President of the Republic of Colombia, Dr. Juan Manuel Santos, in connection with two topics. One is global in nature and concerns us all, but in addition to being of concern, it is one that we must address to identify its causes and consequences and how to combat the problem of drug trafficking. Because drugs and drug trafficking could turn the states of this region into failed states.

Juan Manuel spoke about combating drugs, something to which we are all committed, but really, if drugs are not tackled in terms of the problem of the consumer countries, because we also have to be honest: the countries where they are produced are not generally those where they are consumed. And also talk about the funding of drug trafficking, because in the producing countries, when the toxic substance is produced, it is worth 2,000 dollars, but, for example, when it reaches Chicago it is worth 40,000.

So, essentially, what we should address – and those countries that consume the most drugs should address this problem and, also essentially, it is the crux of the matter – is its funding. Where is

the money from drug trafficking laundered? In the banks of the producing countries, or in the banks of the developed countries and tax havens that belong to the developed countries?

Let's not be naive. Let's not be naive. Billions and billions of dollars are laundered in tax havens and in developed countries' banks, and if that problem is not addressed, there can be no solution to drug trafficking. In the same way and with the same enthusiasm that we investigate and pursue the funding of international terrorism, we must also pursue the funding of the drug cartels and the paths taken by their money. If it is not tackled from that perspective, we will hold 20,000 summits and, worse yet, the emerging countries will be full of the dead and full of the guns that the developed countries also produce and supply to the cartels.

And there's a contradiction for you: the developed countries get the drugs and the money; and the poor people of Latin America get the dead and the guns. So, addressing this problem means that the central nations must have a clear policy on the topic of how the proceeds of that money are laundered.

I would also like to congratulate President Juan Manuel Santos for his stubbornness – if I can be allowed to use the term – in undertaking a peace process in a country that is broken, territorially divided, in conflict, with thousands of victims, with thousands of deaths, with thousands of people displaced to neighboring nations.

The commitment of my country and of the whole region is to help him and support him. We want Colombia to be made whole again, a single territory, and we have to commit all our efforts to that goal.

The truth is that this is my final Summit, as President of the Argentine Republic, and I also believe that it is the final Summit for President Barack Obama. And yes, it is an historic Summit. It is an historic Summit because for the first time, the Republic of Cuba is present. Curiously, we learned about that rapprochement in my country when we were hosting the Mercosur Summit, on December 17 of last year, when it was announced that there was to be a simultaneous dialogue between the President of the United States and the President of Cuba, Raúl Castro.

But, please, let's not be mistaken: I know, from what he just said, that President Barack Obama doesn't much care for history, or that it doesn't seem important to him. I believe that history... I love it because it also helps me to understand what is happening, what happened, why it happened, and, essentially, to prevent what might happen, because history teaches. Not to remember it and to punish ourselves, or as an exercise is masochism, but simply to understand why things happened.

So, let us be clear that Cuba is not here and we are not witnessing the meeting of two presidents who finally, after a long time, decided to shake hands. No, ladies and gentlemen. Cuba is here because it struggled for more than 60 years with unprecedented dignity, with a people – as Raúl just said – of whom 77 percent were born under the blockade, who suffered and continue to suffer many hardships, and because that people were guided and led by leaders who did not betray their struggle but instead were a part of it.

And that is no reason to stop applauding – as we have done, and as I have stated absolutely and positively – the decision of President Barack Obama to begin a dialogue, to open talks during his presidency: that is a positive attitude and we appreciate it.

The fact is that we are very happy to come to this Summit of the Americas to produce – to witness, more than produce – this historical triumph of the Cuban Revolution, because the real triumph of the Cuban Revolution is the one we are seeing here today.

And we were happy, because, as I said, we are going to attend, I am going to attend, as President, the final meeting in an historical event. And that's where we were, when suddenly a decree emerges, or is signed, declaring the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to be a threat to the security of the United States of America.

I confess, I must confess to all my colleagues, that when I heard that news, I said, no, there must be a mistake, it must be that they don't agree with the policies, that they condemning the policies. And no, they brought me the document: a threat to the security of the United States.

And, truthfully, my first reaction wasn't a flamboyant anti-imperialist response. My first reaction was to laugh, because it is absolutely unbelievable, almost ridiculous, to state that Venezuela or any other country in our continent could be a threat to the biggest power in the world. Leaving aside whatever ideas we might have about the United States, we cannot ignore that it is the largest military, economic, financial, and scientific power, with a budget of 640 billion dollars, 640 billion dollars. And, incidentally, and I say this in passing, they should make better use of that money to combat drug trafficking and illegal immigration. Because with a budget of that size, it's difficult to understand why they can't fight the drugs trade and why there are 11 million undocumented aliens.

But back to the topic. Last night, I asked Nicolás Maduro, "How big is your military budget?" And I think he said a billion, two billion dollars, a bit more.

And so, how could the greatest power in the world possibly see the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a threat? What's more, I was listening to President Barack Obama's speech or explanation to his own people after signing, on April 2, the agreement with Iran on the nuclear issue, along with the other members of the Security Council and Germany, explaining to his own people that they should feel safe because the United States was the most powerful country in the world and Iran only had a budget of 30 billion dollars while the United States had a budget of more than 600 billion dollars.

That is nonsense, and it's really a shame, President Obama... I don't know if he is here, or if he has left; I can't see, I would have to put my glasses on and I don't want to... he's not here. It doesn't matter: someone will tell him. It is really a shame, perhaps the result of internal negotiations in his country, because we know he hasn't got it easy; we also know about the most reactionary sectors that have him surrounded, asking him for things; we know about the series of difficulties he faces in political negotiations.

But, really, if they wanted to confront Venezuela, they should have found another way, because really, nobody can believe this. Just as nobody can believe that the United Kingdom declared my country, the Argentine Republic, to be a threat, regarding the Malvinas Islands, which are our own territory.

It is absurd to have a budget of almost 60 billion dollars, 2.3 percent of the United Kingdom's GDP, dedicated to defense. Also absurd. But I noted the similarity and synchronicity of the two positions. And I noted it because my country has been ruled by terrible dictatorships that killed thousands of Argentines, which were, no less, those that decided to go to war in the Malvinas in 1982. And, nevertheless, with them the relations were always almost cordial, let's say.

For that reason, I say it is a shame for that decision to have cast a shadow over this Summit. And we ask, along with our brother countries, for this decree to be put to one side. But not because of... Look, I'm not going to appeal to sovereignty or make tearful speeches, but simply appeal to common sense.

The leader who founded my movement, General Perón, used to say that you can return from anywhere except a ridiculous position. And really, it is absolutely ridiculous to consider any of us a threat.

Also, to conclude, Mr. President, I do like history. And I have also read that the guidelines for our agenda, as President Obama also said, in this Hemisphere, often assumed that the United States could interfere with impunity, and that now belongs in the past. It is true that the interference we remember and that was spoken of, for example, by President Castro, the overthrowing of democratic governments – most emblematically, Salvador Allende, Jacobo Árbenz – are a part of history, of invasions, or of the outsourcing of coups d'état through the local armed forces of each country.

But it also true that new, more subtle forms of intervention in our governments, and influence over them, have arisen through what are known as "soft coups." Soft coups that use the multinational mass media, false accusations, ungrounded associations of states with other states, to do all sorts of things and conspiracies. They are more subtle, more sophisticated, but they are still interventions and they invariably originate from new organizations called NGOs.

The other day I was reading a very interesting article in a Mexican newspaper: NGOs that are always fighting either for liberty or for human rights or for all the noble ideals we all share, and no one ever knows how they are financed; they are always ready to make the most outlandish accusations that they can never prove, but that are clearly aimed at destabilizing the region's governments and, basically, and curiously, those governments that have done the most for equity, for education, and for social inclusion.

I believe the words of those who say they want a fairer world, where children go to school, where everyone has rights, where they can study, where there is health. But then, why do they fight, and decry as populists, those governments that in South America, in Latin America, have achieved the most in the areas of human rights, of equity, of inclusion, of education, of health? Why did they support, or still support, governments that propose neoliberal policies that exclude the citizens? Or why do they fight those governments with which they might – logically – have differences but which can provide proof, over this decade, of having included the most of their people and of having extracted them from hunger, misery, and poverty?

And that's why I say, to conclude, Mr. President, and so as not to go on too long, that it is necessary, when we heads of state and government later talk in private, that we do so with absolute

sincerity. We all know that when we talk about the large, dominant countries in the region, when we say the United States, we are not talking solely about the executive branch. We are talking about numerous factions of power, because the structure of these powers creates powers that gradually secure autonomy from the political power elected by the people. And that they often come into conflict with the internal popularly elected political power, when those governments do not serve the interests of those large groups. And so, taking two historical examples, even though they might not meet with approval: one was given by Raúl Castro himself, when he said that just when President John F. Kennedy had begun talks with President Castro to begin a thaw in relations, he was assassinated. We still don't know who assassinated him, but it is clear that it wasn't a Bolivarian hit squad, because they didn't exist, or one from Cuba: he was killed in his own country by his own people.

And Abraham Lincoln, another man who also... the founder of the Republican Party, a great patriot who was referred to by my dear friend the President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, a great statesman who fortunately won the Civil War, which was also the basis for the greatness of the United States, because it wasn't Uncle Tom's Cabin that inspired Abraham Lincoln to fight for the abolition of slavery: he wanted the people of African descent, instead of working on the plantations, to be working in the factories, producing added value to forge a great country.

So, history is important in understanding why some countries developed in one way... Someone – Correa, I think – also asked, what was the difference... . Why, if we were born all at the same time or almost simultaneously in our independence, why some of us are still emerging countries and others, like the United States, have had the luck to become a great power, the greatest in the world?

Well, because we must study history and see what their leaders did. Their leaders were not the elites that ruled our countries and who looked to Europe or to the North to receive their orders. Instead, they were true patriots: like Lincoln, like Jefferson, like Franklin.

So, history is important, because history explains why some of us are one way and others are another way; because everything is related to everything else.

And so, Mr. President of Panama, I want to offer you heartfelt thanks for this meeting and its warmth. In concluding, I would also like to send a fraternal expression of support for the natural disaster that the sister Republic of Chile and its President, my dear friend and colleague Michelle Bachelet, are suffering, and to remind you all that it is necessary, sincerely, to address our problems with a great deal of sincerity.

Let us not be afraid of history, let us not be afraid of ideologies. On the contrary, look at what has happened since the end of ideologies was declared: the fundamentalists arose, and they are now the real problem for security and peace in the world, much more problematic than ideas. Because an idea can be fought with another idea, but when someone tells you he is killing in the name of God, it is much more difficult to fight and combat.

So, let us not turn our back on ideologies: they created the civilization of the 20th century, they set the solid foundations of the scientific progress that will define the 21st century.

Instead, let us learn from history, let us defend our ideas, and, essentially, let us understand that we are facing a different world with new challenges, one that demands a new theoretical framework for understanding it. If we do not understand it, it will be difficult for us to address the real problems and real dangers.

Thank you very much, and a good morning to you all.