

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A CONVERSATION ON THE FUTURE OF CENTRAL AMERICA:
THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY AND TRADE

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PARTICIPANTS:

Keynote Address:

STROBE TALBOTT, Introduction
President
The Brookings Institution

LAURA CHINCHILLA
President
Republic of Costa Rica

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MR. TALBOTT: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Strobe Talbott, and it's my great pleasure to thank all of you for being here this morning for what has been an extraordinarily good conference, and I would like to thank President Rischbieth of CABI for the support that made this morning's very good discussion possible.

It is now my special honor to welcome President Chinchilla here to the Brookings Institution and, I'm glad to say, not for the first time. She was here a couple of years ago as a candidate for the presidency of her country, and it's always nice to welcome back a candidate who won, by a landslide election, the leadership of one of the most important and admirable countries of our hemisphere.

As I think everybody in this room fully appreciates, and certainly all the citizens of Costa Rica appreciate, our guest of honor this afternoon leads a country that is renowned not just in this hemisphere but around the world for having institutionalized the very best values and the very highest standards of good governance -- genuine, deeply, deeply felt democracy, civil society, accountability, stewardship of the environment, and of course a readiness always to advance the cause of regional peace and reconciliation.

Costa Rica stands for human rights in the widest and deepest sense of that phrase, so it was particularly pleasant and fun, if I may put it that way, to be in the room just a couple of doors down from here when she got the news from her colleagues that Costa Rica has been voted as a member of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations just a couple of hours ago.

So, a round of applause to you and your country. (Applause)

President Chinchilla is an expert on another issue of vital national and global importance, and that is protecting the security of all citizens in a country and ensuring genuine and equitable rule of law. She was renowned for precisely her advancement of that cause when she was Minister of Public Security, and she is also an author of several books on the issue of how to deal with criminality and how to improve the system of justice in her country. As president, she has vigorously promoted tax reform with a heavy emphasis on transparency and fairness.

I find it particularly significant and appropriate that all of these issues, which we associate so much with President Chinchilla, are also issues that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton feels about

deeply, and several of us in this room had a chance to hear Secretary Clinton on that subject earlier this week when she met over a two-hour working dinner with six former Latin American presidents on Wednesday evening. That event was organized by the Brookings Institution's Latin America Initiative, which is so ably led by my friend and colleague Mauricio Cárdenes and enriched by the presence here at the Brookings Institution as part of the Latin America Initiative and as a Senior Fellow, Kevin Casas-Zamora who, of course, is your former cabinet colleague, Madam President.

Now, the president is no stranger to Washington, D.C. She has a master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University, and she will be giving a commencement speech at Georgetown tomorrow. In fact, she gave me a brief preview of that speech, and I would love to be able to attend it myself. She's going to be talking about the importance of values and particularly those values I mentioned earlier that have been the basis for Costa Rica's extraordinary legacy and example that it is setting to so many other countries.

But now she is going to talk to us about Central America's challenges and opportunities. She is going to be giving her speech in a language that she has long since mastered, a little more than me apparently, and that is English. And then when Mauricio comes up to lead all of us in a discussion with the president, she will be speaking in Spanish. So, those of you who are not comfortable in the most widely spoken language in all of the Americas, we will have on your seats available devices so that you can listen to simultaneous interpretation.

But now, Madam President, I would offer the microphone to you, and once again thank you for gracing the Brookings Institution this afternoon.

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: Good morning. Good afternoon, I should say. Thank you very much, Mr. Talbott, for this very warm welcome to me and my delegation.

I would also like to thank the Brookings Institution for this invitation to me with a very select group of people interested in Costa Rica and in general in Central America. This institution's prestige rests on the critical role it plays in conducting high-quality, independent research leading to innovative proposals in order to secure a safer, more prosperous, and more cooperative international system.

I also want to thank the Central America Integration Bank for the support they gave to this

activity.

I am especially glad to share this time with new and old friends, including Kevin Casas-Zamora, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Latin American Initiative, and former vice president and minister of planning of Costa Rica and a very good friend of mine.

I am here basically to share with you some thoughts about how Costa Rica has become and continues to be a leader in Latin America in democracy, human development, and environment. I am also here to discuss some of the most important challenges we as a country face ahead. I know you have been focusing during the morning on Central America as a region. I'm going to be more concentrated on Costa Rica, but of course I'm going to put it in the context of the Central America situation, and I will be glad to talk a little bit more about Central America during the question period.

Let me start by saying that we Costa Ricans have always believed in achieving prosperity, true peace, freedom, and rule of law. That is a major national understanding and to history we have taken decisions to follow and reaffirm our beliefs. We believed in an armed democracy, and here we are 60 years after we decided to abolish the army to ensure stability and devote more resources to education, health, and development in general.

We believed in sustainable development, and here we are 30 years after we decided to preserve 25 percent of our land and became the first country in protecting the environment in the Americas and the fifth in the world.

We believed in prosperity, and here we are proceeded by 20 years of constant economic growth thanks to wise international reforms and our opening to the international economy.

And, most importantly, we believed in human development, and here we are with an extended educational system and health indicators that are even better than those of some countries in the developed world.

At the same time, Costa Rica has not been exempted from the impacts of the international economic crisis experience during the last three years. However, thanks to our economic transformation and diversification, we were less vulnerable to the effects of the crisis. Therefore, we continue focusing on prosperity for all sectors of the economy. In fact, considering Costa Rica's receding in the economy during these trying times, the rating agency, Moody's, last year upgraded Costa Rica to

investment grade.

Since 2000, our GDP has multiplied by more than 2. Our foreign direct investment has increased more than three times, and our exports have doubled. Moreover, we have successfully diversified our export base right now. We can probably say that we export over 4,000 different products to almost 150 countries around the world. Today we are a diverse high tech exporter in Latin America and the first per capita exporter of known network resource products in the region.

Looking back to our legacy as a country, reflecting on Costa Rica's full potential and looking ahead to the policies and initiatives my administrations want to implement, I envision that Costa Rica can continue leading the way in Latin America and beyond. We intend to continue implementing the right policies in sustainable development. Today more than 90 percent of our energy comes from renewable sources. We are determined to become one of the first carbon neutral countries. We want to prove to the world that economic development and environmental protection can go hand in hand.

But foremost we're focusing on implementing the right policies to become one of the first developed countries in Latin America. With this in mind, Costa Rica will continue its part toward a prosperous and sustainable development led by innovation, science, and technology. We will lead this way through our continued focus on education. It has been a long-time commitment. 140 years ago Costa Rica decided to provide free access to primary education to all its children. This investment has paid off. Today we'll spend 7 percent of GDP in public education. At the same time, we have been working on a number of initiatives that will enhance not only the quality but the quantity of our educated and well-trained population.

In order to accomplish our goals, my administration will continue to strengthen our social policies and our competitiveness environment. We have already achieved significant milestones that have expanded the high school technical education: an ambitious investment business plan for infrastructure; developing one of the most important container terminals in the Caribbean Sea; modernizing the telecom sector; promoting a sound and novelty digital agenda; focusing on enhancing our electricity generation capacity; and streamlining regulatory procedures.

And here is where our trade and investment initiatives come into place. More than at any

other time, it is clear to us the nations are interdependent. Thus, Costa Rica will continue improving the solid foreign investment and trade platform that it has managed to build during the last 20 years. Today our country has a dozen free-trade agreements that grant our products preferential access to the largest world markets, including the United States, European Union, and China.

From Costa Rica you can access 2.3 billion people, about 70 percent of worldwide GDP, making Costa Rica's export platform an ideal one for both services and manufacturing operations. CAFTA in particular has been a success story, consolidating our access to the American market and leveling the playing field for U.S. exporters to the region.

The results are clear. Despite the economic slowdown, total trade among participating countries increased from \$35 billion prior to the implementation of the agreement to \$48 billion in 2010. In the case of Costa Rica, total trade with the United States increased from about \$10 billion in 2008 to \$14 billion in 2010. We rank No. 3 as recipients of foreign direct investment per capita in Latin America. In the last 10 years, foreign direct investment flows to Costa Rica have increased more than threefold. On average during this decade, such flows have represented more than 6 percent of our country's GDP. More than 200 of the leading companies and services of the best manufacturing, our life sciences among others, have made Costa Rica their home.

But still we want more, because we recognize that exports and investment are crucial for economic growth, integration of new business ventures, jobs, and novelty production in Costa Rica. This is why Costa Rica continues to bolster above.

Finally, I must refer to the issue of public safety, a vital element in maintaining economic growth and social stability. As you must know, Latin America is the most violent continent in the world, measured by average homicide rates. We, in Costa Rica, are aware that we currently face challenges in erasing criminality and drug-related violence. But we are working very hard to address this problem and contain it.

We are confronting drugs on a lesser scale. Similar challenges of combating drug trafficking, illegal guns, and money laundering that are being faced by Mexico, all of Central America, Colombia, the Caribbean, and that is spreading throughout South America and all around the world. Because of the geography of this situation, would Central America lie in, to the north of Colombia and to

the south of Mexico. It is ironic that the more successful these countries are at clamping on the drug lords, the more spillover we get.

In this battle we have our strengths in our structured judicial system, a transparent institutional framework, and educated population, and education for community-based solutions. But we also have our shortcomings --a police force in need of upgrading and provisionalization, and a lack of funds for the material support that is necessary for the detection, intervention, and detention.

Costa Rica is fighting this battle on two levels, both local and international. At home we are working on a wide spectrum of policies and programs aimed at achieving the right balance between repression and prevention, building up institutional capabilities in the state, the private sector, and the community and increasing funding through tax reform.

The order level of the battle against drugs is international. The cycle of drugs, guns, violence, and money laundering is a chain of cross-border crimes. What is needed is a constructive effort on behalf of the whole region, involving coordinated intelligence and logistics in every country and including a fundamental change in policies that will reduce demand and control and regulate all transactions related to the drug trade.

Combating crime, especially organized crime, is attacks of intelligence more than a force. This is the first challenge facing our countries. Our security agencies must collect the news information intelligently in order to prevent this serious problem from occurring in the first place. In Central America we are embarked on an effort to confront this problem on a regional basis. There, too, we face institutional and political challenges complicated by surprising diversity in capabilities that is displayed by this group of small countries. But we are doing all we can to help in the development of a regional strategy.

The government of Costa Rica is aware that we cannot fight alone against these threats to our national security. Cooperation with technical and financial support and its efficient use are basic to sustaining a regional strategy against organized crime, probably the most significant threat to the social and political stability of Central America.

Having said that, Costa Rica continues to be one of the three safest nations in Latin America, and we want to keep it that way. For many years, Costa Rica has been recognized not just for

its historic democratic stability but for its peaceful and safe environment. We are gearing up all our resources to keep it that way.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're conscious of the challenges that lie ahead, but at the same time we are convinced that Costa Rica has the fundamental requirements for excelling in the region and in the world. Clever and innovative people; a stable, political system based on respect for the rule of law; sound, economic policies; and ideal geographical position and strong social network; and a deep respect toward our environment. We truly believe that by keeping our commitment to the values that supported the building of our nation, Costa Rica is on the right path to successful development. We want to keep building a good future.

We know our friendship and alliance with the United States is a key to that future. We will seek keeping more solid and closer ties with this country, its business community, its academic community, and all of these people in the years to come.

Thank you very much.

MR. CÁRDENAS: So, with your permission, we're going to do this part in Spanish. I hope that's alright with everyone in the audience. If not, as Strobe Talbott just mentioned, we have simultaneous interpretation. Just raise your hand and they'll come to you with equipment.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Well, I should say, Madam President, that with your high quality image
(off mike)

Let's change to English.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Let's change to English. Can you hear in English? Okay.

Thank you, Madam President, for your remarks. That adds a lot to the conversation we had in the morning that as I said is a conversation that seeks, most of all, to position Central America in the Washington agenda and especially within the administration and the Congress.

Central America is a very relevant topic that attracts more attention every day because of its complexities and challenges and so your presentation shows that there is a good understanding of how to do things in Central America, and it is an admirable republic as a showcase.

We are now opening the floor for everyone to ask questions. Please be brief, introduce yourselves to get the information. This is being recorded. We are now open to questions and comments.

MS. COSTINELLEDA: I'm Diana Costinelleda. I'd like to ask the president -- she was talking about tax reform in Costa Rica to try to collect funds to fight organized crime in Central America in the corridor between Mexico and Colombia. Are you taking other measures in case this does not get passed in Congress?

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: Which reform did you mention?

MS. COSTINELLEDA: Tax reform.

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: Oh, the tax reform, okay.

We can't pick and choose when you have a taxation system. You either cut or collect. At the end of the day you have to do both and you seek more efficiency in the public sector and from that point of view we're doing our best to do more with less, and we are sending a message of austerity to the population of Costa Rica at this juncture.

I also recognize that public expenditure is quite rigid. Most of the resources are committed to salaries, pensions, and service in the debt. So, little is left, so we don't want to sacrifice infrastructure investment or social investment. That is a big mistake countries make when they do that and they create debt in the long term.

So, we favor strongly our tax reform. It is not easy for any country, and that tests the political system, the maturity of the political actors, and the ability to negotiate and to face corporations and unions and their interests. They will have to give in to the social pact that is being built, and the discussion is not easy. I have to recognize that the political dialogue is quite robust.

There are more political parties that are surfacing, and the actors are numerous and the dialogue becomes more complex, and we are insisting on a new phase we're in after hearing the parties.

We are sending a new text for the tax reform that would not sacrifice three items that are essential: One, to try to collect at least 2 percent of the GDP through the reform; two, we would like to end with a system that is simplified and ensures transparency for tax collection; and three, that the tax burden does not prevent us from being able to reform the system.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Any more questions?

SPEAKER: I'm trying to have a conversation on Central America mostly, and interesting comments were made. Someone said that crime does not recognize borders, but the administration does

know where are the borders. I am from Colombia, and I wonder what would have happened to Colombia if the departments of El Valle, Antioquia would have been other countries. That would have been difficult to handle. So, understanding sovereignty, how can we make progress in the fields of justice, police, security within Central America? How can we coordinate with other countries in general? There are claims of lost sovereignty. If a country wants to cooperate with friendly nations, and that comes up with a certain degree of demagoguery but especially when these are small and large nations -- for instance, the treatment for stewardship of the environment of basins -- and one should be reminded that sovereignty is already being disputed by the drug cartels and other factions. So, we have to think about this. We're not only losing ground because we cannot negotiate the sovereignty that is lost by being taken away by intimidation, corruption, and the loss of institutions that lose ground to these cancers. So, we should leave those aside undoubtedly. We'd need to negotiate with intelligence -- make it a contribution to the regional dynamics -- and to redefine our strategy.

Central America is having a discussion with the financial institutions about how to ensure effectiveness in a regional setting. I have been the architect of the first phase of regional cooperation within the region. In the last 15 years I was the minister of safety when we started with these regional programs with the U.S. for joint patrolling, and I'm afraid some of it has been limited to treatments and agreements, because we have not been able to translate that into action, and we haven't promoted enough joint training and creating even personal ties with key players at the police level, the minister of justice, and other agencies to ensure that those instruments are used. Undoubtedly, the challenge is to go beyond the thought that if one nation solves the problem, that's the end of the problem. It is not. Crime never disappears but surfaces elsewhere. And we see that in the region. We do celebrate the effort of Colombia, a heroic one, but we see the unintended effects of the relocation to other areas. That's the balloon effect, as we know it, that the problem ends in one area and it appears in another area, so we look for a systemic solution.

MR. LOUIS: David Louis, Manchester Trade, member of Caribbean Action.

We were discussing security and trade at the regional level, and one of the comments was the success of the international trade for Costa Rica and the effective integration of the private sector for trade. One of the missing pieces is the integration of the business sector in the security agenda. We

know that next month there's a security summit in Guatemala and there is a participation of the business sector not only from Central America but from other countries that have business in Central America, and I'd like to hear your views, as the president, on how we can continue to make progress in terms of the participation of the business sector in this agenda.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Should we HEAR other questions as well? Okay.

MR. CORREA: Good afternoon, I'm Lena Correa, Voice of America. I'm going to go outside the economic issues, and I'd like to ask what are your first impressions about the inclusion of Costa Rica in the Human Rights Commission and what are the challenges that it faces in terms of security, and what does it mean for the treatment of human rights, a problem that is included in the whole landscape of regional safety?

MR. CÁRDENAS: Another question to finish this round?

MR. BOUDILOUDAY: Good morning. Drohillia Boudilouday. I was Under Secretary for Defense of the U.S. attached to that -- it's ironic because we don't have an army, but we'll fight for peace. My question has to do with how Costa Rica relates to China. In San Jose, for instance, the new stadium donated by China impresses everyone there. Roberto Artavia had mentioned that this is a creation of AID, that he got a scholarship and funds to establish the library. How do you see these kinds of donations, this type of competition? Obviously, Costa Rica is an important investor for China. What words do you have for the U.S. in terms of this relationship?

MR. CÁRDENAS: Let's stop there. We have a certain diversity here. Yeah, we have enough material.

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: I should say that the business sector in Costa Rica is showing signs that it wants to belong to something, certain participation with the citizenry that happens when a country reaches certain problems that affect the flow of investment and economic growth and opportunities. So, there is the awareness that we want to do something about it.

The administration is designing a strategy so that everyone can participate, because otherwise the danger for security could be that people take this into their own hands. And if we have too many initiatives, that can run counterproductive to what the government is trying to do.

Part of the problems that Colombia had to overcome was the issue of the paramilitary,

and if the private sector feels that the government is not responding, then they want to do things their own way. And it is key to have the government initiative to include everyone and give everyone a role to play. The same goes for Central America. The Business Federation is also interested in being a part of it.

In terms of the vote for Costa Rica to be part of the Human Rights Council, we are honored by that decision, and that is a tribute to our history and work for human rights, and it's a commitment looking into the future. We have firm resolve and we want to continue to work along these lines.

Now, as to security and human rights and the -- for instance, personal freedoms -- it is key for each society to find its own balance based on the circumstances, we cannot have freedoms taken to extreme or have disdain for security. That may curtail freedoms. So, each society has to find its own balance. It's not a general recipe that applies to all, and if we are to decrease or to curtail freedoms, we have to do it based on clear rules that ensure they will be applied to all of those who violate the rules. We cannot have decisions that are whimsical, that we are losing freedoms in two officers whose rules are not clear when they face circumstances.

In terms of Costa Rica and its relations with China, we're very happy about the stadium I must admit. It's a very beautiful thing for us. And that was a gesture from China on the occasion of the beginning of relations with China. You may know that we had relations with Taiwan and not with China and two -- three years we started having ties with China during the Arias administration, and Costa Rica does not base its relations with other nations on what we're going to get from it.

The spheres that we have access to -- because of our sizes we don't have access to many programs. We want trade and not aid, as we said, and we are mostly interested in our international policy of trade as an engine of growth, and we are only 4 million-plus population with a small market, and any country represents an opportunity, and if we're speaking about China with such a large market, that's an excellent opportunity that we think does not run counter to market opportunities with the U.S. or any other nation -- the E.U., for instance -- that we are discussing.

SPEAKER: Speaking about trade and not aid, if you look at the FTAs with Panama and Colombia and how much that was delayed in the U.S, what's your opinion about that?

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: Well, seeing -- looking at the opportunities that we have a

need for, we would like to have had that approved, and we're doing many things right for the last few years. Colombia undoubtedly has overcome a huge problem with organized crime and so having incentives for those actions, and in the case of Panama, similarly to Costa Rica, is not begging for aid but is looking to have more trade. So, we hope that they can make progress and we understand that when an economic crisis surfaces, sometimes the need for protectionism tends to surface. And it's hard to explain to our people why we have more unemployment, so we put up barriers to trade. But that would be a terrible mistake. We should continue to promote trade.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Any other question or comment?

And I'd like to say hello to the Ambassadors of Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador. Thank you for your presence here. It's an honor to have you.

MR. TALBOTT: -- this session. I want to just make an observation here at the end.

Our guest made history in her own country, history that we have not yet made in the United States, of being the first woman president. I believe we have also made history here in the last half hour. I'm going to check the archives and I'd be mortified if I were wrong, but I believe this is the first time we have had an intense wide ranging discussion in this auditorium entirely in a language other than English. By the way it happens to be a North American as well as an American language but I think this is a good thing. It shows that Brookings is also making some progress and becoming a better neighbor to the rest of the hemisphere and also a better global think tank.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Thank you, Strobe. As you know Gabriel Garcia Marquez has this great phrase that says that the universal language is broken English. (Laughter)

Let's go on then. There was another question.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Ms. President from the National Democratic Institute. We have a small project in the northern triangle of Central America that tries to foster dialog within governments that are national and municipal and the civil society. My question is can you discuss the experience of Costa Rica in terms of dialog with different levels within government and the civil society, the police, and other projects as in your experience as Minister of Public Security?

MR. CÁRDENAS: We may have time for one or two questions.

SPEAKER: Jorge (inaudible), previously with IDB, now with WOLA.

President, according to the news today, you will be signing a sizeable loan with the IDB for citizen safety. That is a commitment for security. We are thinking about the ability of Costa Rica to handle this issue, vis-à-vis the other countries in the northern triangle. How do you think that that imbalance can be overcome thinking, as Mauricio said, that crime knows no borders? And it is an infectious disease actually, and if we don't handle it together simultaneously, the problem will keep coming back.

MR. CÁRDENAS: We have time for only one more question. Mr Castresana if you are interested in making a comment --

MR. CASTRESANA: I accept the invitation. There is a huge difference in Central America that favors Costa Rica on the rule of law issue. I was in a mission for three years in Guatemala, but within the U.N. we believe that cooperation, that in many senses its focus on transferring best practices in the Central American region will be led by Costa Rica because, fortunately for you and your neighbors, is in a condition to export best practices for the rule of law issue in training or assigning prosecutors and police officers. And do you think that it is possible to have a common market for justice and security for Central America wherein some countries can be donors and others be on the receiving end?

It may be easier to have Costa Rican police officers helping in Guatemala rather than having Russian police officers there, and would it be possible to have, like, a common market for transferring technology where Colombian police officers specialized in certain security topics can be exported to the rest of the countries, for instance?

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: About the dialog applied to security, our experience is that it's very easy to get people interested. The main concern for most of our countries is that people are avid of being shown a way how to do it so it is easy to have a dialog with people who find avenues for collaborating. What is difficult sometimes is to have a method for the dialog, because if we dialog it's to get better results, to improve, to have an impact, and sometimes people become interested.

There's a first level of communication. Expectations are created. But we cannot translate it into concrete outcome. That's where we need to do more work, and there are many experiences that have been documented in the region of what is the philosophy for community security at

the local level where they are more successful, where when we get a good mayor that leads these efforts with the national police, the business sector, they have generally accomplished good results. So, we have many success stories. Colombia has them as well. And we don't have to go too far but to use what has happened and being leaders have a method for creating outcomes.

About the financial burden, this is similar to the environment, that each nation has an obligation to do its own work to mitigate the phenomena that goes outside its own borders. We cannot expect -- and this happens to Costa Rica when we talk about the environment. We feel frustrated, because we have worked seriously and we have used resources, and every time that we -- there are climatic events, we are in an area where we get the most impact, and not because we're not doing our work but because we're trying to do it correctly but maybe not at the scale that needs to happen for a change to be seen.

We are a small market, and in terms of fighting crime, we are collecting more taxes. We are committed to investing, but other nations have to accept responsibility on equal terms, and if that doesn't happen it will be difficult to sustain. So, we are sometimes frustrated, because we want to do things right, but we receive externalities of those who are not doing it correctly.

In terms of corruption within the institutions, no successful strategy against organized crime can be implemented if the institutions are not committed. That is a premise, a basic, fundamental premise; and if a country has that challenge, the first thing they have to do is to clean up the institutions, to have supervision and control of the police, and to review the sanctions. That will help. And if the media is independent, then they can help to report crime, sometimes anonymously, and that is essential. Otherwise, this will not lead to a good fruition. And I would dare to say that there are problems of corruption in many countries in the region. Costa Rica is making an effort of the judicial power, branch, and we still have problems to face.

In the cases that we have seen judges acting inappropriately, the press has been the first one to report it and then we have had investigations, and this has been clarified. Sometimes they have been punished.

About the comments by Mr. Castresana, I do believe that there is horizontal cooperation that we can exchange in the region, and Costa Rica is very interested in strengthening police techniques,

and if we think about Colombia, I'd rather have this cooperation with Colombia. We are very similar in our idiosyncrasy. We understand each other. We have worked in circumstances of great difficulty, and we are improving our cooperation with Colombia in legal issues, and police cooperation we already have exchange. And in Central America, we would like to have more. There are some differences that explain why the best practices may not be used interchangeably. In the northern triangle they use the army to combat drug trafficking. We wouldn't be able to do that. But in other areas we may.

MR. CÁRDENAS: Thank you to the president, and I would like to recognize the Central American Bank for economic integration, because this alliance with Brookings will allow us to have spaces for discussion about Central American issues in an integrated way, to have comprehensive regional approaches to understand these topics.

Thank you, Madam President. You are at home and you know that the opportunity of addressing a U.S. audience is much appreciated. We wish you the best in your term, and we know that you can play a leading role in promoting these topics at a regional level and find spaces to have coordinated solutions to problems that go outside national borders.

Thank you, and we wish you well tomorrow at Georgetown.

PRESIDENT CHINCHILLA: Thank you.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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