

Arturo Frondizi



Former Argentine President asks Clinton to free LaRouche

Below is the full text of a seven-page letter from the former President of Argentina, Arturo Frondizi. It was covered on June 6 in the Argentine daily paper La Nación.

Buenos Aires, May 14, 1993
To the Hon. William J. Clinton
President of the United States of America

Distinguished President:

I am addressing you, sir, first to congratulate you for having assumed the presidency of that great nation by the will of your people.

It would be nothing new if I told you that your presence in the White House holds for North Americans and, especially, for Latin America, a true hope for change for the world and for the continent. If this change is brought about in the correct and hoped-for way, I can assure you that you will be returning dignity to millions of human beings who clamor for justice and well-being. It was my duty to tell you this.

Since Nov. 3, 1992, the world has heard much talk about whether the young dynamic politician William J. Clinton will restore to the government of the United States the vitality which my great friend President John F. Kennedy had given it, and whether there is a "New Frontier" to nurture hopes for the future.

I offer you my fervent wishes that your efforts be crowned with success. The mission you have assumed offers you the opportunity to embark on the exciting adventure of helping to build a better world, guided by freedom, peace, development, and social justice. That is undoubtedly an irresistible challenge.

I pray to God that He grant your presidency a most Christian inspiration to fight for the cause of humankind, for, as President Kennedy emphasized on March 13, 1961, upon assuming the commitment to help the peoples of the world break the chains of poverty: "Hungry men and women cannot hope."

Two special circumstances have moved me to write to the new President of the United States of America. One

relates to justice for all men, individual freedoms and human rights. The other is the clear presence of negative factors on the continent, which bode particularly dangerous moments, both immediately and in the future, for its incipient democracies.

I

It may have come to your attention that I, together with thousands of international personalities, plead with the U.S. government to free the economist Lyndon LaRouche, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison on Jan. 27, 1989. On Aug. 12, 1991, I learned of an appeal submitted by him to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States, concerning alleged human rights violations and related political attacks. Out of an elementary concern for justice, I wrote to that body requesting a clarification of the charges.

I had the opportunity to meet Mr. LaRouche in June of 1984 in this city, and was able to conduct a dialogue at length with him concerning the world situation, and especially regarding conditions which are still current and constitute the panorama of Latin America today. Among other things, we agreed with the statements of Pope John Paul II contained in his Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, where he says that the countries of the continent cannot pay their foreign debts through intolerable sacrifices, and that "the other name for peace is development."

Later, I began an intellectual relationship with Mr. LaRouche, through reading his books and articles in newspapers and various other publications. I totally share his definitions of national sovereignty and the right to life, security, and the freedom of the human person.

Our thinking finds strong agreement in that Mr. LaRouche considers economic development to be the pillar which sustains and affirms the self-determination of the nations of Latin America, through aggressive industrialization programs, currently blocked by monetarist plans and adjustments orchestrated by the International Monetary Fund and other supranational credit institutions.

I am also of a similar mind with Mr. LaRouche when he says that Latin America could be the United States' best trading partner. Of course this could only be possible to the extent that, as John Kenneth Galbraith stated it, a profound cultural change is brought about among the elites who are content with their own prosperity and ignore the millions of human beings who struggle daily with poverty and exclusion.

May I appeal to you, Sir, to exhaust all available means to settle the "LaRouche case" once and for all, and thus give him back his freedom if justice so warrants it.

The humanitarian principles you expressed in your political campaign regarding individual freedoms and human rights; the presence of Martin Luther King's son at your side on the path to the Presidency; and your professed admiration for John Fitzgerald Kennedy, guarantee absolutely that you will give this request—otherwise subscribed to by thousands of people, including former Presidents, military men, businessmen, intellectuals, political leaders and legislators—the objective consideration appropriate to a righteous man.

America was born so that man could live free of oppression, injustice, and persecution. Such was the thinking of George Washington in the United States, and of José de San Martín in South America. Because of this legacy we must deepen our love of freedom, respect for individual dignity, and civilized understanding among the people of the Americas, through concrete actions. According to his brother, the President murdered in Dallas used to love to quote Dante when he said: "The most searing parts of Hell are reserved for those who, in moments of difficult moral crisis, remain neutral."

I am fully confident that President William J. Clinton will do justice.

II

When I had the honor of assuming the presidency of my country on May 1, 1958, I said before the Legislative Assembly that Latin America has a common destiny and a common purpose of human redemption. I stressed that its people stand on a continent that is united both geographically and in its historic roots, and that is also united by a common quest for the achievement of democracy.

That reality forces me to take note of the inequality which was present then and continues to exist today, between the progress and well-being attained by one part of America, and the backwardness and misery in which millions of human beings are submerged in the other part of our America.

My government's first priority was to energetically pursue National Development, in order to assure a future of progress and greatness for my country. Anything else would have meant leaving Argentina paralyzed, growing daily more impoverished and doomed to backwardness and national disintegration.

I further informed the U.S. government that I would defend any clear and vigorous action to seal continental uni-

ty, through a great cooperative effort of economic and social development, and support for democratic institutions. I was absolutely convinced that if these objectives were achieved, they would serve as a great help in assuring that the people would not fall prey to Communist propaganda which finds such fertile ground in poverty and exclusion. It was imperative that they acquire a clear sense of the true paths to freedom and well-being, in which the possibilities opened up by the Alliance for Progress were becoming available.

I could tell you a great deal about this matter, Mr. President, but I shall just say that, concerning that Alliance, I found in your inspirer a broad, humble, and generous understanding that it was a simple plan of social assistance, and that it would not resolve structural problems. I stressed to President Kennedy that the poor nations of the world, especially in Latin America, did not need charity, but capital for their development.

As you well know, the Alliance was born out of a concern for the problems of social development, while it was also a political response to the political problem posed by the Cuban challenge. Kennedy had called upon the governments of Latin America to fight the evils of social injustice.

In fulfilling my obligation as President of Argentina, I accepted the call and embraced all that was positive within it, while simultaneously emphasizing my government's standpoint for waging the fight against underdevelopment, a condition which destroys the national identity of nations increasingly subject to a concentration of economic power.

In February of 1962, I told the U.S. government that the most important initiative taken by my government in the international sphere had been to establish deeper and closer ties with the United States. This gave us a full and active presence in the heart of the community of the Americas, having first reoriented our earlier links to certain European countries.

President Kennedy's administration fully backed my government in carrying out its policies from 1958 to 1962, when I was overthrown by a civil-military coup. The United States was on our side in the war we declared against the monopolies, to establish the preeminence of the nation-state as the arbiter of the greater national interest.

The joint declaration I had the honor of signing with President Kennedy in New York on Sept. 26, 1961 said in one part: "The interview between the Presidents of the Argentine Republic and the United States of America has unfolded in the spirit of true friendship and mutual respect which joins the two fraternal countries and which is expressed in the fruitful cooperation and close solidarity of ideals and objectives that are common to both nations."

The strengthening of U.S.-Argentine ties was due to the positive precedent of my visit to your country during the administration of General Eisenhower in 1959. That opened the way to a new understanding, for which reason the tour was assigned an importance that went beyond the limits of

relations between the two countries and, according to the world press, constituted “a measure of the new attitude of the United States toward Latin America.” I, in turn, was charged with a mission I could not refuse, of being the interpreter of a genuine continental aspiration and not merely defending my country individually.

At that time, I told the National Press Club in Washington that Latin America’s development was an historic challenge and that it was unforgivable to continue living in poverty in such an immensely rich soil.

On Jan. 21, 1959, during a joint session of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, I stated that “the unequal development of the continent contradicts the ideals of justice and freedom, and economic backwardness is a threat to hemispheric security.” At the end of my presentation, I urged: “Let us make sure that the American continent can truly be a continent of human hope, fulfilling on its soil and for all of its children the promise of happiness and abundance that America offered to humanity.”

I clearly stressed that the Argentine people were filled with national pride and were ever ready to jealously guard the sovereignty of their country. Therefore our people—I explained—are open to any investment intended to promote the progress and welfare of the country, just as they will reject any proposal which implies a threat to their sovereignty.

I should tell you with great concern, Mr. President, that were it possible, at my 84 years of age, to magically return to the time when I visited your country under Eisenhower and Kennedy, I would be obliged to pose the problems regarding Latin America, and Argentina in particular, in precisely the same words and sentiments that I did then. This, to me, shows the reality of a frustrated continent. It is clear that the conditions of backwardness and social injustice and the inhuman concentration of economic power continue to prevail in Latin America.

From time immemorial, countless think-tanks have been created to study and analyze the Latin American situation. At the same time, innumerable plans to amortize the foreign debt have been created and offered. Despite all of this, the debt continues to grow, with the added problem that most debtor countries have gone on, through privatizations, to auction off their public assets.

Mr. President, the 1990 statement of the U.S. bishops, that “total forgiveness of the foreign debt would not resolve the problem because it would leave intact the systematic underlying causes of the current crisis, both structural and behavioral,” was very significant.

The bishops also stated that “no interpretation of the Scriptures could force the hungry to starve, and to starve their children, merely to fulfill contractual obligations designed to reimburse the rich and their institutions.”

Latin America is dangerously convulsed as a result of the political, economic, and social project now being implemented continent-wide.

Allow me to state with great conviction, because I am informed both by my own experience and by the cries of alarm coming from the oppressed peoples, that Latin America urgently needs the United States to revise its policies derived from the Initiative for the Americas of President Bush and of the Free Trade Agreements.

The prestigious economist Galbraith, cited earlier, has stated unequivocally, regarding the 12 years of Republican government, that they will be remembered as one of the most horrible periods of U.S. history, whose only success was to provide the prosperous some kind of reward. This man, who was a collaborator of both Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy, has distinguished himself for his concern for the poor peoples of the Earth and for the need to reevaluate the problem of the foreign debt. Following your election, he stated that there was a sentiment in your country that this was a time of renewal.

If anything should change, it is the general rule that prevails throughout Latin America, which clearly says that “economic reactivation is meager, macroeconomic stability is fragile, and investment is insufficient.”

You must obviously share Galbraith’s opinion regarding your inheritance from the Republican administration. This encourages one to believe that your administration will review and correct the policies of your country toward the continent, which I insist with the greatest respect, cannot be delayed.

As with John F. Kennedy in his time, destiny has placed you, Mr. President, at the crossroads between freedom and prosperity, or submission and poverty. With the second, Latin America’s future is not so difficult to predict, because it is well known that popular upheaval, violence, and fratricidal warfare always have a backdrop of social injustice.

It would be highly dangerous for the development of Latin America were economic coercion to continue to condition the functioning of the American democracies, which are contracting in an economic context distorted by underdevelopment, moral decline, and the increasingly weighty influence of the drug trade.

As long as assistance plans continue to be designed to collect the debt and not to produce genuine risk investments channelled by sovereign states according to the national interests of each nation, the people will continue to be sacrificed through starvation and exclusion. This is the most noteworthy circumstance.

I respectfully request the Honorable President William J. Clinton to meditate upon these well-considered thoughts. All I hope is to reach you with a well-grounded appeal in defense of the peoples who are subjected to an inhuman, marginal existence, and for the freedom of a politician in your country, because of the serious meaning this has for keeping peace on our continent and upholding individual freedoms.

Arturo Frondizi

Former President of the Nation of Argentina