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GOV. EUGENIO ELORDUY WALTHER
Governor of the State of Baja California
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On Thursday, February 16, 2005 the CSIS Mexico Project of the Americas Program hosted the Governor of the state of Baja California, Eugenio Elorduy Walther, at a breakfast round-table discussion. Several members of the Government of Baja California accompanied Mr. Elorduy in his presentation, including the Secretary of Government, Bernardo Martinez Aguirre, the Secretary of Education, José Gabriel Posada, and the Secretary of the Environment, Enrique Villegas. The themes of cooperation and coexistence predominated in Governor Elorduy's agenda for a good-neighbor bilateral policy.

Mr. Elorduy's discussion of the bilateral agenda was centered on cooperation through effective communication – particularly with regard to frontline issues such as immigration and security. He addressed the need for a sensitive and comprehensive bilateral policy to halt illegal immigration, such as a visa program for migrant workers, and cautioned not to interpret a shared border as a security threat, but rather as a shared opportunity for mutual development. On the issue of security and narco-trafficking, Governor Elorduy proposed stronger coordinated efforts with U.S. border officials. While he praised his collaborative relationship with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in identifying the economic synergies in the cross-border region, and in the development of integrated, state-to-state, economic development strategies – such as the Silicon Border Project, he urged for better bilateral cooperation in implementing border security measures. Mr. Elorduy encouraged the U.S. to take a larger role in detaining and extraditing cross-border traffickers that reside within U.S. territory, and noted that his government had created special prosecutors and passed new state legislation to combat narcotrafficking. Governor Elorduy equally stressed the need for greater bilateral communication when outlining the trans-boundary environmental effects of the proposed 23-mile All-American Canal Lining Project that is slated to begin construction later this year just north of the border. He was critical of the severe environmental implications that the canal could have on wetlands, endangered bird species, and Baja California's farm workers. He implored the U.S. Department of Interior to maintain an open dialogue in working with the government of Baja California on the Canal Project.

On the domestic front, Governor Elorduy detailed an agenda for his remaining eighteen months in office that consisted of increasing the availability of technology, education, water access, and wind and solar powered housing. He presented the Silicon Border Initiative, a technology-based proposal aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of the border region, which could reinforce the semi-conductor industry in the capital city of Mexicali and create

technology clusters with potential to create a more skilled high-tech workforce. On education, Mr. Elorduy vowed to increase scholarships by another 44,000 beyond the 190,000 scholarships already awarded by his administration to ensure that all Baja Californians could complete levels from preschool through high school. He also proposed to increase water accessibility to 98-99 percent of his state, and to provide greater affordable housing based on wind and solar energy.

In the question and answer session, Governor Elorduy predicted that the National Action Party (PAN) candidate Felipe Calderón should win the Presidential elections later in July if he campaigns well and communicates effectively, in simple rhetoric, with the electorate. He also reflected on his personal future, citing a sense of satisfaction with his Governorship and his career in politics that began with the PAN in 1968. He explained the danger of becoming addicted to public office, and stated that his own career would not depend on it – he was a businessman, first.