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Jorge BATLLE Ibanez (Phonetic: BAH-jay)

President (since 2000) (b)(3)

Addressed as: Mr. President

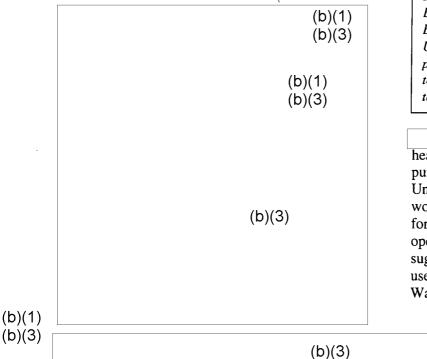
I'm not going to change at this stage of my life; I'm going to go on saying what I think is good for the country. (b)(3)

Jorge Batlle, November 1999

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Lawyer and veteran politician Jorge Batlle is using his dynamic personality to carve out a role for Uruguay in international economic affairs. he

has met with Argentine and US economic officials, offering advice on how to engage in more fruitful trade negotiations. An ardent advocate of strengthening the Mercosur trade bloc, he has pushed his counterparts in the bl(b)(1)implement more "harmonious" macroeconor(b)(3) policies that would bolster Mercosur's overall influence with the United States, Europe, and other regional trade coalitions. At the same time, Batlle, who brings an outward-looking econor (b)(1) perspective to the presidency, often expresses (b)(3)frustration with the slow pace of regional integration and is promoting export diversification that will eventually reduce Uruguay's dependence on the markets of Argentina and Brazil (D)(3)





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(b)(3)Seeking Stronger Ties to Washington (b)(1) Batlle stronger bilateral relations as a way to improve  $u^{(b)(3)}$ Uruguay's long-term economic stability. Batlle is open to any kind of trade agreement—bilateral, regional, or hemispheric—that would allow Uruguay better access to US markets. he has called for the United States and other agricultural exporters to create a common front to challenge EU agricultural subsidies that limit Uruguayan beef exports to Europe. To bolster ties to the United States, Batlle has expressed interest in stepping up Uruguayan contributions to international peacekeeping operations, to aid the war on terrorism by freeing US soldiers from nonterrorism-related duties. -(b)(3)= he alienated regional heavyweight Brazil by publicly supporting Chile's pursuit of a bilateral free trade agreement with the United States, arguing that Chile's initiative would open the way to a hemispheric agreement

for Mercosur member states. In addition, he has openly chastised the US State Department for suggesting that Uruguay's banking system was used by money launderers. He added that Washington should focus on its own

> (continued) LP 01-110445 9 November 2001

# Pushing Peace Worldwide

Batlle supports the US antiterrorist position and has emphatically condemned the 11 September attacks in New York City and Washington. He, nevertheless, favors pursuing peace rather than aggression and has publicly called for all nations to avoid the spread of violence. Batlle has stated that the attack was an act not of war but of terrorism and has called for a global peace movement to prevent the escalation of bloodshed. On the diplomatic front, Batlle has announced that any military operation against terrorists should be authorized by the UN, adding that the attackers must be punished using international criminal law rather than acts of revenge. [(b)(3)]

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problems, alleging the world's largest moneylaundering system operates in the United States as a result of high US drug consumption. Never afraid to take a stand, he became the first Latin American leader to call for the legalization of illicit drugs. Batlle, who admits that this topic is open for debate, says that legalization would lower drug price (b)(3) lamage the livelihood of narcotraffickers.

### **Fulfilling Campaign Promises**

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On the domestic front, Batlle's independence and political persistence have enabled him to fulfill a number of his presidential campaign goals, despite resistance from within his coalition government. Early in his administration, for example, Batlle pressured the Congress to pass reforms that increased the government's (b)(1)flexibility to administer state-owned compan(b)(3) and used that legislation to cut nonpersonnel expenses. Batlle has lived up to his campaign pledge to increase tax revenue by establishing an antismuggling program within the Defense Ministry (b)(3)(b)(1)<sup>-</sup>

At the same time, Batlle has made politi(b)(3)inroads and blunted opposition to his marketoriented policies by addressing key concerns of left-leaning opponents. The President, for example, established a peace commission to

investigate disappearances during the 1973-85 military regime, becoming the first president to take up the issue

Batlle won points across the political spectrum when he fired his Armed Forces Joint Staff Chief immediately after the officer opined that the military would eventually have to "fight the left." Despite his persistence, he has failed to implement deeper reforms-such as privatization of some state activities-because of the popularity of Uruguay's social welfare syste(b)(3)

### A Career Politician

Batlle was born on 25 October 1927 in Montevideo. Several of his ancestors were Presidents of Uruguay, including his late father, President (1947-51) Luis Batlle Berres. Batlle holds a law degree from the University of the Republic of Uruguay. He began his political career in 1945, when he joined List 15---a minority faction of the Colorado Party (PC). From 1958 to 1967, he was a member of the Chamber of Deputies. Batlle ran unsuccessfully for the presidency in 1966, 1971, 1989, and 1994. During Uruguay's military dictatorship (1973-1985), he was a representative of the PC in the Triumvirate, a clandestine party. After the restoration of civilian rule, he returned to the political arena as a senator, serving until 1989. Batlle was president of the PC from 1990 until 1995, when he was reelected senator, a post he (b)(3) held until his 1999 presidential bid.

#### -(b)(3) **Personal Data**

Batlle is married to his second wife, Maria de las Mercedes Menafra; he has a daughter, a son, and three grandchildren from his first marriage.

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Battle enjoys reading, walking, and spending time in the countryside. He has a passion for old cars and is an avid fan of rowing and Nacional-one of the top soccer teams in Uruguay. The President, who is an agnostic, has received the Jerusalem prize from the World Zionist Organization for his religious tolerance. In addition to his native Spanish, he speaks English, German, French, and Portuguese fluently. (b)(3)

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# Approved for Release: 2018/05/21 C06746716

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