The Second Meeting of the Andean – U.S. Dialogue Forum

IDEA International

Lima, Perú

June 1-2, 2010

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June 1-2, 2010

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Andean – U.S. Dialogue Forum

June 1-2, 2010
Lima, Perú.

Tuesday, June 1

08:00 - 08:30 am	Breakfast at the Sonesta Hotel.
08:30 - 09:15 am	

Document of the US Andean – U.S. Dialogue Forum

Documents and articles about Andean – U.S. relations

Andean – U.S. relations under President Obama

“Remarks at the 40th Washington Conference on the Americas.” United States

But our commitment to trade is one that we feel strongly about. We just have to deal with the political winds and we need more help from the private sector. We need more

joy in the positive GDP growth, our income disparity continues to grow. And that is not

spots were springing up elsewhere in the world, and I am committed to doing everything I can to have this hemisphere be a model and to combine our strengths, overcome our weaknesses, work in a real spirit of partnership and friendship, and I welcome your thoughts and ideas about how we in the Obama Administration can be more successful in doing that.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

"Andean Region Trip Review (Interview)." United States Department of State. Arturo Valenzuela, Assistant Secretary of State. April 12, 2010.

QUESTION: Assistant Secretary Valenzuela, welcome back, you just came back from a 3 country trip to the Andean region. Why did you go and what were the main themes of your visit?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY VALENZUELA: I did go travel to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and this is an Andean tour. In each of the countries, I was able to meet with the president as well as foreign minister, although in some ways, what I most enjoyed about the trip was to meet with embassy people in each of the embassies, U.S. embassies, but also to speak with university students. I am a college professor so I enjoy doing that. I also visited some projects that the United States government supports through USAID and through other initiatives in various places. It was a great trip.

In Colombia, for example, I was able to visit an extraordinary project with a private foundation that helps Afro-Colombians who have been displaced because of the conflict in Colombia, the narco-trafficking conflict in that country, and who are essentially trying to get their lives in order. These are very poor people. But this foundation is a wonder foundation. It's called Little Grains of Hope, that is the name of the foundation and it was very moving to see what they do.

In the Peruvian Andes, I was able to actually go down to the jungle area, in upper Huallaga, in Northern Peru, to see an absolutely phenomenal development project. With assistance from the United States, through various different agencies, peasants who used to grow coca in this area of Peru are now growing cacao. In fact, not only are they growing cacao, they are producing their own chocolate. One of the cooperatives there of about 1500 peasants won a prize recently in Paris for the quality of their chocolate. They also produce coffee and various sorts of things. This is what we need to do, the main theme of the trip was to talk to leaders in each of these places on how we can move ahead with social inclusion, poverty alleviation, making sure that our populations are more competitive which means in investment in infrastructure, investment in human capital and education. At the same ti3.2(m)6.6o2.0 782(e)78mpe Tweucectively.1(lop)-5.5(,)ge thtion nn

QUESTION: We understand you have had the opportunity to meet Ecuador's President Rafael Correa. Can you tell us about that meeting?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY VALENZUELA: Let me just say this—that in all three countries, I was able to meet foreign ministers as well as the president. I had an equally good meeting with President Uribe in Colombia and his team. And President Uribe, as you know, is leaving office soon. It's extraordinary. He has 80% approval ratings. He has done a tremendous job in reversing a very difficult situation in Colombia. Colombia is now a very secure country. But he is leaving office because the constitutional court said that he could not go on for another term. Colombia is an example where the rule of law and where institutions are working well and where a president decides, even if he is very popular, that at the end of his term, he indeed steps down. In Peru, I met with President Garcia who has done an extraordinary good job. Peru has very high economic growth rates recently. Although they have problems in some of the jungle areas for example with the degradation of tropical forests—that was one of the things I looked at there. But as asked in your question, I did go to Cartagena for the World Economic Forum and participated in a panel there with several other leaders and with business leaders from all over Latin America discussing international problems. It was a great opportunity for me to give our message –that is that the United States is reaching out to Latin America to have stronger partnerships with all of our neighbors in the hemisphere in order to resolve the problems that we all think we can resolve together. I am very optimistic about this trip.

Castañeda, Jorge. "Adiós, Monroe Doctrine. When the Yanquis go home." The New Republic. 28, December 2009.

The ouster of

they can argue that the peasants in the Andes are still hungry because of the presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, but that is not an easy sell.

And the change in regional dynamics is even more profound than that. The past decade has seen the rise of governments--like those of Lula in Brazil, Michelle Bachelet and

effective and transparent antitrust institutions are tasks that countries cannot carry out alone, given their integration with the U.S. economy.

Many of the region’s traditionally anti-interventionist nations--Mexico, Brazil,

distinction, the United States could shed its history and get off the defensive, shifting the onus to Chávez. James Monroe's doctrine would officially be retired. A new era could truly begin.

Jorge G. Castañeda, the Global Distinguished Professor of Politics and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at New York University, was foreign minister of Mexico from 2000–2003.

Haugaard, Lisa; Adam Isacson; George Withers; Abigail Poe; Joy Olson; Lucila

• Push for passage of free-trade agreements with Colombia and Panama. After initially balking about these pending trade deals, Obama called on Congress in his Jan. 27 State

for their part, have complained about Lula's increasing efforts to form economic and political ties with a leading American adversary, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. "Stop punishing him," Lula shot back a few months ago. The differences with Brazil underscore how the Obama administration's Latin American relations have become marred by tensions and suspicions.

Polls indicate that Obama remains highly popular with Latin Americans, but his administration's relationship with some regional governments has been tested by a series of developments. Those include the June 28 military coup that toppled Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, a deal with Colombia giving the Pentagon use of seven bases for flights to combat drug trafficking and insurgency, stalled free trade deals, and Iran's growing ties with Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia, among other Latin American countries.

Another area of tension is the anti-drug fight. Although U.S.-Mexican cooperation remains broad, Central American and Caribbean countries are increasingly complaining that they receive less help than they need, and there are growing cries for the United States to do more to lessen demand at home, said Daniel Erikson of the Inter-American Dialogue, a think tank that specializes in Latin American issues.

Latin American leaders who hoped to move up the U.S. priority list have discovered that the new president, like his less popular predecessor, has most of his foreign policy attention focused elsewhere -- namely Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The administration created expectations that were enormous, but sooner or later reality was going to catch up," said Juan Carlos Hidalgo of the Cato Institute in Washington, D.C. "That's what happened."

It was always probable that the Obama administration would come into conflict with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the allied left-leaning governments of Cuba, Bolivia and Ecuador. After some early praise, Chavez has been critical of Obama, declaring recently, in a message carried by state media, "the Obama illusion is over."

But the United States has had differences with governments closer to the center, too. These nations have been pleased with Obama's calls for closer consultation, and his moves to wind down the U.S. mission in Iraq -- a major element in the hemisphere's unhappiness with President George W. Bush.

But many governments were unimpressed with U.S. efforts to negotiate Zelaya's reinstatement in Honduras.

Ward, Francis. “Are Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales Enemies of the United States?” Council on Hemispheric Affairs – Coha.org. May 12, 2010.

Adversaries, yes. Enemies, no (at least not yet). However, they are enemies of global capitalism which, in the eyes of some Americans, makes Chávez and Morales enemies of the American people. But this is one of many misleading impressions which inadequate Latin America coverage by U.S. media helps to perpetuate.

On Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010, the people of Bolivia went to the polls to elect (2), 500 officials in local and provincial elections, including the governors of nine

Morales' power is concentrated in the five western departments of the country, which have the largest percentage of the nati

economic approaches to put the nation on a sound footing and to develop in an orderly manner (5).

Two years later, Chile elected its first woman president, Michelle Bachelet, a confirmed socialist whose father had been murdered during the reign of terror by Chile's notorious dictator, Army General Augusto Pinochet, who seized power in a bloody coup on Sept.

its police and military. This is true because of the potential that exists that the violence will spill over into American border cities like El Paso and San Diego. And while there were some stories about Sebastián Piñera's election in Chile, the U.S press has been woefully inadequate in covering and explaining the complex political and social trends which caused the election of so many liberal/left politicians in Latin America at a given moment.

Hugo Chávez and the Rise of the Bogeyman

There has been a rising crescendo of coverage of the problems and conflicts between Hugo Chávez and his mounting opposition in Venezuela and now the U.S. Of course, the coverage is overwhelmingly negative, focusing almost entirely on what Chávez has done wrong, rarely focusing on his success in bringing needed reforms to benefit the country's poor and dispossessed. American media have told the story over and over of how Chávez has closed down radio stations and placed restrictions on other media. But there's been little, if any, mention of how print and broadcast media throughout Latin America have always been controlled by and identified with the dominant middle and upper classes, never with poor people, in the highly stratified societies with huge gaps between rich and poor. American journalists and news executives are quick to leap to the defense of any news organization that is pressured when it criticizes government officials (as media often do in Venezuela), but not always as quick to seek contextual reasons for the cause of the conflict in the first place.

American press coverage of Latin America is still done through the prism of the Cold War, when Americans were bombarded with the idea that the whole world was divided between two camps – pro – Communist and anti – Communist. This simplistic view was reduced to the most basic of formulae of countries being either friends or enemies, good guys or bad guys. American allies, of course, were always the good guys and generally received benevolent news coverage. The countries or leaders presumed to be allies of the Soviet Union or China were the bad guys and received mostly critical or negative coverage. This compound for a quick understanding of international relations facilitated comprehension, but its biggest flaw was that the formula was often wrong and gave Americans a deceptively distorted and chronically inaccurate picture of other countries and leaders.

Today's coverage is disturbingly similar to the Cold War formula of good and bad guys. News stories tend to lump Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Cuba together as the socialist malefactors and Colombia's Uribe, Chile's Bachelet (now Piñera), and Brazil's Lula as the good guys because of their cordial relations with the U.S. (Though American journalists take pride in their independence from government, there has always been and remains a close correlation between policies of the U.S. State Department and how the U.S news media report foreign affairs.) Brazil and Chile have made no secret of their desire to close the huge gaps between the very rich and very poor in their countries. Neither Brazil nor Chile has resorted to nationalizing vital industries or pressuring media outlets as Chávez has done,and Brazil, Chile and Colombia are also less critical in public of the role of the U.S. in world affairs or of global capitalism. Most observers don't expect Sebastián Piñera to attempt any major reversal of the economic or social policies established under Bachelet, but in reality, Latin American politics are less uniform and somewhat more problematic than would be the case of their U.S counterparts.

Chávez the Enemy

Hugo Chávez was briefly deposed by a coup attempt in April 2002 that ultimately failed. Since being returned to power, his policies without question have polarized various sectors of Venezuelan society. Chávez also has allied himself with Iran's controversial president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as well as maneuvered changes in the constitution to allow him to run for president indefinitely. Chávez has clamped down on political opponents, closed some radio and TV stations, and acted like an insipid dictator who aspires to assume total control of Venezuela. This makes it easier for critics in the U.S. and elsewhere to demonize Chávez as the hemisphere's looming Hitler or Stalin. And Chávez's reckless behavior and confrontational personality makes the job easier.

Chávez also has become Latin America's most vocal critic of the U.S. With all of this, it may seem natural that most Americans would regard him as their enemy. Chávez undoubtedly wants to check the power and influence of the U.S. in regional affairs. So does Iran. And so does Evo Morales, China, some liberal or socialist politicians in Britain, Spain and the rest of Europe. But this does not automatically make them enemies of the U.S. Adversaries, yes. Enemies, no. An enemy country would actively try to thwart various American policy initiatives in the region. There's no evidence that Chávez is doing this or leaning in that direction. Also, an enemy would want to strike the U.S. militarily, to harm American citizens, or to launch terrorist strikes against American properties or interests. Despite his anti – American bluster, Chávez has given no signs of moving in any of these directions. Also, Chávez has sold oil at cheap prices to those Americans living in poverty in various parts of this country, including Boston, which his critics have dismissed as a propaganda stunt. But a true enemy of the U.S. would not have provided any benefits to Americans, not even for the sake of propaganda. Also, Chávez has made overtures to improve relations with the U.S., but there has been little inclination on Washington's part to explore whether the overtures are serious and worth pursuing.

Bolivia and the U.S.

There are also strained relations between the U.S. and Bolivia. During the past two years, some Morales supporters in several of Bolivia's eastern provinces have been killed or wounded during violent encounters with anti – Morales forces. Morales subsequently accused the U.S. of abetting the violence against his supporters. He leveled accusations against the U.S. ambassador to Bolivia, Philip Goldberg, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) of intervening in the domestic affairs of the country. These prompted Bolivia to expel Goldberg, and the U.S. promptly retaliated by sending home Bolivia's envoy to Washington.

Morales makes no secret of his vehement opposition to global capitalism and he perceives America as its driving force. But being anti – capitalist is not the same as being anti – American. However, observers like Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly of Fox News, schooled in the old Cold War formula of mindless attacks against presumed ideological enemies, would argue that any anti – capitalist is automatically an enemy of the U.S.

The U.S. press seems reluctant to explore the roots of anti – capitalist sentiment throughout Latin America. The main reason is that most Americans don't seem particularly interested in what happens in Latin America, despite its geographical closeness and obvious racial, cultural and language ties between the Americas to the south, and their all-powerful neighbor to the north. "Latin America, it is safe to say, gets scant respect from Washington. Mention the region at a meeting of foreign policy cognoscenti who are not Latin American specialists, and eyes immediately glaze over," wrote Francis Fukuyama in the November/December 2007 issue of Foreign Affairs. He continued, "There may be a quick discussion of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, but attention will swiftly return to the Middle East, Russia or China. … Coverage of Latin America in the mainstream media is little better. It merits attention primarily when it causes trouble for the United States. Thus, more ink has been spilled on Chávez for the past few years than on the entire rest of the region combined. The only associations that many in the United States have with Latin America are problems with drugs, gangs and illegal immigration" (6).

Fukuyama's criticisms, while somewhat commonplace, are right on target. I reviewed 30 issues of the New York Times in a random selection from February 1 – April 4, 2010, where many stories concerning the Chilean earthquake came to the fore. Other Latin American countries had racked up following tallies:

+++ • Argentina, two briefs on the Falkland Islands dispute with Britain.
+++ • Brazil, two stories, titled "Rio de Janeiro Journal."
+++ • Colombia, one "Cali Journal" story.
+++ • Cuba, one story.
+++ • Mexico, four briefs and four complete stories.

backbone of Morales' political base in Bolivia, and in recent years have gained considerable strength in Peru and Ecuador. Larry Birns, the director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), a Washington-based think tank, explained in an April 6, 2010 telephone interview, that indigenous Indi