

COLOMBIA TODAY

A Weekly Update from the Embassy of Colombia

April 26, 2017

This Week: Colombia in the News

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Op-ed: Colombia Is a 'Smart Power' Success Story

By Bill Lane, Former Director, Global Government Affairs, Caterpillar Inc.

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

"... Twenty years ago, Colombia was on the verge of becoming a narco-terrorist state. The government had ceded large swaths of territory to the left-wing Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. In 2000, President Clinton and House Speaker Dennis Hastert came together in a bipartisan effort to help Colombians take back their country. It was known as Plan Colombia.

"The program combined military assistance with civil-society initiatives. Free-market reforms were included, resulting in the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. All of this bolstered the efforts of Colombia's determined political leaders, its courageous citizenry and its dedicated military.

"... Democracy is thriving, the economy is growing, law and order prevails, and the Colombian people are optimistic about the future. ... Plan Colombia is a reminder that a sustained, bipartisan intervention that includes defense, diplomacy, development and democratic values can be effective. Smart power isn't cheap, quick or easy, but it can work.

"... Plan Colombia was a difficult intervention, but it largely worked. It also demonstrated the importance of having many tools in America's foreign-policy toolbox. To make that point, future foreign-policy analogies should cite Plan Colombia."

For the full text of the op-ed, click [here](#).



Op-ed: The impact of the collapse of Venezuela on Colombia

By Dr. R. Evan Ellis, Research Professor of Latin American Studies,
Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College

Monday, April 24, 2017

"... As the economic and political chaos in Venezuela deepens, the Colombians in the security sector I spoke to had two principal concerns. The first of these is a possible destabilizing surge of refugees from Venezuela, and associated criminal violence in areas of Colombia currently wrestling with delicate mixture of criminal bands and active and demobilizing terrorists. The second is the possibility of military aggression from Venezuela as a collapsing Venezuelan regime faces its final days and seeks to rally public support and a distraction.

"... If Colombia is confronted by an expanded humanitarian crisis or military threat as contemplated in this article, it is in the strategic interest of the United States to stand by Colombia with a combination of strong diplomatic support, resources, and the provision of specific assistance identified as appropriate and necessary through ongoing coordination with Colombia."

For the full text of the op-ed, click [here](#).

Minnesota Extends a Warm Welcome to Ambassador Pinzón

Governor Declares April 24, 2017 'Republic of Colombia Day'



Yesterday, Colombian Ambassador to the United States Juan Carlos Pinzón closed out a two-day visit to Minnesota, where he met with policymakers and business leaders about Colombia's transformation on the path to peace and the Minnesota-Colombia partnership.

Minnesota is home to a Colombian population of 5,000. Ahead of the Ambassador's visit, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton declared April 24, 2017 "Republic of Colombia Day."

The official proclamation reads in part:

"... Whereas the commercial and investment relationships between Colombia and Minnesota contribute to the economies of both; and academic research partnerships and cultural exchanges between schools, colleges and universities in Colombia and Minnesota advance academic excellence and foster international friendship and understanding; and Colombia President Juan Manuel Santos and the people of Colombia were honored with the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to establish a just and lasting peace in Colombia. ... I, Mark Dayton, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim Monday, April 24, 2017 as Republic of Colombia Day."



Ambassador Pinzón said:

"It is a privilege to be in Minneapolis to meet with Governor Dayton, leaders of key industries and the Colombian community. It is also an honor to build on the ties between Colombia and Minnesota at this critical moment in Colombia's history when we are working to build a stable and lasting peace."

This year, Global Minnesota, a thought leadership organization advancing international connections and dialogue, is honoring the nation with its "Year of Colombia" celebration. On Monday, the Ambassador delivered an address at a Global Minnesota luncheon and discussed the historic Peace Agreement the government of Colombia reached with the FARC last year. He also talked about the challenges and opportunities ahead related to implementation of the accord, and the ways peace will make a positive impact on the U.S.-Colombia partnership.

Ambassador Pinzón stated:

"For peace to be another major turning point for Colombia, like the transformation that we have achieved in the past 20 years, it has to be sustainable. And for sustainable peace, we need the commitment of leaders at a local, state and national level in Colombia, and also the continued support of the global community, including the United States through the Peace Colombia initiative."

"Through Plan Colombia – one of the most successful joint U.S. foreign policy initiatives in a generation – Colombia transformed remarkably and went from the brink of failure to one of the most dynamic economies and security leaders in this hemisphere. And through Peace Colombia, those gains will be maximized and we will become an even stronger U.S. ally and economic partner. That is good for Colombia and the United States, and it's good for Minnesota."

Recent Weeks in Tweets

Ambassador Pinzón
@ColAmbPinzon
Following

Yesterday, the Embassy received donations for those who lost so much in #Mocoa
#TodosPorMocoa @GIVETOCOLOMBIA
@naitafur



RETWEETS 3 LIKES 7

10:55 AM - 24 Apr 2017

Ambassador Pinzón
@ColAmbPinzon
Following

Colombia a country that is worth seeing with different eyes, a country where development opportunities abound @Gens_For_Peace
#gpf17 @gpforg

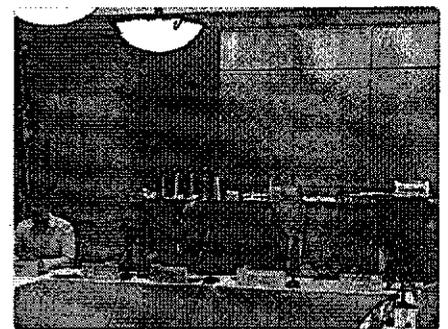


RETWEETS 2 LIKES 7

1:00 PM - 19 Apr 2017

Ambassador Pinzón
@ColAmbPinzon
Following

Proud to have @SenatorCardin (D-MD) and Sen. @RoyBlunt (R-MO) as the co-chairs of the bipartisan Colombia Peace and Prosperity Task Force



RETWEETS 3 LIKES 3

4:30 PM - 12 Apr 2017

Ambassador Pinzon
@ColAmbPinzon



Also @Heritage, we talked about the enormous potential that Colombia has to become an even stronger US ally with #PeaceColombia



2:51 PM - 12 Apr 2017

Ambassador Pinzon Verified
@PinzonBuenoEmb



With Jelson Aristizabal @CNNHeroes at the Embassy of Colombia. He tells us about his life experience. Example for all.

Translate from Spanish



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