

LOOKING TO THE AMERICAS: THE UNITED STATES IN 2014

MAY 6–7, 2014

IN BRIEF

Council of the Americas convened senior U.S. government officials, private-sector leaders, and the diplomatic community for the 44th Washington Conference on the Americas on May 7, 2014, at the U.S. Department of State. A Washington institution, this annual event remains the premier meeting each year for discussion of the state of regional affairs with a business-relevant focus.

Featuring a Davos-style interview format, the conference provided participants a unique opportunity for engagement with senior U.S. administration officials and hemispheric political and industry leaders as well as comprehensive coverage of current U.S. policy and its impact on the region. Speakers addressed trade promotion, energy security, innovation, and North American integration, among other issues.

SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY ON EXPANDING PROSPERITY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Introduced by Ambassador John Negroponte

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry opened with praise for strides made across the hemisphere in the reduction of inequality and poverty, the expansion of economic and educational opportunities, and the assurance of financial and human security. This progress, he emphasized, “[D]idn’t happen by accident. It happened because leaders and institutions were willing to make the tough decisions to break away from the past, to try to make peace where there were insurgencies, and to open up new markets with trade agreements. They were prepared to commit to the future.”

According to Kerry, this commitment promises more gains in the future. He outlined four areas of focus that can ensure continued Western Hemisphere economic growth: education, trade and economic integration, energy security, and good governance. The Secretary went on to highlight current programs targeting these issues, such as the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative—improving cooperation on hemispheric education—and the continuing strength of NAFTA in its third decade. He also spoke with candor about the challenges we face, chiefly energy security, complicated by climate change, and concerns over continued challenges to democracy in several nations.

Top to bottom, left to right: Secretary of State John Kerry; Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson with Council President Susan Segal; Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Ed Royce at the Mexican Cultural Institute.



U.S. SENATOR TIM KAINE ON MEXICO'S MOMENT AND THE REVITALIZATION OF NORTH AMERICA

Interviewed by Ambassador John Negroponte



Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia, in a conversation with AS/COA Chairman John Negroponte, shared his thoughts on immigration reform, border issues, and NAFTA, as well as broader commerce and trade concerns. He highlighted the U.S.-Mexico Inter-Parliamentary Group that he co-chairs, emphasizing its constructive and opportunity-focused dialogue—an increasingly important tool, he noted, as NAFTA marks its twentieth anniversary and the U.S.-Mexico trade relationship grows ever more singular and robust.

Senator Kaine's thoughts largely centered on the importance of making Latin America a priority. "I hope for a day when our North-South foreign policy is as prominent as or more prominent than our East-West foreign policy," he said. The Senator also noted the importance of immigration reform to our success, asserting that, "It's not just reforming an immigration system, but recognizing a global connection. Economic success is about talent and global connections."



MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR DEVAL PATRICK ON LATIN AMERICAN TRADE TIES

Interviewed by Mónica Pinzón



Governor Patrick, who has earned a reputation for recognizing Latin America's importance to his own state of Massachusetts, shared insights drawn from trade missions in the hemisphere in an interview with Mónica Pinzón, Colombia's Consul General in Boston. Chief among these insights is the recognition of foreign entrepreneurs and industry leaders as peers. "It's very important to have a sense of mutuality," he said. "What kinds of things can we build together?" Patrick noted that one of the challenges of the missions, which aim to build trade ties across borders, is the expectation of immediate results: "It's about forming relationships: it's all in the follow-up." Patrick also stated that innovation is a pillar of his state's economic strategy and explained the importance of investments in education and infrastructure as a source of ideas and entrepreneurship. Echoing Secretary Kerry's praise of the 100,000 Strong program, the Governor said that part of his administration's growth strategy has been attracting foreign citizens to study and do business in Massachusetts, to the betterment of their home communities as well as those who host them.



Left top: Chairman Negroponte and representatives from Boeing; Far left: Angélica Fuentes Téllez, CEO of Grupo Omnilife-Angelissima-Chivas and Thomas "Mack" McLarty, Chairman of McLarty Associates; Left: Jorge Rosenblut, Chairman of Endesa Chile.

SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY JEH JOHNSON ON FACILITATING LEGAL FLOWS OF GOOD AND PEOPLE

Interviewed by Susan Segal



In an interview with AS/COA President and CEO Susan Segal, Jeh Johnson, the new Secretary of Homeland Security, stated that he is “pleased and optimistic,” about the U.S. government’s relationship with its counterparts in Mexico and Canada. He also discussed trade with Mexico, the visa waiver program, and pressing U.S. security issues.

With grounded optimism, Johnson explained the multitude of security concerns the U.S. now shares with its neighbors, many of which, such as immigration and cybersecurity, necessitate greater cross-border cooperation by the day. He also asserted that those concerns can be opportunities for an improved relationship based on logical progress. Regarding immigration reform, he said that “I believe it will become law because it makes so much sense... There is a certain inevitability. I look forward to implementing it.”



SECRETARY OF COMMERCE PENNY PRITZKER ON MULTILATERAL TRADE TIES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Interviewed by Edward Luce

Luncheon keynote speaker, Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, spoke with Edward Luce, Chief U.S. Commentator for the *Financial Times*, about the importance of free trade



agreements in the Americas and encouraging exports. Central to this effort in the near future, Pritzker said, are negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), on which “enormous progress is being made.”

Asked about the sometimes controversial nature of trade deals, Pritzker explained that these accords are often misunderstood. She noted that “11.3 million Americans have their jobs today solely because of exports.” Given that 95 percent of the world’s consumers are outside the United States, all kinds of business owners recognize that their supply chains and goods are linked to the rest of the world, Pritzker said. She noted the centrality of small businesses, which comprise 98 percent of all U.S. exporters. In addition, foreign direct investment from Latin America stands at \$321 billion, representing a 42 percent increase from 2008. On both fronts, Pritzker highlighted the importance of the North American trade relationship as well as the U.S. economic relationship with Brazil.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2014

Mexican Cultural Institute
Opening Reception

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere
Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson

Secretary of State John Kerry

Mexico’s Moment and the Revitalization of North America
U.S. Senator Tim Kaine

The Opportunity Agenda in the Americas
World Bank Vice President Jorge Familiar
Scholar and Author Moisés Naím

Creating Growth and Opportunity at Home and in the Americas
Governor of Massachusetts Deval Patrick

Facilitating Legal Flows of Goods and People
Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson

Keynote Luncheon:
Strengthening Economic Ties Across the Americas
Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker

Top left: Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and Ambassador of Colombia to the United States Luis Carlos Villegas;
Right: Luncheon in the Diplomatic Reception Room



PANEL: THE OPPORTUNITY AGENDA IN THE AMERICAS

Moderated by Eric Farnsworth

Jorge Familiar, the recently-appointed Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean at the World Bank, and Moisés Naím, author and scholar at the Carnegie Endowment, discussed issues including the expanding middle class in the Americas, crime and security, the innovation agenda, and energy.

Naím spoke about the three “supercycles” driving development in the region: commodities, easy money, and super populism. Highlighting the problem of insecurity in the region, he stated that “even in war zones, the crime rate is not as high as in Latin America” and posited that tackling crime, including through civic education, should be a priority for the next decade.

Familiar stated that the region is an emerging energy superpower. He pointed to hydropower resources, saying the region has the highest concentration of potential for it in the world: “Demand for energy in the next 20 years will double—and decisions that we make now will impact our future.”



The opening reception included conference attendees, sponsors, senior U.S. government officials and the Washington diplomatic corps. The event was hosted by the Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S., Eduardo Medina-Mora.



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