

45TH WASHINGTON CONFERENCE ON THE AMERICAS

INTEGRATION & INNOVATION: The Americas Agenda

APRIL 20-21, 2015



Clockwise: Secretary of State John Kerry, President of Honduras Juan Orlando Hernández, Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie, and panel on innovation.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.
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COUNCIL OF THE **Americas**

The Council of the Americas convened our 45th Washington Conference on the Americas April 20–21, 2015. Each year this signature event brings together senior government officials, thought leaders, and private sector representatives for a discussion of current issues and trends in hemispheric affairs.

In the wake of the 7th Summit of the Americas and the Obama Administration's recently announced opening to Cuba, our conference this year focused on integration and innovation. Speakers addressed trade, energy, infrastructure and workforce development, among other relevant topics. They also discussed new models for innovation and the evolving role of the United States in a dynamic, free-flowing conversation with meeting participants and with each other.

There really is nothing else like the Washington Conference on the Americas. We hope you will enjoy this synopsis of proceedings, and that you will make early plans to join us in 2016!





CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Secretary of State John Kerry on U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere

Fresh from the Panama Summit and the meeting between Barack Obama and Cuba's Raul Castro, Secretary Kerry said that the United States must "break free from old arguments" and, instead, "build a new era of cooperation between [hemispheric] countries, as equal partners, based on mutual interest and mutual respect." During his keynote address, he added that, "The United States is meeting that commitment." The Secretary also emphasized the important role of energy innovation and sustainability as both an opportunity and a necessity in hemispheric affairs. He concluded with a strong appeal for the continued hard work of democracy promotion efforts across a varied and diverse hemisphere.

Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz on Energy Innovation in the Western Hemisphere

Building on his keynote role during the Caribbean Energy Security Summit which the Council co-hosted with Vice President Biden in January, Secretary Moniz spoke out strongly in favor of the regional energy agenda as an important topic of convergence between the United States and hemispheric allies. Mexico's reforms, he said, offer "incredible integration opportunities" and a platform for expanding North America's global leadership on energy. He pointed to renewables as an important contributor to pressing needs across the Americas for sustainable energy and also as a meaningful contributor to global climate change mitigation efforts. He commented that innovation is really about cost: alternatives are not widely pursued until they become cost effective. Once they do, the case for adopting them becomes overwhelming. The interview of Secretary Moniz was conducted by Rob Mosbacher, Jr, the chair of COA's Energy Action Group.

Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx on Innovation in Infrastructure and Transportation

Secretary Foxx focused his remarks on the role of transportation innovation as a key driver of development and economic success. He also noted the critical role that effective and efficient transportation systems play in building economic competitiveness in the United States and across the Western Hemisphere. Using the construction of the Panama Canal as an example, he noted that, sometimes, innovation can look like "a channel connected by a series of man-made lakes," and highlighted that "the Canal is an example of how the international community can 'out-innovate' transportation problems." He also commented on the significant need for infrastructure development across the region, and urged greater attention to these critically important topics.

IDB President Luis A. Moreno on the Summit of the Americas and Hemispheric Integration

President Moreno discussed the connectivity of supply chains in Latin America, and his hope that nations across the region will soon be able to claim products "Made in the Americas." He pointed out that the biggest challenge for policymakers in Latin America and the Caribbean is economic, given a slowdown in commodities markets which are impacting most of the region. He urged greater attention to long-mooted structural reforms, while also noting the political difficulties in attempting to implement reforms "that don't pay immediately."

Governor Chris Christie

New Jersey Governor Christie discussed his recent trade missions to both Canada and Mexico, as well as overall U.S. policy in the region. Our North American neighbors must be a "first thought, not an afterthought," he said, and, in particular, "we should not be in the business of calling someone just when we need something." The Governor was expansive in his views on the importance of hemispheric trade to New Jersey and also the nation, called for rapid approval of the Keystone XL pipeline, and spent considerable time commenting on the Obama Administration's recent changes in policy toward Cuba.

PANEL: Innovation as a Driver of Development in the Americas

Bruce Andrews, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce

Ángel Cabrera, President, George Mason University

Eduardo Caride, Chief Executive Officer, Telefónica Hispanoamérica

Omar Ishrak, Chief Executive Officer, Medtronic

Interviewed by Megan Murphy, Washington Bureau Chief, *Financial Times*



Reception and Private Sponsor Meeting at Mexican Cultural Institute L to R: sponsors meeting, Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson, Governor of Quintana Roo, Mexico, Roberto Borge Angulo and Counselor to the Department of State Tom Shannon.

The purpose of this panel was to discuss how innovation and integration are driving development in the Americas from various points of view and how to increase results. Specifically, the panelists examined government's role in deploying special initiatives, investing in infrastructure, and creating a regulatory environment that supports innovation. Education systems are working to develop a prepared workforce to enhance competitiveness, and companies are utilizing technology to improve efficiencies and collaborate with governments.

The government view was examined by Bruce Andrews, deputy secretary for the U.S. Department of Commerce, who spoke to the Department's priority to increase competitiveness in the Western Hemisphere. Andrews said that rule of law was "a critical piece" to having effective competition. "What holds back so many countries in their ability to be successful is systems that promote or allow corruption without commitment from high levels to address them," he said.

Intellectual property is also key: "To know that you can create something and be remunerated and no one can take that away from you is hugely important for innovation and economies to thrive," said Andrews

Eduardo Caride, CEO of Telefónica Hispanoamérica, described connectivity throughout Latin America as one of the most salient issues in the region. But he noted that strategies that might have worked in the United States might not be immediately applicable elsewhere. "We [in Latin America] are starting from a different point than developed countries, so we shouldn't be doing the same things," he said.

Omar Ishrak, CEO of Medtronic, said that innovation in healthcare at his company is dependent on using technology and engineering to change outcomes. He noted Medtronic's focus on what he called the "digital ecosystem" in using big data and hardware to improve healthcare directly in people's own homes. He also mentioned how it's not just enough to create healthcare solutions, but to also work with governments to develop and adapt infrastructures required to roll the solutions out.

Angel Cabrera, the president of George Mason University, spoke about the important role that higher education plays in innovation. "World-class institutions are the biggest attractors of world-class talent," he said, and cited a study saying one out of every two founders of startups grew up outside the United States. He highlighted the importance of university study abroad programs as keys to integration. "Honestly, student exchange is perhaps one of the most powerful tools that we have found to develop people with the skills to interact with people from different cultures and skills," he said.





Council Chairman John Negroponte interviews the President of Honduras.



Private Sponsor Dinner L to R: Interior Minister Jorge Hernández Alcerro, First Lady of Honduras Mrs. Ana García de Hernández, Council Vice President Eric Farnsworth and President Juan Orlando Hernández.



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KEYNOTE: President Juan Orlando Hernández on Honduras's Upward Trend

President Juan Orlando Hernández of Honduras stated that the country is now one of "hope and happiness," where progress has been made in several areas, including migration, homicide rates, the fiscal deficit, and tax collection. There is still much work to be done including in the areas of economic growth, human capital, strengthening democracy, and citizen security. He expressed the desire for U.S. support as Honduras continues to implement needed reforms.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

MONDAY, APRIL 20 – Mexican Cultural Institute

Opening Reception

Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State

TUESDAY, APRIL 21 – U.S. Department of State

The Summit of the Americas and Hemispheric Integration

Luis Alberto Moreno, President, Inter-American Development Bank

Energy Innovation in the Western Hemisphere

Ernest Moniz, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy

U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere

John Kerry, Secretary, U.S. Department of State

Promoting Innovation in Infrastructure and Transportation

Anthony Foxx, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

Innovation as a Driver of Development in the Americas

Bruce Andrews, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce

Ángel Cabrera, President, George Mason University

Eduardo Caride, Chief Executive Officer, Telefónica Hispanoamérica

Omar Ishrak, Chief Executive Officer, Medtronic

A View from the States

Chris Christie, Governor, State of New Jersey

Keynote Luncheon

Juan Orlando Hernández, President, Republic of Honduras

For more information on the conference, and to view videos and speech transcripts, visit our website:

www.as-coa.org/wc2015

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