

50
YEARS

WASHINGTON
CONFERENCE
ON THE
AMERICAS



418,355

TOTAL VIEWS RECEIVED BY THE 2020 WASHINGTON CONFERENCE VIRTUAL SERIES

The Council of the Americas hosted an innovative and ambitious 50th anniversary conference to reflect the long history, strong influence, and role of the Council of the Americas in the Western Hemisphere. The virtual event featured the United States Secretary of State, two sitting Latin American presidents, the head of the World Bank and many distinguished leaders and media personalities from across the hemisphere.

Months into a new year, an unprecedented global pandemic disrupted travel, commerce and plans to hold the Annual Conference. The Council of the Americas quickly adapted and created a new virtual series format.

The new model enhanced one of our marquee events, enabled new programming and expanded our viewership. This Report summarizes and details the results of these remarkable activities in full. It includes data, quotes and photos from past conferences and last year's conference. It details our plans to innovate in the coming year; ensure the Washington Conference continues to be the premier venue for our members and global audience to discuss Western Hemisphere policy in 2021 and beyond.



AN UNPRECEDENTED CONFERENCE IN AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR

United States leadership has participated in numerous Washington Conferences over the years. Presidents, Vice Presidents and Secretaries of State gave remarks on the myriad opportunities and challenges in the Americas during their administrations. In 2020, the Americas faced a new challenge unlike anything the hemisphere as experienced in over a century.

A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The Americas have been especially impacted by this pandemic, which has halted travel, closed borders, and strained medical systems to capacity.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISRUPTION

Business and social activity were greatly reduced, and supply chains were disrupted, impacting daily life in communities across the Americas.

RESILIENCY AND RECOVERY

The 50th Washington Conference was rethought and revised for this unanticipated environment. The result was a conference that proved to be nimble, timely, innovative, and resilient to the challenges of the pandemic. It matched the quality of previous conferences and exceeded the expectations of our members and sponsors. The Conference delivered unparalleled content to a larger audience across diverse digital platforms.



COA/50TH
WASHINGTON CONFERENCE
ON THE AMERICAS

Connecting the Past, Renewing the Present, Shaping the Future

May 4 and 5, 2020
Washington, D.C.



An Innovative Conference

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Over the years, the Washington Conference on the Americas has built a reputation for bringing together high profile government, private and public sector leaders from across the Americas to discuss relevant and important issues and trends in the hemisphere and set the agenda to address the most pressing concerns in the region. This year was no different. Despite the pandemic, leaders throughout the Western Hemisphere participated in the conference as keynote speakers, panelists and guests. The 50th Washington Conference on the Americas featured the following leaders.

DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP

- **The United States Secretary of State**
- **Sitting Latin American and Caribbean Presidents**
- **U.S. government officials**
- **Latin American and Caribbean Ambassadors**
- **Multilateral leaders and global influencers**
- **Internationally renowned journalists and political experts**
- **Private Sector leaders**

The annual Washington Conference on the Americas is an opportunity for COA members, business leaders, government officials, academics, and general public to hear from the world's leading practitioners of business and policy on important issues throughout the hemisphere. With a new virtual format, more leaders from across the Americas were able to attend and engage with the audience in a myriad of settings, including large plenary sessions and small members only meetings.

The 50th Annual Conference titled, Connecting the past, renewing the present and shaping the future, was especially relevant as the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the preexisting issues afflicting the Americas, including the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. The conference also addressed the constitutional crisis in Chile, China's growing presence in the region and the signing and implementation of USMCA trade agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada, among other topics.

- **Michael Pompeo**, U.S. Secretary of State
- **Sebastián Piñera**, President, Chile
- **Luis Abinader**, President, Dominican Republic
- **Larry Kudlow**, Director, U.S. National Economic Council
- **David Malpass**, President, World Bank Group
- Ambassador **Nestor Forster**, Brazil
- Ambassador **Alfonso Silva Navarro**, Chile
- Ambassador **Martha Bárcena**, Mexico
- **Steve Biegun**, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State
- **Michael Kozak**, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs
- **Mauricio Claver-Carone**, Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs, National Security Council
- **Jesus Seade**, Undersecretary for North America, Mexico
- **Ben Cardin**, U.S. Senator, Maryland
- **Jan Van Acker**, President, Latin America and Emerging Markets Human Health, Merck
- **Shery Ahn**, Anchor, Bloomberg TV
- **Michael Barone**, Senior Political Analyst, *Washington Examiner*
- **Frida Ghitis**, World Affairs Commentator and Columnist, CNN Opinion, *The Washington Post*, *World Politics Review*
- **Susan Glasser**, Staff Writer, *The New Yorker*
- **Andrés Gluski**, Chairman, Council of the Americas
- **Clay Neff**, President of Chevron Middle East, Africa, South America Exploration and Production Company
- **Susan Segal**, President & CEO, Council of the Americas
- **Eric Farnsworth**, Vice President, Council of the Americas

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo gave remarks that acknowledged the importance of democracy in the region. In reference to countries not living under democratic administrations, he said, “We’re working to change those outliers,” including through multilateral coalitions such as the Lima Group and the Organization of American States. He highlighted the importance of the United States- Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) that entered into force on July 1, will help to solidify North American trade ties. “When the dust is settled, our companies will have new clarity,” he said.



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo giving remarks, June 29, 2020

“We’re not fated to go in one direction.” That was one of the messages **World Bank Group President David Malpass** had for Latin American governments when discussing the region’s recovery in a post-pandemic world at the 2020 Washington Conference on the Americas. The region will likely need to depend on multilateral institutions like the World Bank to support its recovery, but it must also make tough decisions that will benefit the region’s economy in the long term. Malpass explained that countries need to take meaningful steps and actions that will mitigate the blow now, allowing capital and labor to move from industries that don’t survive into jobs needed after the crisis. “Governments can’t create all the jobs needed for the people losing their jobs now,” he said, adding that countries must take social inclusion into account.



World Bank Group President David Malpass giving remarks, July 1, 2020

In a different session, **President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera** spoke on the achievements of his country since the return of democracy in 1989. “We’ve have had three decades of progress,” he said, “because we’ve reached a strong agreement in our society based on a strong commitment to democracy and rule of law, strong commitment to open markets and a fair economy and a strong commitment to defeating poverty and increasing equality of opportunity.”



President of Chile Sebastián Piñera giving remarks, July 28, 2020



U.S. National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow giving remarks, August 13, 2020



President of the Dominican Republic Luis Abinader giving remarks, October 7, 2020



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Ben Cardin
U.S. Senator (D-MD)

@SenatorCardin
#2020WCA

Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) giving remarks, November 10, 2020



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Shery Ahn
Anchor, Bloomberg TV

@SheryAhnNews
#2020WCA

Shery Ahn moderating the Final Plenary Session panel, November 10, 2020

In a plenary session in August, Chevron's Clay Neff, in introducing **keynote speaker Larry Kudlow**, expressed on behalf of COA member companies that, "we are all very fortunate to work with an administration that sees us as partners" in the economic recovery from the pandemic. Recovery after the pandemic is a major challenge to governments across the Americas. Our private sector members at the Council of the Americas are ready and willing to contribute to growth and recovery in the Hemisphere. In his keynote, Kudlow called the recently implemented United States-Mexico-Canada agreement on trade "an extremely important deal." COA continues to advocate on behalf of the private sector by inviting senior level officials like Larry Kudlow to hear directly about the needs of the private sector in stimulating economic growth.

During an October Plenary Session, newly elected **President of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader** gave keynote remarks on his commitment to fight corruption in all its forms in his country and preexisting challenges like attracting foreign direct investment and education inequities. "One of the few good things of this pandemic, because of the virtual obligation that we have, is that what was going to take five years to do, now we're doing in five months," said in reference to how providing technology can improve educational inclusion not only in the context of the pandemic but for the benefit of students across the island now and in the future. The president, who took office in August, spoke to Andrés Gluski, COA Chairman, about his plans for energy reform and rebooting the Caribbean's largest economy in the wake of the pandemic.

To close out the 2020 Washington Conference on the Americas, the final plenary session featured **Maryland Democrat Senator Ben Cardin** and a panel of senior political observers from the *Washington Examiner*, Bloomberg News, CNN, and *The New Yorker* to discuss the 2020 U.S. election and its implications for democracy. **Shery Ahn of Bloomberg TV** moderated the expert panel as they analyzed the United States Presidential election in real time, a week after the first in person votes were cast.

Both **Susan Glasser** and **Frida Ghitis** said that if, when, and how Republicans continued to back President Donald Trump's efforts to call into question the results of the vote, which networks called for Democrat Joe Biden, had implications for U.S. democracy. Council of the Americas Vice President Eric Farnsworth conducted an interview with Cardin that covered topics from U.S. politics to the crisis in Venezuela. This timely final plenary session capped one of the most significant years not only for the Washington Conference but for the hemisphere.



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Michael Barone
Senior Political Analyst, *Washington Examiner*
@MichaelBarone #2020WCA

Michael Barone on the Final Plenary Session panel, November 10, 2020

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

This year’s Washington Conference on the Americas was entirely virtual. A first for the conference, an extended series format allowed for greater participation and engagement during some of the most transformative times during the pandemic across the Americas ensuring our members and audiences heard in real time from leaders and practitioners in the field working to combat the effects of the global pandemic, from various points around the globe.



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Susan Glasser
Staff Writer, *The New Yorker*
@sbg1 #2020WCA

Susan Glasser on the Final Plenary Session panel, November 10, 2020

A GLOBAL AUDIENCE AND NETWORK

Known for our networks throughout the hemisphere, the 2020 Council of the America’s Washington Conference offered members who are generally unable to attend in-person at the State Department a new opportunity to attend our premier event. It also created unique opportunities for high-level speakers to engage with our audience in various formats, including small meetings, embassy events and large public programs over a more flexible time frame.



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Frida Ghitis
World Affairs Commentator and Columnist, *CNN Opinion*,
The Washington Post, *World Politics Review*
@FridaGhitis #2020WCA

Frida Ghitis on the Final Plenary Session panel, November 10, 2020

GLOBAL REACH AND VIEWS

- The 50th Washington Conference on the Americas received a total of 418,355 views in 2020 on social media platforms Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and as-coa.org
- Attendees tuned into programs from across the hemisphere, Europe and Asia



Mariela Condo (left) and Willan Farinango (right) performing in closing WCA series concert

51st Washington Conference on the Americas 2021: Join us on May 4, 2021!

- New convenient virtual format
- Virtual and in-person conference at the Department of State
- Robust Sponsorship opportunities
- Special Members only ticket options
- New Speakers and increased social engagement

2021 promises to be another challenging year for the Americas and we're already planning the next Washington Conference on the Americas to be held virtually on May 4 and in-person in December at the Department of State. Please contact sdavis@as-coa.org for more information.

The Council of the Americas thanks the sponsors of our 50th annual Washington Conference on the Americas for their tangible and meaningful support.

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