

## Americas Program Hosts U.S. Chiefs of Mission to Central America



The U.S. ambassadors to Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, along with the chargé d'affaires of the U.S. embassy in El Salvador, met at CSIS March 15 to discuss regional such topics as social mobility, economic growth, Cuban and Venezuelan influences, and regional security in Central America. With the exception of Belize, the envoys talked of rising social indicators and reductions in extreme poverty, with the ongoing theme of being "open for business."

They spoke of the utility of Venezuela's Petrocaribe subsidized oil distribution program and Cuban medical exchanges, but dismissed their influence as minimal relative to other foreign programs and leadership of the United States. Although the problem of drug trafficking remains overwhelming because of Central American states' limited capacity to deal with it, numerous successes in bolstering legal *(More →)*

## HEMISPHERE INSIDER

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### *In Depth*

#### Haiti: Bringing Tourism Back to Port-au-Prince

Haitian minister of the interior Thierry Mayard-Paul recently traveled to Alabama to discuss plans to bring a 4,000 person cruise ship to Port-au-Prince. With a scheduled voyage date of June 1–6, 2013, it would be the first to sail to the capital in more than 25 years. The minister met with Praisefest Ministries, a nonprofit organization that organizes Cruise with a Cause, an experience that combines cruises with Christian missionary work. Volunteers provide humanitarian assistance such as donating laptops and solar panels to schools, building homes, and installing water purification systems. In 2011, Cruise with a Cause missionaries donated 8 tons of school supplies to Jamaican students.

Bringing cruises to the capital is part of President Michel Martelly's plan to revive the nation's tourism sector. Currently, the northern coastal town of Labadee serves as the primary destination. Before the government can make Port-au-Prince a port of call, it has to upgrade its tourist infrastructure. This includes expanding ports to accommodate ships, extending airport runways, and building hotels. However, absent a prime minister following the resignation of Garry Conille and with continued gridlock between the administration and parliament, it may be a while before these plans turn into reality. —**Sebastian Arandia**

### *In the News*

#### North America: Mexico

Marking the 74th anniversary of the nationalization of Mexico's petroleum industry, Mexican president Felipe Calderón announced new investments in the oil sector. They will include the purchase of six new oil tankers and a refinery revitalization project to improve Mexican petrochemical infrastructure and competitiveness. Still, Calderón warned that the industry is at risk of being short on resources. —*El Universal (Mexico)*

#### Central America: Honduras

According to recent estimates, the Honduran government spends a mere US\$199 per year for each student, much less than the Latin America average of \$658. Lack of investment in education has left Honduran students with declining test scores, alarming the government that today's youth will have few skills when entering the labor market. Approximately 800,000 Hondurans between the ages of 12 and 30 do not study or work. —*El Heraldo (Honduras)*

#### Nicaragua

From October to February, coffee export revenues have been down for nine producing countries in the Americas because of low prices and overproduction in Brazil. Nicaragua saw the greatest decrease in exports at nearly 40 percent. —*El Nuevo Diario (Nicaragua)*

frameworks and internal corruption are bright spots against a difficult backdrop.



### CSIS Americas Program at Chile’s Army War College

March 20, Americas Program director Stephen Johnson spoke before the Chilean Army Academy of War in Santiago on challenges and opportunities regarding regional security. Earlier, Johnson met with the Army general staff and spoke at the Center for Military Studies and Investigations.

#### Recent Blog Posts:

[Last Summit without Cuba;](#)  
[Mexico’s Jail Problem](#)

#### Upcoming events:

**April 10:** Prospects for Police Reform in Latin America, CSIS, B-1B Conference Room, 9–11 am.



### Caribbean: Dominican Republic

Cyberspace in the Dominican Republic reportedly hosts the most malicious code in the region. However, few victims of cybercrime are found within the country, suggesting that its networks are being used as a cybercrime “bridge.” For now, the country struggles with jurisdictional constraints when tracking hackers and cyber criminals. Growing areas of cybercrime involve credit card cloning and smart phone hacking. —*Listin Diario* (Dominican Republic)

### Haiti

The Haitian government recently evicted several groups of hopeful soldiers from barracks once belonging to the Haitian armed forces, according to a statement released by the Interior Ministry. The expulsion follows recent marches demanding that President Michel Martelly follow through with his campaign promise to restore the army. Protestors have also been demanding payment for some US\$15 million in claimed lost wages and pensions stemming from the army’s dissolution in 1995. —*San Francisco Chronicle* (USA)

### South America: Bolivia

Bolivian president Evo Morales warned the United States not to use joint efforts to combat terrorism and drug trafficking as an avenue to interfere with domestic issues in Bolivia; threatening to close the U.S. embassy in La Paz if it did. The Bolivian government alleges that the United States has supported indigenous movements critical of the government. The two countries signed an agreement in late February to restore the bilateral relationship. —*La Razón* (Bolivia)

### Peru

Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Carlos Posada announced that exports to China increased 28 percent in 2011, after growing 40 percent in 2010. Vice Minister Posada also said Peru seeks to triple nontraditional exports to China by 2016. Meanwhile, his government plans to conduct a feasibility study of potential free trade agreements with Russia and India. —*El Peruano* (Peru)

### Colombia

Colombia’s Administrative Department of National Statistics (DANE) released new figures showing that Colombia’s economy grew just under 6 percent in 2011, its third-highest growth rate in the past decade. Much of the growth was fueled by Colombia’s booming energy and mining sectors as well as construction and consumer demand. Jorge Bustamante, DANE director, noted that Colombia’s recent economic growth compares favorably with the region, with the region’s industrial powerhouse, Brazil, growing at 2.7 percent last year, less than half Colombia’s rate. —*La República* (Colombia)

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