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Report Summary/Argentina

Political Issue

Argentina's Supreme Court has granted political asylum to a former leftist guerrilla who is charged of assassinating a senator and kidnapping a businessman in Chile in 1991. Chilean president Pinera has asked Argentine president Fernandez Kirchner to extradite the person because he is wanted in Chile as he has done such grave crime. Kirchner is not only against the extradition but also the human rights organizations as well who they think that if he is extradited he will be sentenced by military courts. Human rights organizations want his extradition because he has done this crime not under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet but in a democratic government in 1991 while the dictatorship of Pinochet was finished in 1990. It is said this case has soured the relationships between the two neighboring countries.

In an interview to SPIEGEL, a German based magazine, Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner discusses her country's path away from the military dictatorship of the 1970s that she is running a democratic country, to escape from the economic crisis of 2002 and her country's good relations with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez because he had helped Argentina when its economy was declining. Kirchner said she is having good relations with all South American countries and by boosting trade with all. Its agricultural sector is also boosting up that can be a large source of Argentina's economy. She is invited in Frankfurt to open the Book Fair and was asked about the books as well which she like and going to buy in the book fair.

In a question's answer regarding relations with Brazil she said that you cannot compare Argentina and Brazil because Argentina has 40 million inhabitants but Brazil have almost 200 million. She said we maintain a close and solid cooperation with Brazil within Mercosur. The relations between the two countries were never better. She also said that Brazil is ruling in the region now and like overshadowed on Argentina and all this is due to its population.

Economic Issue

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

Argentina has taken US \$326 million loan from a regional development bank CAF to upgrade its freight rail network. The freight rail system of Argentina is very useful for the country that passes through its mining area and the freight shipped on the rail line includes copper, corn, minerals, petroleum products, rice, soybeans and vegetable oil.

Report Summary/Brazil

Political Issue

In the Brazilian presidential elections of October 3rd presidential candidate Dilma Rousseff could not get 50% votes as she got 46.9% and her opponent Jose Serra got 32.6% only and there would be a runoff election now. Surprisingly Marina Silva of the Green's Party got 20% votes beyond expectations and her policies regarding environment are very strict as she has also been environmental minister in Lula's cabinet.

Marina Silva is born in Amazon and she has always stressed on environmental policies and this is why she has resigned from Lula's cabinet due to not to stress on environmental policies as she wanted so later she joined Green's Party. It is hoped she can be the next president of Brazil. Now Dilma and Serra must address an issue they largely neglected throughout their campaigns, the cause of sustainability and responsible environmental policy that has given such prestige to Marina Silva.

According to a vote count from Sunday's legislative election, Lula's Workers' Party (PT) and its allies are to have 55 Senate seats beginning in January as their present seats were 39, while the opposition goes from 33 down to 22 seats and independents shrink from 10 to four. Extraordinary point in this election is that the women are coming to rule in Brazil as two presidential candidates are women and even one of them is going to win by polls that are unprecedented for Brazil.

Dilma Rousseff of the center-left ruling Workers' Party fell short of winning an absolute majority on Sunday, October 3 and now she will face runner-up Jose Serra of the opposition's centrist PSDB party in a runoff on Oct. 31. It is said Rousseff is now getting favor of religious class by linking her background with Roman Catholic church. Her stance regarding abortion was to decriminalize it but now she is asking votes from evangelicals as well.

For the runoff elections candidate from PSDB Mr. Serra has launched his campaign as he seems fully committed. He said the first mission of his government will be to make a law in the congress reduce the powers of president in campaign. After it he said he will make a strong government that respects democratic institutions and freedom of the press, with a strong economy that will prioritize job creation.

The PT got back the leadership of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and kept Bahia, Sergipe and Acre. Its allies from the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) comfortably won Ceara, Pernambuco, Piaui and Espirito Santo. Secondly, the centrist PMDB, the PT's main ally, won in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's third most powerful state and also won Maranhao, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. However, the social democratic opposition will keep command of Brazil's two most powerful states in both political and economic terms that states are Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais. They also won Parana and Tocantins; while their allies of the DEM are to govern the states of Rio Grande do Norte and Santa Catarina. On the other hand the state of Amazonas elected a governor of the tiny Party of National Mobilization (PMN).

Brazil's High Electoral Tribunal reported that almost 400 people are arrested outside the polling stations in Brazil who were alleged for running campaign illegally. 26 of them are candidates themselves and the tribunal also reported that the figure is much more time higher as compare to the previous years.

Economic Issue

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Food/Environment and Energy Issue

According to the head of the Brazil's mining association, Brazil will more than double its copper production by 2014 as several new projects come online, transforming it into a regular net exporter of the red metal. According to government data, the copper concentrate output has been rising at a rapid pace to 210,000 tons in 2009, from only 26,275 tons in 2003 that is making it close to self-sufficient in the metal already. Even the Local demand for copper has also been strong as the country's economy booms with large investments in construction, the electric sector and sorely lacking infrastructure.

Geostrategic Issues

Brazilian president condemned the mutiny against the government of Rafael Correa in Ecuador and said he is strictly against such mutiny in a democratic country. He tried to contact the president Correa but no luck. He also couldn't participate in UNASUR's meeting on mutiny issue due to his business in elections but he sent his foreign minister in Quito.

Report Summary/Chile

Political Issue

Economic Issue

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Chilean president said the mine workers who were trapped 2,300 km (700 meters) in the mine are expected to be brought out within two weeks. Actually internationally community has also asking Chile government to intensify the rescue work and the navy of Chile has made a cage like tube that is very comfortable and secure and would be sent in the mine to rescue the mine workers one by one. The same tube like capsule is being used to send their clothes, medicine and food etc from a borehole in the mines.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

Report Summary/Colombia

Political Issue

Economic Issue

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Colombia's defense minister has said that in a crackdown against the drug cartels the authorities have seized \$29 million and & 7 million Euros from the drug cartels in a village. He said the money belonged to the drug traffickers including Daniel "El Loco" Barrera whose leader by the authorities is offering a \$2.7 million reward for Barrera's capture.

The government forces have killed Jorge Posada Medina who was one of five people who were killed Monday in an attack on a FARC camp along the Panama-Colombian border. The attack was carried out by the Colombian Air Force. He was charged of 72 people in 2002.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

The government of Spain has arrested 41 people who are accused of money laundering in the country for the FARC guerrillas in Colombia. It is said FARC was supported by these money launders financially from Spain.

Colombia and Peru have opened their borders for Ecuador as the military and army based rebel movement started in the country. President Santos of Colombia said to the has Ecuadorian counterpart that his government is against the mutiny in Ecuador and support Rafael Correa's government in the country for the integration of the regional countries.

According to the government's statistics agency Colombia's exports rose 22.3 percent in August compared with a year earlier and climbed 21.9 percent in the January to August period.

Report Summary/Mexico

Political Issue

Mexican president said he needs the legislation of a new bill in the congress of Mexico to train Mexican police forces so that they could combat with the drug cartels that are becoming stronger in the country. He said according to the new plan the forces would be weed out and the new young police officers would be recruited who they would be trained by the new and modern weapons from the United States. Some trainees from the US would come to train them against the drug cartels.

Economic Issue

In a new report survey Mexican finance minister has said that the boost in the drug violence in Mexico is not disturbing Mexico's economy and the economy of Mexico is still Latin America's second largest after Brazil. While the officials of the United States and the government of Mexico are saying that the drug war is not affecting the people of the country but also economy. The drug war has taken the lives of more than 29,000 people in Mexico.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Two grenades were thrown in the U.S consulate in Monterrey state of Mexico that caused some damage of property but not any life death. The government of United States called it the revenge from the Mexican drug cartels from the US government. In the meanwhile, some 20 tourists have been kidnapped from Mexico's Pacific coast resort city of Acapulco. They were first said as the people of the drug cartels but one of their survival companion said that they were just tourists and were captured by some drug related persons.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

The government of Texas has asked to the government of the Mexico to sharpen its operation against the killers of their American citizen in Mexico's Tamaulipas state. One of the American citizens has filed her case in the court of Texas that her husband is killed by some drug cartels members in Mexico when they were chasing him and the government even could not trace the killers yet so the Texas government is pressurizing Mexican government now for their arrest.

President of Lebanon Mr. Micheal Suleman visited Mexico City with his wife and met with his counterpart there. It is the first visit of any Lebanese president since last 65 years in

Mexico but the relations between both countries are going well in various fields. More than half a million Lebanese and their descendants are living in Mexico that is a great figure of Lebanese abroad.

Russian Minister of telecommunications and mass communications and Mexican minister of communications and transport have signed the corresponding memorandum on mutual understanding few days back. Both countries showed their interest on developing the infrastructure of technology, communication and transportation with mutual interests.

Report Summary/Venezuela

Political Issue

The Bolivarian Militia is a force of volunteers ranging from students to retirees formed in recent years by Chavez, who says it is a crucial component of the nation's defenses. Chavez said there is no concept of militia without weapons so he is going to issue weapons to the militia so that they could defend the country when there is time and to leave weapons in the depots only is not of use. He also suggested the Venezuelans to join the militia and recruit the more persons to defend their country as already there are almost 120,000 fighters already who are ready to fight any time for their country.

Economic Issue

According to the president of the National Statistics Institute (INE) the unemployment rate in Venezuela ended at 9.6 percent in August that is a 1.6 percent jump compared to the same month in 2009 when it amounted to 8 percent. He said despite the increased jobless rate, unemployment in Venezuela, it remains far below than in other countries that have been hit by the global economic crisis.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Geostrategic Issues

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez accused the United States that it provides million dollars to far-right wing movements to destabilize the governments of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), he said US should keep its imperialist hand away from such activities. While the US Department of State says that the presidents such as Chavez, Bolivia's Evo Morales and Rafael Correa of Ecuador are totalitarian and authoritarian dictators and always negative regarding US policies.

President Chavez has also said that US is always backing military governments for military coup d'état in the Latin America countries to get rid of socialist governments as it did

with Venezuela but the people came out against the coup d'état. He said in Ecuador military coup it is the United States who is backing the military to get rid of Rafael Correa. In a TV show Chavez has also invited Fidel Castro to Venezuela and requested him to deliver a speech for five hours.

ETA is considered the rebel organization of Spain that has killed more than 800 people since 1968 in its attempt to achieve Basque independence from the rest of Spain. Two Venezuelans are captured in Spain of having links with ETA and Spanish government has accused Venezuela of supporting ETA members but the Venezuelan ambassador to Spain and the Venezuelan foreign minister has been denied that Venezuelan government has any kind of links with ETA. Moreover, Colombian government has also accused Venezuela of supporting FARC of Colombia but the Venezuelan government has also denied supporting FARC as well.

It is said if Venezuela is not supporting these FARC or ETA of Spain then why always Venezuela is under blame so there is something that it is not clarifying. Venezuelan officials including the president have strictly refused this accusation from the both governments even from the US as well. These allegations have spoiled the relationships between Venezuela and Colombia in past that are restored now and now between Venezuela and Spain.

In a press conference, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos contacted the Venezuelan ambassador in Madrid and addressed in a joint press conference that Venezuela should intensify an immediate action against the ETA in Venezuela.

Venezuela's daily newspapers El Universal and El Nacional were given the Premio International Journalism Award by a Spanish newspaper El Mundo. Thus, becoming the first two Venezuelan print media to win this prize that El Mundo has been awarding since 2002.

Detailed Report/Argentina

Argentina grants political asylum to leftist accused of killing Chilean senator

Buenos Aires, Argentina (AP) — Argentina granted asylum Thursday to a former leftist guerrilla charged in his native Chile with assassinating a senator and kidnapping a businessman, a decision sure to sour relations between the neighboring countries.

Chile's government had been urging Argentina to extradite Galvarino Apablaza Guerra to face trial for the murder of right-wing Sen. Jaime Guzman and the kidnapping of businessman Christian Edwards del Rio.

But an official in the Argentine interior ministry said Apablaza was granted political asylum.

"The decision has to be communicated first to his lawyer and the judge, but unofficially the asylum was granted," the official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release information about the case.

Argentina's Supreme Court had approved a Chilean request for Apablaza's extradition. And Chilean President **Sebastian Pinera** had urged his Argentine counterpart, Cristina Fernandez, to follow through on the extradition.

"I think a person who has committed such a grave crime, that cost the life of a senator, and that was committed in Chile, should be tried in Chilean courts," Pinera said.

But Fernandez rebuffed the pressure and said the last word would go to Argentina's national refugee commission, which is part of the interior ministry and includes a member of the United Nations refugee commission on its board.

Argentina's human rights groups also lobbied against the extradition because Apablaza would be tried under Chile's dictatorship-era anti-terrorism law, which allows for secret witnesses, pretrial detention, military courts and other legal mechanisms they said would violate his rights to a fair trial.

The anti-terrorism law is controversial even within Chile, where Mapuche Indians accused of attacking buses and torching farms are on an extended hunger strike demanding to be tried in civilian courts under less draconian conditions.

But some Chileans accused Argentina of tarnishing its human rights legacy by defending a man accused of assassinating a sitting senator during a democratic government. Both crimes occurred in 1991, after the end of the 1973-1990 dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Apablaza, who requested asylum in 2004, was an ideological leader of a branch of Chile's Communist Party that took up arms against Pinochet. After democracy returned to Chile, Apablaza's faction refused to put down its weapons.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/sns-ap-lt-argentina-chilean-asylum,0,6838144.story?>

SPIEGEL Interview with Argentina's President

'We Are Slowly Starting To Enjoy Greater Trust'

Argentina is the guest country at this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, which opens this week. In a SPIEGEL interview, Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, 57, discusses her country's path away from the military dictatorship of the 1970s, the economic crisis of 2002 and her country's relations with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.

SPIEGEL: President Fernández de Kirchner, on Tuesday evening, you will attend the opening of the Frankfurt Book Fair. Argentina is the guest country this year. Which book are you reading at the moment?

Fernández de Kirchner: A historical book about a hero from our independence movement from the Spanish colonial bosses 200 years ago. It is so good that my Venezuelan colleague Hugo

Chávez nabbed it from me. I read it in New York, where I took part in the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

SPIEGEL: At the book fair you will be accompanied by a group of exciting young authors, but you seem to have a more strained relationship with journalists. You have just presented a controversial media law to the parliament. Do you want to keep the press on a short leash?

Fernández de Kirchner: No, absolutely not. We advised all parties in advance and extensively. We also oriented ourselves based on US legislation.

SPIEGEL: But you want to centrally regulate the distribution of paper for newspapers. In that way, the government is going to be able to put pressure onto them.

Fernández de Kirchner: *La Nacion* and *Clarín*, the two biggest newspaper companies, have a monopoly on paper production. The state only holds a minority stake. The two can access the paper at special prices while the others are forced to pay more. That is unfair competition!

SPIEGEL: Is that not just a pretext to discipline Argentina's biggest newspaper, *Clarín*? It has been criticizing your government for years.

Fernández de Kirchner: All governments had a problem with *Clarín*. A former associate of the paper has admitted that they always support a president in the first few years to take advantage of them. In the last two years they punish them -- in the hope that a new president will take office and the cycle will be repeated. Now, for the first time it has come to light that *Clarín* has downplayed the crimes of the military dictatorship.

SPIEGEL: You and your husband have tried to encourage a process of working through the crimes committed under the military dictatorship. What experiences did you have then?

Fernández de Kirchner: My husband and I were arrested several times. We weren't allowed to work as lawyers in the civil service, but, luckily, we could work as independent attorneys. We were in a sort of internal exile, far from the capital, in Patagonia. One time a bomb was planted in my office, but it didn't explode. Another time my office was set on fire. I was never tortured. We were lucky. But we always felt an obligation to the victims of the dictatorship.

SPIEGEL: Were you a member of the left-wing guerrilla movement, the Montoneros?

Fernández de Kirchner: No. When I was a student, I belonged to the Peronist Youth, but I never fought with a weapon in my hand.

SPIEGEL: One of the biggest idols in Argentina is Che Guevara. He tried to bring the Cuban revolution to the rest of the world and was murdered in Bolivia in 1968. What does he mean to you?

Fernández de Kirchner: For those who stand up for their ideals, things often end tragically. Che is a man who fought unconditionally for his ideas and died for them. We will send an exact copy

of his diaries, which has been made available to us by the Bolivian government, to the book fair in Frankfurt. The original lies in a vault in the central bank in Bolivia.

SPIEGEL: Is Evita Perón your personal role model?

Fernández de Kirchner: I probably identify much more with Evita because I am a woman and a Peronista. But you have to see it in the historical context, to understand that she caused her own revolution inside the Peronist revolution. At that time, in the 1940s, women weren't allowed to vote in Argentina, and artists like her were viewed as prostitutes. She was an illegitimate child and poor. Actually, she would have been destined to be shut out of society, but instead she remains worshipped to this day around the world.

SPIEGEL: Che and Evita are tragic heroes, and tragedy appears to be a constant in Argentine history. Until the middle of the last century, Argentina was one of the richest countries in the world. Then a descent began that has already lasted for decades.

Fernández de Kirchner: That is the lasting result of the military coup of March 24, 1976. The military destroyed our local industry with their neoliberal politics. What ruined us in the end was the coupling of our currency, the peso, with the US dollar in the 1990s.

SPIEGEL: Carlos Menem, a Peronist like you and your husband, was responsible for that.

Fernández de Kirchner: I don't have a "Peronometer," or a yardstick for how bound someone is to the ideals of Juan Domingo Perón. At any rate, he was elected president two times. In order to keep the exchange rate parity with the dollar, the state had to go further and further into debt. And, naturally, exports suffered. We weren't able to compete.

SPIEGEL: The Menem years culminated in the financial crash of 2001.

Fernández de Kirchner: When my husband, Néstor Kirchner, took over the government in 2003, debt amounted to 260 percent of gross domestic product, and there was a poverty rate of 50 percent. It was a catastrophe. Of course, we still have many disparities, but since then we have made great strides in all areas. We have record reserves in the government coffers. Since 2003, we have had six years with about 8.5 percent economic growth, the highest growth rate in the last 200 years.

Part 2: 'I Maintain Very Good Relations with all Governments'

SPIEGEL: Hasn't the high inflation eaten away at wage increases and limited the purchasing power of the middle class?

Fernández de Kirchner: We have more consumption than ever before. Our shopping centers are flourishing. And wages have risen higher than inflation.

SPIEGEL: According to information from private economic institutes, you have cooked those numbers. Inflation is actually twice as high, at 25 to 30 percent.

Fernández de Kirchner: Those are one-sided critics.

SPIEGEL: Haven't you arbitrarily changed the basket of goods to suit your purposes?

Fernández de Kirchner: The method of measurement was always being changed. We have now eliminated absurd categories for comparison and simplified them, so that they now play a real role in the life of an industrial worker.

SPIEGEL: Argentina is still considered a pariah in the financial world. Will you pay your creditors back so you can get access to credit again?

Fernández de Kirchner: In 2005 my husband began rescheduling the debt. We have strictly adhered to all the maturities despite the onset of the financial crisis.

SPIEGEL: But you have still not reached an agreement with the international creditors, the Paris Club.

Fernández de Kirchner: In New York, I met with an important group of investors. They are offering money at a sensible price. We are slowly starting to enjoy greater trust.

SPIEGEL: What did you do to cushion the impact of the crisis?

Fernández de Kirchner: We invested in infrastructure and incentives for small- and medium-sized businesses so that they didn't have to fire any personnel.

SPIEGEL: Could troubled European countries like Greece learn anything from Argentina?

Fernández de Kirchner: I certainly think so. When Greece crashed, it still had a better rating with the agencies than we had, even though it had long been dragged down by its problems. Ratings are of no use in helping assess the real substance of an economy. The measures have to be tuned to the necessities of the individual country. The medicine which helps one country can prove life-threatening to another.

SPIEGEL: Argentina is booming largely because of its agricultural exports. Why have you started to fight with the very farmers who helped underpin Argentina's growth?

Fernández de Kirchner: The agricultural businesses have never had things as good as they are now.

SPIEGEL: Argentina has only fallen behind when it comes to its most famous export, steaks. Now even its small neighbor Uruguay exports more meat.

Fernández de Kirchner: That is due to the dreadful drought in the past year, which meant that hundreds of thousands of cattle had to be culled. But now global market prices are so low that it is more profitable for us to consume our meat at home. We are definitely not turning vegetarian.

SPIEGEL: In truth you ought to thank Venezuela's leader, Hugo Chávez. He helped Argentina twice out of a credit crunch by buying up Argentine bonds for \$5 billion (€3.6 billion). Are you financially dependent on Chávez?

Fernández de Kirchner: He stepped in at a time when nobody else was willing to help us. But we don't depend on him and he doesn't depend on us. I maintain very good relations with all governments in the world, especially within South America.

SPIEGEL: Did Chávez support you financially in your electoral campaign? It is said that Argentine civil servants took a suitcase full of money back from Venezuela ...

Fernández de Kirchner: President Chávez came to visit one day later. Why did the president not transport the money in his own airplane, which would not be checked? In an election, €800,000 is a laughable sum. It almost looks like a satire manipulated from the outside by vested interests.

SPIEGEL: While Argentina and Brazil were once rivals on an equal footing, Brazil now overshadows your country. Are you jealous of Lula's success?

Fernández de Kirchner: You cannot compare Argentina and Brazil. We have 40 million inhabitants, they have almost 200 million. We maintain a close and solid cooperation with Brazil within Mercosur. The relations between the two countries were never better. This development can only be measured if you consider that the provinces neighboring Brazil do not have a gas network because Argentina's rulers used to fear a war with Brazil.

SPIEGEL: The rivalry between the two nations continues in football, however. But the two countries both failed at the 2010 World Cup. Diego Maradona stepped down as trainer of the national team. Are you going to offer him a post as a minister for sport?

Fernández de Kirchner: No, he doesn't need that. While other icons are controversial, we remain unanimous regarding Diego. He is and remains a great joy to the Argentine people.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,721216-2,00.html>

Argentina gets loan to upgrade rail freight network

Argentina's Planning Ministry has obtained a US\$326 million loan from regional development bank CAF to upgrade the key Belgrano Cargas freight rail network, reported Dow Jones Newswires.

The loan will finance repairs to rail lines in Chaco and Santiago del Estero provinces as well as the purchase of signaling equipment, rail cars and locomotives, the ministry's transportation secretariat said.

The administration of President Cristina Fernandez is looking to restore the dilapidated Belgrano Cargas railway that operates 10,000 km of track in 13 provinces.

The network passes through Argentina's key farm and mining regions and could also be used to ship freight to and from Chile and Bolivia. Freight shipped on the rail line includes copper, corn, minerals, petroleum products, rice, soybeans and vegetable oil.

In July, Argentina and China signed an agreement under which China pledged to invest \$10 billion in the South American country's railroad industry.

<http://www.cargonewsasia.com/secured/article.aspx?id=15&article=23995>

Argentina Seeks to Restructure Paris Club Debt, Fernandez Says in Germany

Argentina wants to restructure its defaulted debt with the Paris Club group of creditor nations, President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner said.

“The idea is to make a broader restructuring of debt,” Fernandez told reporters today in Berlin after meeting German Chancellor Angela Merkel. “Argentina has always been willing to pay its debts.”

Argentina owes the Paris Club, an informal association of creditors that includes the U.S., Germany and Japan, about \$6.7 billion in defaulted debt. In June, the government of South America’s second-biggest economy restructured \$12.2 billion in bonds that were held out from a 2005 exchange. The country defaulted on \$95 billion in bonds in late 2001.

Settling with the Paris Club will give foreign companies access to government credit to finance investments in Argentina, Economy Minister Amado Boudou said in an April 14 interview. Boudou said resolving the Paris Club debts would be the country’s next step after the June exchange.

Fernandez said any accord with the Paris Club should include a discussion about the investments that European companies make in Argentina and the fiscal benefits and loans that they get from the country. Foreign Minister Hector Timerman said July 30 that the country wants an accord with the club without oversight from the International Monetary Fund.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-10-06/argentina-seeks-to-restructure-paris-club-debt-fernandez-says-in-germany.html?>

Detailed Report/Brazil

Ruling coalition wins majority in Brazil's Congress

Core parties allied to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva have secured a majority in Congress in Sunday's general elections, according to latest vote count results.

The new parliamentary makeup will boost the position of Dilma Rousseff, the presidential candidate of the ruling Workers' Party (PT), when she faces off in the Oct. 31 runoff with rival Jose Serra of the Social Democracy Party (PSDB).

The ruling coalition managed to expand presence in the Federal Senate, the upper house of the Congress, as they took 57 out of 81 seats, with 36 of them belonging to the PT and to the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), the core parties of Rousseff's 10-party center-left coalition.

However, the numbers may change pending a decision of Brazil's supreme court, which will determine whether a new law that prevents the political candidacy of people facing convictions or prosecutions applies to this election.

If the court says the law applies to Sunday's election, the outcome for the Senate in the states of Para and Paraiba will change.

If not, about 19 to 21 senators will represent the PMDB, and 15 will represent the PT in the upper house.

For the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the Congress, the ruling coalition will have 72 percent of the 513 seats.

The PT was the biggest winner in the lower house, as the number of its seats increased from 79 to 88 after the election.

The PMDB lost 10 seats, a decrease from 90 to 80, but the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), also in the ruling coalition, had their seats increased from 27 to 36.

On the opposition side, the PSDB's presence shrank from 65 to 53 deputies, and the deputies of the Democrats Party (DEM) decreased from 54 to 43.

Although the Green Party's presidential candidate Marina Silva surprisingly garnered 20 percent of valid votes in the elections, the party's presence remained at 14 seats.

In all, the new Congress would allow Rousseff to count on a qualified majority, equivalent to three fifths of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, or 308 and 49 respectively, needed to approve constitutional amendments and laws.

Besides, the opposition would not reach the minimum required to create Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (CPIs), an instrument commonly used in Brazilian politics to block the legislative process and prevent the enactment of new laws.

If elected, Rousseff "will have an unprecedented parliamentary majority to deal with her agenda," local newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo said in an article published on Tuesday.

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90852/7157976.html?>

Brazil's Rousseff reaches out to religious voters

Brasilia, Oct 5 (Reuters) - Brazil's ruling party candidate on Tuesday played up her Roman Catholic background in efforts to win back religious voters, whose doubts about her faith and position on abortion rights may have cost her an outright victory in Sunday's presidential election.

Dilma Rousseff of the center-left ruling Workers' Party, fell short of winning an absolute majority on Sunday and will face runner-up Jose Serra of the opposition's centrist PSDB party in a runoff on Oct. 31.

In a surprise shift, many religious voters who oppose abortion, especially evangelical Christians, abandoned the Rousseff camp to vote for the Green Party's Marina Silva, who captured an unexpectedly large 19 percent of the vote.

"Personally, I'm from a Catholic family. I am and always was in favor of life," Rousseff told reporters outside of her campaign headquarters in Brasilia.

"I have no problem addressing the religious issue. My project addresses all the religions," she said.

Pro-life usually is a description associated with opponents of abortion rights. She did not elaborate on her position.

Internet videos showing Rousseff's past comments on abortion became a hit in recent weeks. They showed Rousseff, a former leftist guerrilla leader, apparently favoring the decriminalization of abortion, which is illegal in most cases.

Evangelical Christians are growing in influence in Brazil and now make up about 20 percent of the population in the overwhelmingly Catholic country.

Rousseff and Serra have begun courting Silva, a devout evangelical Christian, in hopes of winning over her supporters.

Leaders of the Green Party said on Tuesday they would not decide for another two weeks whether to endorse either of the candidates.

Rousseff got 46.9 percent in Sunday's first-round vote and needs just a few more percentage points to win a majority and ride the popularity of her mentor, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the Workers' Party, into the presidential palace.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0521819420101005?pageNumber=2>

Despite Election Defeat, Brazil's Greens Rally Strong

While the results of Brazil's presidential election offered no decisive victory for any of the leading candidates, it is still being hailed as a resounding success for the nation's environmental movement. Despite being eliminated from the running, Green Party candidate Marina Silva, an Amazon-born environmental activist, garnered an impressive portion of the votes, suggesting that the sustainability movement has gone mainstream in one of the world's most rapidly developing countries. Now, it very well may be Silva's endorsement that determines the next president of Brazil.

Leading up to the election, most political pundits predicted an overwhelming victory for Dilma Rousseff, the Worker's Party candidate hand-selected by Brazil's wildly popular President Lula. Just days prior, many polls showed that Dilma had over 50 percent of support. Ultimately, however, she only managed a surprisingly low 46.7 percent of the votes.

In Brazilian elections, if no one candidate receives at least half the votes, it forces a run-off between the two leading candidates.

Dilma's closest competitor, Social Democratic candidate Jose Serra, around whom much of the debate was centered, also fared worse than what was expected, receiving less than 33 percent of the vote. Both candidates geared their platforms on continuing much of the same economic and industrial policies which their predecessor implemented. But a third voice resounded louder than many imagined.

Despite polling suggesting that her support was in the low teens, Green Party candidate Marina Silva received nearly 20 percent of popular votes with her platform centered on furthering the environmental cause, which has been at the heart of her political career. As a member of the Worker's Party, Silva once served as Lula's Environmental Minister, earning international acclaim for her staunch support of rainforest protection and sustainable development. But after years of infighting with then Energy Minister Rousseff and numerous industrial interests within her own party, Silva resigned from that position and joined the Green Party.

Once outside the circle of support from Brazil's ruling party, few expected her to rally enough support to take the office when she announced herself as a candidate for the presidency, but the election results proved she was not alone in her environmental ideology.

"There are nearly 20 million Brazilians who understood her positions and who voted for her as an alternative... believing in a utopia, a possible country," writes Altino Machado, a journalist familiar with Silva's cause. He believes her support in the election reflects "the people's desire for change."

Realizing this desire, now Dilma and Serra must address an issue they largely neglected throughout their campaigns -- the cause of sustainability and responsible environmental policy -- on the heels of the run-off election to be held at the end of October. Now the media and political establishment must wait with baited breath to know which candidate Silva will endorse since her support will likely play a major role in determining who will be elected to the highest office.

For a nation which has undergone tremendous growth over the last decade, the new-found political clout of Silva and her cause will undoubtedly help shape the course Brazil's development into one that cannot neglect environmental responsibility. Although the phrase *Order and Progress* is inscribed upon the Brazilian flag and in the nation's modern consciousness, it would be unwise to forget the prominence of green there too.

[http://www.treehugger.com/files/2010/10/despite-election-defeat-brazils-greens-rally-strong.php?campaign=th_rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+treehuggersite+\(Treehugger\)](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2010/10/despite-election-defeat-brazils-greens-rally-strong.php?campaign=th_rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+treehuggersite+(Treehugger))

Brazil copper output to surge by 2014 - industry

Brazil will more than double its copper production by 2014 as several new projects come online, transforming it into a regular net exporter of the red metal, the head of the country's mining association said. Copper concentrate output has been rising at a rapid pace to 210,000 tons in 2009, from only 26,275 tons in 2003 according to government data, making it close to self-sufficient in the metal already.

But five new projects coming on line between now and 2014 are likely to turn the country into a consistent net exporter. "By 2014 we will more than double our copper production. We will go from 210,000 tons (in 2009) to 475,000 in 2014," Paulo Camillo Penna, head of mining industry association Ibram, told Reuters in an interview.

"The improvement in the commodities prices will increase the volume of Brazilian production," he said. The five projects will require investments of \$2.7 billion. Brazil's iron-ore giant Vale will account for most of this with two projects in the northern state of Para, which will turn out 254,000 tons per year.

Parapanema's 30,000-tonne Boa Esperanca mine and the 40,000-tonne Vale Verde project owned by Aura Gold in the northeastern state of Alagoas, will also come on line to contribute, according to the national mining department DNPM.

Brazil tends to import most of the copper it consumes due a peculiarity of the market. Local producers often profit more by selling their output abroad. Export and import volumes are now similar but Camillo expected imports would start to fall.

Local demand for copper has been strong as the country's economy booms, with large investments in construction, the electric sector and sorely lacking infrastructure. Penna said the local mining industry had rebounded strongly after a 2009 downturn that saw prospectors abandon planned investments and return mining rights to the government, as capital required to develop them grew scarce.

Penna said that after a 2009 blip amid the global economic crisis, investment in prospecting and new mines had been rising. The industry has forecast a record \$62 billion dollars in investments for the 2010-2014 period. "This could be revised upwards again this year," Penna said.

"(2010) has been exceptional ... The increase in volume and prices are taking us to a record in the value of Brazil's mining production," Penna said, estimating the value of Brazil's total mining output at \$35 billion.

The total was \$24 billion in 2009 and \$28 billion the previous year, Penna said.

<http://www.commodities-now.com/news/metals-and-mining/3731-brazil-copper-output-to-surge-by-2014-industry.html?>

Lula's allies sweep Senate race, governorships

Brasilia - The coalition that backs Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is set to have a two-thirds majority in the Senate and won 12 governorships in the first round of voting, results showed Monday.

Sunday's general election was however not a complete success for the ruling- party camp. Its presidential candidate, Dilma Rousseff, won the first round of voting, but still must to face off against social democrat Jose Serra in a runoff October 31.

Lula's Workers' Party (PT) and its allies are to have 55 Senate seats beginning in January - up from their current 39, while the opposition goes from 33 down to 22 seats and independents shrink from 10 to four, according to a vote count from Sunday's legislative election. Lula's allies swept the board Sunday: Of 54 Senate seats being chosen, they won 40.

The relevance of the balance of power in the Senate will depend on the outcome of the presidential runoff between Rousseff and Serra.

If Rousseff wins the presidency, she will have a very friendly Senate to work with, in line with the wishes of the outgoing Lula. However, if Serra were to win, he would have to govern in an unfavorable legislative setting.

Rousseff's leftist PT increased its own share from 11 to 15 senators. It is set to be the second-largest in the upper house of the Brazilian Congress, behind its main ally, the centrist Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), with 20 seats.

The opposition led by the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), whose presidential candidate Serra managed to hold Rousseff to a runoff, and by the conservative party Democratas (DEM) suffered a historic defeat in the Senate race.

The PSDB, which currently has 14 senators, will from January have only 10, while the DEM went from 18 seats to seven.

No details were immediately available as to the make-up of the lower house of the Brazilian Congress, for which pre-electoral opinion polls had also given Lula and his allies a comfortable lead.

The ruling coalition that backs Lula and Rousseff also carried 12 of the 18 state governorships races that were decided in Sunday's voting.

The PT got back the leadership of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and kept Bahia, Sergipe and Acre. Its allies of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), in turn, comfortably won Ceara, Pernambuco, Piaui and Espirito Santo.

The centrist PMDB, the PT's main ally, kept Rio de Janeiro - Brazil's third most powerful state - and also won Maranhao, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul.

However, the social democratic opposition will keep command of Brazil's two most powerful states in both political and economic terms, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais. They also won Parana and Tocantins, while their allies of the DEM are to govern the states of Rio Grande do Norte and Santa Catarina.

The state of Amazonas elected a governor of the tiny Party of National Mobilization (PMN).

The election for governor is set to be defined in a runoff in the remaining eight states and in the federal district of Brasilia.

http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/americas/news/article_1589197.php/Lula-s-allies-sweep-Senate-race-governorships?

Brazil vote goes to runoff

Brazil: Ruling Party candidate Dilma Rousseff placed a strong first in Brazil's Presidential election Sunday, but she will face a runoff after some voters were turned off at the last minute by a corruption scandal and her views on social issues.

Rousseff, a former guerrilla who was handpicked by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to continue the centre-left economic policies that have made Brazil one of the world's hottest emerging markets, had 46.7 percent of valid votes with 99 percent of ballots counted.

That result left her unable to get the 50 percent of valid votes she needed to avoid a runoff vote between the top two candidates on Oct. 31, election regulators said. Rousseff will face her nearest rival, former Sao Paulo state governor Jose Serra, who won 32.7 percent of the votes.

An unexpected late surge by a third candidate, the Green Party's Marina Silva, came largely at Rousseff's expense. Silva had 19.4 percent of valid ballots and her supporters will now be a highly prized voting bloc in the second round.

Rousseff is favoured to beat Serra in the runoff and become the first woman to lead Brazil, although a first-round victory would have given her a stronger mandate to push through reforms such as changes to Brazil's onerous tax laws.

Rousseff sought to put a positive spin on the outcome, telling supporters that a second round would give her more time to detail her proposals.

"We are warriors, and we're accustomed to challenges," she said in a speech in Brasilia, flanked by her running mate and her party's top brass. "We do well in second rounds."

Her campaign has been helped by red-hot economic growth and Lula's constant support. Neither Rousseff nor Serra is seen deviating from the mix of social programs and investor-friendly policies that have made Lula wildly popular, helping Brazilian markets to rally in the run-up to the vote.

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2010/10/05/wld01.asp?>

Nearly 400 arrests in Brazil election

Nearly 400 people were arrested in Brazil on Sunday for illegally campaigning outside polling stations during general elections, the country's High Electoral Tribunal said.

A total of 394 people -- 26 of them candidates -- were detained, it said.

Most were promoting individual candidates or parties to voters in breach of electoral laws, though 22 of them were held for trying to buy votes.

The tribunal said the number of arrests was much higher than for municipal elections in 2008, when fewer than half as many people -- 168 -- were detained.

The elections on Sunday were to choose Brazil's next president, most of congress and all state legislators and governors.

<http://news.brisbanetimes.com.au/breaking-news-world/nearly-400-arrests-in-brazil-election-20101004-1632a.html?>

Woman aims for history in Brazil election

Rio de Janeiro, Oct. 1 (UPI) -- Brazil's presidential election is unprecedented in having two major female candidates, and one of them is poised to win.

Dilma Rousseff, a former guerrilla and political prisoner, leads polls at around 50 percent and is pushing to win the first round Sunday outright and avoid a runoff, The Guardian reported Friday.

Rousseff, candidate of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's Worker's Party, is facing Social Democrat Jose Serra and rainforest defender Marina Silva of the Green Party, who is polling around 14 percent.

"Women are ready to govern Brazil and, more importantly, Brazil is ready to be governed by a woman," Rousseff said in a recent interview, adding that women were "sensible, practical and sensitive."

"These are important qualities for someone who wants to govern a country."

Fatima Pacheco Jordao, a Brazilian sociologist, said it was "absolutely unprecedented" to have two competitive female candidates running for the presidency. "I think it brings us a great potential for change," she said, adding that voters saw in a female candidate the possibility of "new values and new ways of doing politics."

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2010/10/01/Woman-aims-for-history-in-Brazil-election/UPI-68221285960466/

Lula: Coup attempt in Ecuador was "stupid"

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva Friday called the police mutiny turned apparent coup attempt in Ecuador a day earlier an act of stupidity, dpa reported.

"Today, the coup perpetrators realized how stupid they were to attempt a coup against Rafael Correa," Lula told reporters in the industrial city of Sao Bernardo do Campo, near Sao Paulo.

"What happened in Ecuador is condemned by all democratic presidents around the world. We all support democracy and Rafael Correa's stay in power," Lula said.

He said he had tried to call Correa, with no luck so far. Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said he had spoken to Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino on Thursday.

Brazil's Deputy Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota travelled to Quito Friday with the foreign ministers of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to express the region's support for Correa, after an emergency meeting late Thursday in Buenos Aires.

The meeting in Argentina was attended by several president, although Lula stayed in Brazil in order to pursue further his campaign for Sunday's general election.

"It is very important for our region to have reacted fast to events in Ecuador," Amorim said late Thursday from Port-au-Prince, where he was on an official visit. "We will not tolerate attacks on democratic processes and on the civilian authority of a legitimately elected government."

In comments to the daily Folha de Sao Paulo, Amorim said the rapid reaction by the region's governments prevented the Ecuadorian crisis from becoming a full-blown coup like the one that toppled Honduran president Manuel Zelaya in June 2009. The delay to react to the Honduran coup "made it difficult to reverse the situation."

<http://en.trend.az/regions/world/ocountries/1760163.html?>

Opposition presidential candidate launches campaign for runoff in Brazil

Opposition candidate Jose Serra of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) met allied political leaders on Wednesday to launch his campaign for the presidential runoff scheduled on Oct. 31.

In the runoff, Serra will dispute with Dilma Rousseff, candidate for the ruling Workers' Party (PT).

The event, convened as a meeting to design the campaign strategy, was attended by legislators, governors and leaders of allied parties, such as the Democrats (DEM) and the Socialist People's Party (PPS), including the former President Itamar Franco (PSDB).

The numerous leaders present in Brasilia said Serra is likely to win, despite having 32.6 percent of valid votes in the first round on Oct. 3.

In his speech, Serra questioned the involvement of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the campaign of his opponent and said that if he was elected president, he will promote a law to regulate what the head of state is allowed to do during the campaign for succession.

"Brazil has changed for the worse in that aspect. One of the first things we have to do as president, along with Congress, is to make a law that defines the head of state involvement in campaigns," he said.

He said his goal is to make a strong government that respects democratic institutions and freedom of the press, with a strong economy that will prioritize job creation.

"I mean we are going to make a government of unity, we will make Brazil united because we have policies for all. We do not discriminate; we will not pursue or investigate anyone's life. We will have political and parliamentary majority to govern Brazil," he said.

In a clear message to the candidate of the Green Party (PV), Marina Silva, who won 20 percent of the votes in the first round, Serra said she "contributed much to democracy," because the important percentage of votes she won allowed the runoff to happen.

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90852/7158452.html?>

Brazzil Magazine - Since 1989 trying to understand Brazil

Dilma Vana Rousseff, 62, was born in Minas Gerais into an upper-middle class family. Her father was a Bulgarian. Her mother was a Brazilian school teacher. Dilma studied in private schools in Belo Horizonte until she was 16 when she moved to a public high school where she joined leftist student groups.

The military coup of 1964 in Brazil was a turning point for many in Dilma's generation. Although only 17 at the time of the "revolution," she soon joined the opposition to the military, becoming more active as time went by in combating the government established by the generals.

In 1967, studying economics in the university, she joined a group in favor of open resistance. And by 1969, because of her activities, she had gone underground, moving constantly and changing her name numerous times. But, in January 1970, she was arrested in São Paulo. In prison she was tortured. Released in 1973, she moved to Rio Grande do Sul.

In Porto Alegre, Dilma got a diploma in economics at the Federal University there. During this period she was married to Carlos Araújo (who had been an urban guerilla during the military dictatorship and later became a politician) and they had a daughter.

Dilma also got involved in politics. She worked in favor of an amnesty law and helped found the PDT, which ran Leonel Brizola for president in the first direct election in 1989 (when Fernando Collor beat Lula in the runoff).

But before that she had begun a career as a civil servant, becoming the municipal secretary of Finance during the administration of Alceu Collares (PDT) in Porto Alegre in 1986. She was president of the state Economical and Statistical Foundation ("FEE") from 1991 to 1993.

After that, she headed the secretariat of Energy, Mines and Communications in two successive state administrations, Alceu Collares (PDT) and Olívio Dutra (PT). In 2001, she joined a group of PDT dissidents who abandoned that party to join the PT.

When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won the presidential election in October 2002, Dilma became a member of his transition team (the infrastructure group).

When Lula took office (January 2003), Dilma was named minister of Mines and Energy. In June 2005, Dilma became Lula's Chief of Staff ("ministra-chefe da Casa Civil") after José Dirceu resigned because of charges of corruption.

Dilma is an experienced technocrat who is at home with a laptop and Power Point. She has never run for office before.

<http://www.brazzilmag.com/component/content/article/91-october-2010/12384-brazilian-presidential-candidate-dilma-a-technocrat-driven-by-ambition-and-ideology.html?>

Detailed Report/Chile

Chile miners could be rescued this month – minister

Copiapo - The 33 Chilean miners trapped for almost two months could be freed in the second half of this month as rescuers drill closer to their refuge deep below the Atacama desert, Chile's mining minister said on Friday.

The men have been trapped 2,300 feet (700 metres) underground since a cave-in on Aug. 5. Their fight for survival has captivated the country and drawn messages of support from Pope Benedict and World Cup soccer stars.

"The eventual rescue could come in the second half of October," said Mining Minister Laurence Golborne.

Rapid progress by the rescue drills has raised expectations of reaching the miners in October instead of November as first thought.

Rescuers will use metal cages designed by Chile's navy to winch the men to the surface one at a time. Doctors said the workers have started exercising in preparation for the ride back to the surface.

The trapped men, who include a first-time miner, a former soccer star and a Bolivian immigrant, have also started preparing for the trip home by sending up the gifts that have been sent down to them through small ducts over past weeks.

"The capsule is tiny, without space for all his stuff. So he's sending it up bit by bit," Juan Sanchez, father of trapped 19-year-old miner Jimmy Sanchez told state television.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2010-10/02/content_11374199.htm?

Chile's president says 'close to rescuing' 33 trapped miners

San Jose Mine, Chile—Chile's president said Monday that his government is "very close" to pulling 33 trapped miners to safety and he hopes to be there in person to see the rescue before leaving on a trip to Europe.

It was Sebastian Pinera who told the miners after they were found alive Aug. 22 that they would be saved by Christmas, and his government has assembled a team of hundreds to support them while three simultaneous drilling operations pound escape shafts through about one kilometer of rock.

The drilling has gone well enough to move up the date since then, but rescue leaders have been cautious: Only last week, they estimated a late-October pullout.

Now the president has changed the expected date again, to before his Oct. 15-22 trip.

"We are very close to rescuing them, and I hope to be able to rescue them before leaving for Europe," he told a group of Chilean radio broadcasters Monday. "We are trying to adjust the two schedules."

"For me it is very important to share this moment — not only with the 33 miners, but with their families and all Chileans," Pinera added.

The miners also are getting ready for their big day. For the past two weeks, they've been sending keepsakes up in the same capsules that carry food, clean clothes, medicine and other supplies down through a narrow borehole to their underground cavern. Letters from their families, signed Chilean flags and other things they don't want to leave behind are coming up out of the hole each day, said Alberto Iturra, the chief of a team of psychologists supporting the miners.

Told of Pinera's statement, rescue chief Andre Sougarret said he understands how anxious everyone is to rescue the men, who on Monday completed 59 days underground since the Aug. 5 collapse of more than 700,000 tons of rock sealed off the lower third of the mine.

“I understand the desire of everyone, me included, is to leave as soon as possible. Still, we can’t take any risks,” he said.

Setbacks also are expected. Sougarret announced that the leading T130 “Plan B” rescue drill was delayed for hours Monday to replace one of its hammers, and that the Rig 421 “Plan C” oil well drill went slightly off course in the gold and copper mine. Now the “Plan C” team is recalibrating their drill, slowing its advance. And the “Plan A” drill, which trails the other two, has been stalled since Saturday to change its hammers.

“As of now we don’t have anything new that would enable us to move up the date” from the second half of October, Sougaret said.

Only when the T130 drill has reached the miners, and the team has lowered a video camera to painstakingly examine the walls of the shaft, will the rescue team decide whether to reinforce the shaft with steel tubing. That process could extend the miners’ stay for three to 10 more days, but would ensure their safety should the unstable mine shift on their way up.

One of the miners, Mario Sepulveda, turned 40 Monday. Rescuers sang “Happy Birthday” to him by telephone, and sent down 33 little cakes in the “carrier pigeon” capsule that has served as their lifeline.

Also Monday, members of the mine’s union protested in a plaza in Copiapo, the regional capital, demanding their pay for the second half of September and any other remaining benefits owed them by the San Esteban mining company.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/870564--chile-s-president-says-close-to-rescuing-33-trapped-miners?>

Detailed Report/Colombia

41 people arrested in Spain accused of money laundering for FARC

27 premises were searched during the National Police operation which was coordinated by the National Court Judge, Pablo Ruz, who is the replacement for Baltasar Garzón. The Colombian and Ecuadorian police collaborated with the Spanish specialized Economic and Fiscal Crime unit in the operation.

Dogs capable of sniffing out money were used in the searches and more than 250 police were used over Friday.

Those arrested are accused of having laundered more than 200 million € from drug trafficking, which they then sent to Colombia and Ecuador using bank transfers.

It follows the arrest in July 2008 of the woman said to be responsible for the FARC in Spain, María Remedios García Albert.

She was later granted 12,000 € bail after being charged with collaboration with a terrorist organization.

http://www.typicallyspanish.com/news/publish/article_27372.shtml?

Colombia exports rise 22.3 pct in Aug-govt

Bogota Oct 5 (Reuters) - Colombia's exports rose 22.3 percent in August compared with a year earlier and climbed 21.9 percent in the January to August period, the government statistics agency said on Tuesday. (Reporting by Bogota Newsroom)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSWEN077820101005?rpc=401&feedType=RSS&feedName=hotStocksNews&rpc=401>

Colombia, Peru Open Ecuador Borders after Crisis

Colombia and Peru reopened their borders with Ecuador on Friday, officials and local media said, a day after soldiers had to rescue Ecuador's President Rafael Correa from protesting police in the worst crisis of his rule.

The United Nations and governments across the Americas had thrown their support behind Correa, with Washington backing him and calling for a peaceful resolution after police took to the streets over cuts to their bonuses.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and Peru's leader Alan Garcia shut their boundaries with Ecuador on Thursday in what they said was a show of support for Correa's government, which was rocked by unrest over austerity measures.

"It's already reopened and it's functioning in a normal way," Colombian Foreign Minister Maria Angela Holguin told local Colombian radio from Argentina, where South American leaders held an emergency meeting on Ecuador's unrest.

Private local RPP radio in Peru reported that the government had reopened Aguas Verdes international bridge in the northern region of Tumbes on Friday morning.

Ecuador's police chief quit on Friday after failing to stop the rebellion by officers who attacked Correa and trapped him inside a hospital. The leftist leader emerged triumphant from the standoff but still faces a political fight.

http://www.postchronicle.com/news/breakingnews/article_212325432.shtml?ref=rss

Huge drug cash seizure in Colombia, official says

Bogota, Colombia -- Colombia's defense minister says authorities have seized \$29 million and 17 million Euros in cash in a home in a poor district south of the capital, Bogota.

The official, Rodrigo Rivera, says the money belonged to drug traffickers including Daniel "El Loco" Barrera. Authorities are offering a \$2.7 million reward for Barrera's capture.

Rivera says authorities have now seized more than \$140 million in cash in the past month in an operation involving the cooperation of U.S. customs officials.

Officials say several billions of dollars in bulk cash are smuggled into Colombia annually by traffickers. They say most of it arrives by shipping container.

Officials say much of it comes from Mexican traffickers while some arrives from Europe.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/04/AR2010100405928.html?>

Body of FARC leader positively identified

Colombian authorities Wednesday confirmed the death of a FARC leader who was wanted in Panama for allegedly planting land mines in the Darién.

Jorge Posada Medina was one of five people who were killed Monday in an attack on a FARC camp along the Panama-Colombian border. The attack was carried out by the Colombian Air Force.

Medina, also known as "Ignacio" or "Pipón," was also believed to have been responsible for the deaths of 74 people in 2002, when guerrillas bombed a church sheltering civilians in the community of Bojayá in Colombia.

He was also accused of drug trafficking.

http://mensual.prensa.com/mensual/contenido/2010/10/07/hoy/english/news_4961.asp?

Detailed Report/Mexico

Grenades explode near U.S. consulate in Mexico

(CNN) -- At least three grenades exploded near the U.S. consulate in Monterrey, Mexico late Friday, a consulate employee told CNN Saturday.

The closest blast was within 40 meters (44 yards) of the consulate, spokesperson Brian Quigley said.

He did not offer many more details, but Justin Davis, a consulate duty officer, said the series of explosions occurred over the course of an hour, starting at 8 p.m. local time.

Davis said there were no reports of deaths or injuries of Americans or any damage to U.S. property, though a few cars in the area were damaged.

Shrapnel injured the watchman of a nearby courthouse, according to the local El Norte newspaper. Another grenade exploded in front of a prison.

That part of Monterrey has a high concentration of government buildings and is often buzzing with police officers, the newspaper said.

The attacks were not believed to be directed against the consulate, Davis said, but, "the proximity in which it happened... is definitely scary to think about."

U.S. officials in the region and security officers were investigating the incident Saturday along with Mexican officials, Davis said.

There were no immediate plans to close the consulate, Davis said.

"We're on guard," he said. "We're prepared and we're ready to address any issues that we need to."

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/10/02/mexico.us.consulate.blasts/index.html?>

20 kidnapped in Mexican resort city of Acapulco

Acapulco, Mexico (AP) — Gunmen kidnapped 20 men who were traveling together in Mexico's Pacific coast resort city of Acapulco, authorities said Saturday.

A shootout between drug gangs, meanwhile, left 14 people dead in remote town in the northern state of Durango, Mexican newspapers reported.

The group of men in Acapulco was visiting from the western city of Morelia and looking for a place to stay when they were abducted Thursday, said Fernando Monreal, director of state investigative police in Guerrero state, where the resort city is located.

He said the kidnapping was reported by a man who had been with the group.

The man told police that he and another fellow traveler had left the others to go a store and when they returned, their companions were gone.

Witnesses said the men, who ranged in age from 17 to 47, were kidnapped by an armed gang that drove them away in the four cars in which the group had been traveling. Police later found the cars abandoned near the kidnapping site.

The motive was unknown.

The man who notified police described his companions as tourists. He said they all worked for the same tire-alignment company in Morelia and saved up each year to take vacations together.

Mr. Monreal said police have been unable to locate the man since he reported the kidnapping Friday. The man left a cell phone number but was not answering it, Mr. Monreal said.

Acapulco has been a key battleground for lucrative drug-trafficking routes. Violence in the region increased this year after a split in the Beltran Leyva cartel, whose leadership has been hit hard by President Felipe Calderon's drug war.

Police, who were scouring the resort city and the highways leading out of it for the missing men, gave no indication that the kidnappings were tied to drug trafficking.

Drug-gang henchmen frequently kidnap rivals and dump their bodies on the streets days later, but it is rare for a survivor of such kidnappings to go to the police.

The shootout between rival drug-dealing gangs broke out Friday morning in the town of San Jose de la Cruz, El Universal and Reforma newspapers reported, citing the Durango state attorney general's office.

Police and soldiers traveled to the town after being alerted by residents, Ruben Lopez, a spokesman for the office, was quoted as saying.

It often takes authorities hours to travel to the scene of shootouts in Durango, a mountainous state that long has been a stronghold for Mexico's most powerful drug traffickers.

Nobody answered the phone Saturday at the state attorney general's office.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/oct/3/20-kidnapped-mexican-resort-city-acapulco/>?

President Michel Sleiman in Mexico to perpetuate the time-honored friendship with the Mexican people

It was a visit with a particular importance since it coincided with the commemoration this year of the independence of the United Mexican States, and it was the first visit to Mexico of a Lebanese president for 65 years. A historic visit that reinforced the multiple ties, going back well over a century, between the two countries. Between Mexico and Lebanon there is a great and solid friendship, since that vast country of Central America has generously received our compatriots and is home to a community of more than half a million Lebanese and their descendants. President Michel Sleiman and First Lady Wafaa Sleiman, warmly received by President Felipe Calderon and his wife, Marguerita, were able to ascertain during their visit how much our compatriots of Mexico, by their unshakeable devotion to Lebanon, form within the great Mexican family a great extension of the mother country beyond the Atlantic.

A long common history

This long common history, filled with acts of support, cooperation and solidarity, began two centuries ago since the first Lebanese to set foot on Mexican soil was Father Boutros Raffoul, who landed at the port of Veracruz in 1878. The flame of friendship for Lebanon has been fostered in more recent times by presidents Lopez Mateos, Miguel Aleman and Luis Echeverria, and the tradition is continued today by President Felipe Calderon. "El que no tenga un amigo

libanés, que lo busque” (He who has no Lebanese friend, let him seek one!), President Lopez Mateos once said, and President Echeverria told us on receiving us at the Los Pinos presidential palace in 1976: “The Mexican people have always had feelings of friendship and admiration for your [Lebanese-Mexican] dynamic community, which groups within itself a galaxy of brilliant personalities who have won distinction in several spheres of our national life and daily bring their contribution to the development of the country and the building of an even stronger Mexico, an even more prosperous Mexico which is in the vanguard of progress”.

Beginning a new stage of friendship between the two countries, such was the wish of President Calderon, who signed with his Lebanese counterpart agreements on economic matters, including tourism, as well as cooperation in the matter of climate change. It was a visit successful in every way that can only consolidate the time-honored links uniting our two countries.

The presidential address to the UN General Assembly

President Sleiman arrived in Mexico from New York, where he delivered a address to the UN General Assembly, following a speech to the Security Council.

In his speech to the Assembly, the president solemnly recalled Lebanon’s conditions for regional peace. He called for a comprehensive peace based on UN resolutions. But above all he reiterated his rejection of implantation, arguing that Lebanon should be associated with the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the matter of refugees. At the beginning of his speech, the president stressed the fact that “despite the growing and important role the UN plays on the level of social and economic development, it remains essentially and by far a political organization created to maintain international peace and security and to preserve humanity from the scourge of wars and of conflicts which have impeded its development during successive periods of history. In this context, the UN has not hesitated to work for the resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict since it began and has issued a series of resolutions aimed at restoring their [Palestinian] rights and consolidating peace and development. But these efforts have foundered on the rock of the intransigence of Israel and its strong and evident tendency to adopt a policy of expansion and colonization”. He denounced the refusal of Israel to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under the full supervision of the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and he requested the international community to demonstrate the necessary determination and use appropriate means of pressure for a solution based on UN resolutions as well as the Madrid conference and the Arab Peace Initiative in all their aspects, especially those ensuring the rejection of any implantation of Palestinian refugees in their Arab host countries whose situation does not permit such implantation. “We can only reiterate at this stage that it is the international community, which takes responsibility for ensuring the living conditions and the well-being of Palestinian refugees by increasing its contribution to the budget of UNRWA, which was created specifically for this purpose in 1949 in order to guarantee a decent life for the refugees under the sovereignty of the host countries and with their assistance, far removed from extremism and intolerance”, he said.

Condemning the terrorism from which Lebanon had suffered, the president reaffirmed his country’s commitment to UN Resolution 1701 of the Security Council and called for application of all its provisions in order to put an end to Israel’s daily violations of Lebanese maritime and land area and air space. He also asked the international community to compel the Zionist state to withdraw from the still-occupied Lebanese territories of the Shebaa farms, the Kfarshouba

heights and the northern part of the village of Ghajar. "In the appropriate frameworks, Lebanon will spare no effort to compensate for all losses and all the damage it has caused in Lebanon during its successive attacks", the president said. He continued: "Lebanon would like to implement its right to use its resources of water, petroleum and natural gas... in conformity with international law. Above all, it intends to exploit its resources inside the limits of its exclusive economic zone, certain frontiers of which have been defined in the South in accordance with the map submitted by the Lebanese government to the secretariat of the United Nations on July 9, 2010", he said.

President Sleiman also commended the efforts and sacrifices of the men and women of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in South Lebanon, and he stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination between the UN forces and the Lebanese Army in conformity with the rules of engagement, with the objective of ensuring a just implementation of the mission assigned to these forces. He also underlined all Lebanon's efforts to prevent any external aggression as it seeks to constrain Israel to apply Resolution 1701 and mobilizing all its dissuasive national capacities in the framework of a national defense strategy. President Sleiman concluded by reiterating his confidence "in the fact that Lebanon will always remain open to dialogue and to the human interaction, loyal to its mission and committed to the reinforcement of justice and law despite all challenges, and to the defense of the values of freedom, democracy and harmonious coexistence, on the basis of which it was established".

In parallel, President Sleiman took part in the Millennium Development Summit, whose purpose was the mobilization of the international community to achieve between now and 2015 the eight objectives adopted in 2000 by the member states of the UN, the principal of which is the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger in the world, as well as ensuring primary education for all. It was a very full program for the president, replete with meetings and conversations with senior officials of the planet.

<http://www.morning.com/ArticleC.asp?Article=8424&CategoryID=2>

Mexico minister says drug war not hitting investment

Mexico City, Oct 3 (Reuters) - Mexican Finance Minister Ernesto Cordero said on Sunday there is no evidence that Mexico's escalating drug war is discouraging foreign investment or interfering with the country's economic recovery.

Investors, tourists and the U.S. government have been worried by an expanding wave of cartel executions and gun battles in Mexican towns and cities, as well as increasing attacks on public officials.

"Up until now, there is no evidence that this is stopping the level of investment that is arriving to Mexico," Cordero told a press conference, referring to flows of funds into financial markets as well as investment in assets like factories.

Drug violence has killed more than 29,000 people since late 2006 when President Felipe Calderon took office and deployed the army to challenge drug cartels in areas that the gangs have long controlled.

But the death toll is still rising as Mexico struggles to get its economy back up to speed after the global economic crisis knocked it into the worst recession since the 1930s.

The northern business city of Monterrey saw four grenade attacks this weekend, but only injuries were reported. Police also investigated the reported kidnapping of 20 Mexican tourists in the Pacific resort of Acapulco.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0328294320101004?rpc=401>

Russia, Mexico to develop communications, info tech cooperation

Guadalajara (Mexico), October 5 (Itar-Tass) -- Russia and Mexico stated about the intentions to develop the cooperation in communications and information technologies at the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference. Russian Minister of Telecommunications and Mass Communications Igor Shchegolev and Mexican Minister of Communications and Transport Juan Molinar signed the corresponding memorandum on mutual understanding on Monday.

The sides expressed interest in developing and building up cooperation in communications, information technologies and mass communications. They noted that the just-signed document is an important step for broader cooperation in these spheres.

Commenting on the just-signed document Molinar told Itar-Tass about far-sighted prospects of the development of bilateral relations. "Russia is one of major technological powers in the world and was always such a country in telecommunications, Russia is a pioneer of satellite technologies and has a vast potential that can very useful for Mexico," the minister noted.

Molinar emphasized that both countries have "a long-standing tradition of friendship and cooperation," noting that the memorandum "is mutually beneficial and will broaden bilateral relations." "We will be able to yield good benefits from the use of Russian technology, for instance, in the satellite sphere, where we are particularly interested to develop cooperation with Russia," the minister pointed out. He reported about his plans to pay an official visit to Russia, though the exact date of the visit is not set yet.

For his part, Igor Shchegolev told Itar-Tass that Russia has good prospects for the development of cooperation with Mexico in information and telecommunication technologies. He called among the trends for cooperation the access to the communication services for residents of Mexican remote regions and the development of the e-government technologies and the provision of electronic and mobile services.

Thanks to the memorandum additional opportunities open up for broader cooperation between the television companies of the countries, particularly with due account of a growing flow of tourists from Russia to the Latin American country, Shchegolev said. "We hope that cooperation will promote higher activities of Russian companies on the Mexican market, and companies from Mexico will receive the additional information about their opportunities in Russia," the minister remarked.

During the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference underway in Guadalajara, where about 2,000 delegates from 122 countries participate, the Russian delegation headed by Igor Shchegolev is planning to hold negotiations with representatives of other countries.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=15557457&PageNum=0>

Texas Governor Pressures Mexican President to Find American "Victim" in Alleged Pirate Attack

Texas Gov. Rick Perry said Wednesday he has asked Mexico's president to call him in the next 48 hours to say that the body of an American reportedly shot to death on a border lake has been recovered.

Tiffany Hartley of Milliken, Colo., says her husband, David, was shot by Mexican pirates on Falcon Lake last week as they were returning to the United States on Jet Skis. Falcon Lake is a dammed section of the Rio Grande that has been plagued by pirates who rob boaters and fishermen who wander into Mexican waters. Hartley's death would be the first killing on the lake.

Mexican authorities have since questioned Hartley's account, saying they've retrieved no evidence indicating that a crime was ever committed.

Perry, however, called any suggestion that the woman is lying "reprehensible."

"Anyone who is trying to deflect off of what this actually is ought to be ashamed of themselves," he said in an interview Wednesday with Fox News.

The Hartley family has complained that Mexican authorities are not doing enough to find David Hartley's body. Tiffany Hartley has said that her husband was shot in the head by three men chasing them in speedboats and that he fell off his Jet Ski and into the lake. His body has not been recovered.

Perry said Mexico needs to use every resource available to find the body and have it returned to U.S. soil.

"I hope that if (Mexican President Felipe Calderon) calls me within the next 48 hours, that the body has been retrieved," Perry told the Associated Press.

Officials in Mexico's Tamaulipas state, where the shooting occurred, have cast doubt on Hartley's story, telling the McAllen Monitor that no one near the lake reported hearing gunshots or the sounds of a Jet Ski engine.

The district attorney there, Marco Antonio Guerrero Carrixales, also told the paper that authorities "are not certain that incident happened the way that they are telling us."

Perry said the couple was innocently sightseeing in Mexico when Hartley's husband was attacked.

"This is a tragedy," he said.

Perry used the incident to renew his demand that the federal government do more to secure the U.S.-Mexico border as northern Mexico sinks deeper into drug-gang violence. The violence has spread in the last few months from Ciudad Juarez, the epicenter of Mexico's drug war across from El Paso, Texas, to the Mexican side of the Rio Grande Valley, including Tamaulipas state where Hartley reportedly disappeared. Two drug gangs, the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas, are battling for supremacy there and fighting the Mexican military.

"I don't know how many more Americans have to lose their lives before the federal government steps in and sends the troops (to the border)," Perry said.

Perry also told the Associated Press that he spoke Tuesday to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano's chief of staff and once again made his request for an additional 1,000 National Guard troops on the Texas-Mexico border, a request that has been repeatedly denied.

U.S. authorities are unable to investigate Hartley's disappearance because it happened in Mexico.

On Tuesday, Hartley's wife and mother, Pam Hartley, called on the Obama administration to intervene in the search.

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/10/06/texas-governor-pressures-mexican-president-intensify-search-americans-body/>

Mexican president wants to do away with local police

President Felipe Calderon's reform would eliminate Mexico's 2,000 local police departments, seen as tainted by corruption from the drug war. The plan must still be approved by Congress and the states.

Reporting from Mexico City — Amid a bloody war against drug cartels, Mexican President Felipe Calderon said Wednesday that he was sending Congress a plan to overhaul the country's police system by doing away with local forces, long a weak link in law enforcement.

The proposed reform, which would require amending the Mexican Constitution, would eliminate the nation's 2,000 municipal departments, where officers tend to be undertrained and ill-paid and are seen as vulnerable to corruption by criminal groups. Patrol duties in towns and cities would be taken over by the 31 states.

The idea, called "unified command," has been debated for months, as the death toll from the nearly 4-year-old drug war surpassed 28,000 and signs of police collusion with crime syndicates continued to pile up.

In August, six municipal officers in the northern state of Nuevo Leon were arrested in the assassination of Santiago Mayor Edelmiro Cavazos outside the important industrial city of Monterrey. Local police officers are often swept up in arrests of drug henchmen.

Calderon already is behind a police overhaul at the federal level, where a hiring spree has boosted the number of federal officers to 33,000 and a state-of-the-art academy draws trainers from the United States. That reform drive includes drug screening and polygraph tests to weed out suspect police and recruits, a policy that is eventually to apply to all officers in Mexico.

The federal cleanup has revealed problems. In August, officials announced that about 3,200 officers — nearly a tenth of the federal force — had been fired since January for failing drug screenings and other causes, such as absenteeism and substandard performance.

Despite that, Calderon and aides have argued that the Achilles heel of Mexican law enforcement is at the local level, not the federal. Mexico's 165,000 municipal officers make up more than a third of the country's roughly 425,000 total.

Shabbily trained and ill-equipped local police are no match for potent drug gangs and many officers' frequent attempts to solicit bribes make them widely loathed by the residents they are meant to protect. In addition, more than 400 communities lack a police force. In places with municipal forces, 90% have fewer than 100 officers.

"Municipal police are the most vulnerable, the easiest to find, the easiest to co-opt, the most subject to intimidation and, of course, vengeance," Calderon said Wednesday during a police recognition ceremony for federal police. "It is necessary to change course."

The proposal to eliminate the local departments has the support of the nation's governors and the main opposition party, making congressional passage likely. As a constitutional reform, the measure would also have to be approved by at least 17 of the 31 state legislatures.

Mexico's mayors, who would lose control of local police and the budgets that support them, have come out against the plan, complaining that they have been blamed unfairly for Mexico's crime woes and excluded from the discussion of how to improve law enforcement. In August, municipal groups said the "unified command" proposal ignored successful efforts to professionalize and equip police in some cities.

Some experts have warned that concentrating police authority at the state level could make it easier for criminal organizations to control entire regions by buying off or intimidating state commanders.

Besides that, state police have proved as suspect as municipal officers. The country's 196,000 state police make up almost half of officers nationwide and have frequently been found to be working for drug cartels and other crime groups. About 30,000 investigators are assigned to prosecutors' offices around the country.

Officials have said consolidating police at the state level will make it easier to oversee professionalization and vetting aimed at rooting out graft.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-mexico-police-reform-20101006,0,7799956.story?>

Detailed Report/Venezuela

Hugo Chavez says civilian militias in Venezuela should be issued weapons

Caracas, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said Sunday that members of the country's civilian militia should be issued weapons to be armed and ready at all times.

The Bolivarian Militia is a force of volunteers ranging from students to retirees formed in recent years by Chavez, who says it is a crucial component of the nation's defenses.

Until now, members of the militia have regularly trained at weekend boot camps, but their guns have usually been locked away in military depots when not in use.

"Who has seen a militia without weapons?" Chavez said during his Sunday television and radio program. He said he was surprised when he met some militiamen standing guard recently and learned they had no guns.

"The militias are the people with weapons in hand," Chavez told an audience including military officers and high-ranking officials in rural Guarico state.

"We need to break old paradigms because we're still seeing the militias as if they were a complementary force, some battalions that get together once a month over there, or go and march somewhere," Chavez said. "No, buddy. The militia is a permanent territorial unit and it should be armed, equipped and trained — campesinos, workers."

Chavez also suggested that the country should accelerate the formation of militia units.

The militia is named after Simon Bolivar, the independence hero who is an inspiration for Chavez, and its members range from housewives to engineers to public employees. Men and women in the militia regularly attend weekend training sessions where they learn to fire cannons, mortars and machine guns.

Diosdado Cabello, one of Chavez's longtime confidants, has said the militia comprises about 120,000 fighters and is growing.

Chavez, who survived a failed coup in 2002, says the militia should be prepared to defend the country against any threat, foreign or domestic. He has said he believes the United States poses a threat to his oil-exporting country, though U.S. officials strongly deny it.

Opponents of the leftist president say the militia is essentially a personal army for Chavez aimed at intimidating his adversaries, maintaining control and keeping him in power.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/sns-ap-lt-venezuela-chavez,0,5736618.story?>

Chávez urges the US "to keep its imperialist hands" out of the region

Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez urged the US government to "keep its old imperialist hands" out of Latin America. "We must demand the US government to keep its old imperialist hands out of this continent," Chávez said in Buenos Aires, where he attended an extraordinary meeting of the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), which was urgently convened following a police revolt in Ecuador.

The Venezuelan president warned that the United States "provides millions of dollars to far-right wing movements; many of them are trying to destabilize the governments of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA)," DPA reported.

Chávez added that such destabilization plans are "particularly aimed at countries whose governments are legitimate and democratic. We have raised the banner of socialist revolution in democracy."

"The US Department of State says that presidents such as Chávez, Bolivia's (Evo Morales, and Rafael Correa, are totalitarian and authoritarian dictators, but it plots coup d'états," the Venezuelan President said before leaving Buenos Aires.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2010/10/01/en_pol_esp_chavez-urges-the-us_01A4547811.shtml?

U.S. Is Behind Failed Ecuador Coup, Chavez Writes in His Column

Oct. 3 (Bloomberg) -- Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez says the U.S. was behind a failed uprising in Ecuador, in which President Rafael Correa claims he was held against his will in a hospital by police and soldiers protesting wage cuts.

Washington is supporting coup d'états against an alliance of Latin American left-wing countries, known as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, or ALBA, which was formed by Chavez to counter U.S. influence in the region, he wrote in his weekly column "The Lines of Chavez."

"Let's not forget, the failed attempt, manufactured by Washington, was looking not only to bring down Correa's government but also the ALBA and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations)," Chavez wrote in the column. The U.S. "has revived the old measure of coup d'états to spoil plans of governments that don't subordinate to it."

"In response to the events that happened in Ecuador, Secretary (of State Hillary) Clinton immediately came out expressing our support for President Correa," said Thomas Mitnacht, head of the press section at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas. "Any accusations that the U.S. had anything to do with what happened are without foundation."

Correa was rescued from a Quito hospital that police besieged on Sept. 30 in protest of wage cuts. Fighting between security forces and police, as well as related violence, left eight people dead and 274 injured, the Health Ministry said.

Correa and Chavez both described the incident as an attempted coup.

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-10-03/u-s-is-behind-failed-ecuador-coup-chavez-writes-in-his-column.html?>

Chavez invites Castro to give five-hour speech in Venezuela

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez invited former Cuban leader Fidel Castro to Venezuela, Reuters reported on Sunday.

"I have invited him to visit us as he is better than ever, better than ever...Long live Fidel! We await you, comrade, so you can give a speech here of five or six hours," Chavez reportedly said on his television show.

If Castro does go to Venezuela, it will be his first visit abroad in over four years.

<http://www.jpost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=189981>

Caracas puts the blame on "media smear campaign"

Venezuela denies links with two ETA members arrested in Spain

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry said that the statements of Juan Carlos Besance and Xabier Atristain "are likely to be dismissed in court because they are exposed to other arguments in trial and these attestations are not trustworthy"

Venezuela's Foreign Ministry on Monday denied allegations that the Venezuelan government has links with Basque terrorist group ETA, after two suspected members of that group said they had received training on Venezuelan soil in 2008.

In a statement, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry denied that Venezuela has links with any terrorist organization, with special emphasis on ETA, and ratified that the South American country condemns terrorism, DPA said.

"The Venezuelan government has no connection whatsoever to any terrorist organization, especially the Basque group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). We reassert our strongest condemnation of terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations," the statement read.

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry attributed the reports to "a (smear) campaign advanced by some Spanish print media."

Similarly, the statement reiterated that the Venezuelan government is willing "to cooperate at all times with the Spanish government against this or any other terrorist group threatening peace or the life of any citizen."

Alleged ETA members Juan Carlos Besance and Xabier Atristain, who were arrested last Wednesday in the Basque Country, told Judge Ismael Moreno that other two ETA members, who were arrested later in Spain, as well as a Venezuelan national and a Chilean citizen trained them in Venezuela.

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry said that the statements of Besance and Atristain "are likely to be dismissed in court because they are exposed to other arguments in trial and these attestations are not trustworthy."

The statement recalled that on March 6, Venezuela and Spain issued a joint statement in which they reasserted their commitment to the fight against all forms of terrorism, after a judge of the National Court of Spain accused the Venezuelan government of having links with ETA.

"Venezuela and Spain issued a joint statement in which they essentially decided to deepen friendship and cooperation in fighting terrorism, in order to dismiss allegations that Venezuela was cooperating with ETA and reject a campaign similar to the current smear campaign going on in the media," he said.

ETA has killed more than 800 people since 1968 in its attempt to achieve Basque independence from the rest of Spain.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2010/10/04/en_pol_esp_venezuela-denies-link_04A4562611.shtml?

Spain Asks Venezuela for Information about ETA

Madrid—Spain on Monday asked Venezuela for the second time to provide information about alleged training of members of Basque separatist group ETA in Venezuelan territory.

Two suspected ETA members arrested last week in Spain's Basque region were trained in Venezuela in the handling of weapons and explosives during the summer of 2008, a Spanish National Court judge alleged. Earlier Monday, the National Court charged the two men with possession of explosives and weapons.

Isaías Rodríguez, Venezuela's ambassador to Spain, denied any links with ETA. Mr. Rodríguez said Monday that the two men's statements that they received training in Venezuela aren't credible because they are ETA members.

"This request for information forms part of an agreement between the two countries to strengthen the fight against terrorism, and it doesn't imply that there's any kind of involvement by the Venezuelan government," said a Spanish Foreign Ministry spokeswoman.

National Court Judge Ismael Moreno on Monday ordered that Xavier Atristain and Juan Carlos Besance remain in custody on explosives and weapons-possession charges.

Lawyers for Mr. Atristain and Mr. Besance couldn't be reached to comment.

In his order, Judge Moreno alleged that Messrs. Atristain and Besance belong to an ETA cell, and that one of their trainers in Venezuela was Arturo Cubillas. Mr. Cubillas is wanted in Spain on charges that he has led ETA's activities in Latin America since 1999 and has acted as a link between ETA and Colombian guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known as the FARC.

The indictment issued in March against Mr. Cubillas by the National Court, which handles high-profile cases involving terrorism and organized crime, alleged that ETA members were trained by FARC elements and that both groups planned to assassinate Colombian political figures, including former President Álvaro Uribe, during visits to Spain.

Spain made its first formal request to Venezuela for information on ETA's alleged training in the country after Mr. Cubillas was indicted.

The allegations against Mr. Cubillas sparked tensions between Spain and Venezuela. The South American country is an important trading partner for Spain, and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has struggled to maintain friendly relations with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, who has denied any ties to ETA and the FARC.

But the charges raised fresh questions about Venezuela's alleged collaboration with the rebel groups. According to Spanish authorities, Mr. Cubillas was hired by Venezuela's Agriculture Ministry in 2005 and is believed to be living in Venezuela. Venezuela hasn't commented specifically on those allegations.

Although Mr. Cubillas remains at large, both countries had moved recently to ease bilateral tensions. The two governments issued joint statements reiterating their cooperation in fighting terrorism and their respective police authorities have held bilateral meetings.

ETA, considered a terrorist organization by the European Union and the U.S., is held responsible for the deaths of 829 people in more than 40 years of a violent campaign for the independence of the Basque region in northeast Spain and southwest France. The group declared a cease-fire last month. It has broken several cease-fires in the past.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704631504575532352884143626.html?>

According to official figures

Venezuela's unemployment up to 9.6 percent in August

The National Statistics Institute reported that the informal sector of the economy stood at 43.4 percent in August

Venezuela's unemployment rate ended at 9.6 percent in August, a 1.6 percent jump compared to the same month in 2009, when it amounted to 8 percent.

Elías Eljuri, the president of the National Statistics Institute (INE), said that despite the increased jobless rate, unemployment in Venezuela remains far below than in other countries that have been hit by the global economic crisis.

The National Statistics Institute reported that the informal sector of the economy stood at 43.4 percent in August, while the population employed in the formal sector stood at 56.6 percent.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2010/10/06/en_eco_art_venezuelas-unemploy_06A4572453.shtml?

Venezuelan newspapers win international award

Daily newspapers El Universal and El Nacional won a prize awarded by Spanish newspaper El Mundo in recognition of their "free, courageous and independent" editorial stance.

Venezuelan daily newspapers El Universal and El Nacional were given the Premio Internacional de Periodismo (International Journalism Award) by Spanish newspaper El Mundo, thus becoming the first two Venezuelan print media to win this prize, which El Mundo has been awarding since 2002.

Manuel Saucedo, the news director of El Mundo, said that both Venezuelan newspapers were honored for their "free, courageous and independent" journalistic work.

The award, created in 2002, recognizes both media and journalists around the world that, amidst political or social adversity, perform an exemplary work in the journalistic field, in order to disseminate timely, truthful and balanced information on the realities of their nations.

El Universal won the category of Columnistas del Mundo (Columnists of the World), which honored its editorial policy.

This year's jury, which chose both winners unanimously, was headed by the directors of four of Europe's most influential newspapers, namely Pedro J. Ramírez, the director of El Mundo newspaper; Ferruccio de Bortoli, the editor of Corriere della Sera -represented by its correspondent in Spain, Elisabetta Rosaspina; Alan Rusbridger, the editor of The Guardian, represented by its correspondent Giles Tremlett; and Laurent Joffrin, the director of Libération - represented by the International Desk head, Gérard Thomas.

The remaining four independent members of the jury are writers Carmen Posadas and Arturo Pérez Reverte; El Mundo columnist Raúl Rivero and philosopher Fernando Savater -both of whom won the award in previous years; Aurelio Fernández, the vice president of editorial

coordination of Unidad Editorial, and Víctor de la Serna, deputy editor of El Mundo newspaper.

Both Andrés Mata Osorio and Miguel Henríque Otero are committed to freedom of expression, according to the jury. "They practice journalism of opinion and defense of freedom where such practice and defense are most cumbersome," said the jury. "This joint award to the two largest dailies in the country, which have two different ideologies, shows that theirs is a democratic perspective, rather than ideological."

http://english.eluniversal.com/2010/10/06/en_pol_esp_venezuelan-newspaper_06A4571331.shtml?

Spain asks Venezuela to take "immediate action" on ETA

The government of Spain on Wednesday asked the Venezuelan Executive Office for a more intense cooperation in the investigations related to the activities of the Basque separatist group ETA in Venezuela, as well as to take concrete actions regarding former ETA activist Arturo Cubillas, who is a senior official at the Venezuelan Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

The request was made by Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos during a conversation he had with Venezuelan Ambassador to Spain Isaías Rodríguez, reported Spanish First Deputy Prime Minister María Teresa Fernández de la Vega.

In a press conference at the Moncloa Palace, the official residence for the Prime Minister, along with Colombian Vice President Angelino Garzón, Fernández de la Vega said that Moratinos requested "immediate and concrete action" and said that she was confident that the Venezuelan authorities will address the request, Efe reported.

Fernández de la Vega recalled that Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has reiterated his full willingness to cooperate with Spain after ETA members Javier Atristain and Juan Carlos Besance confessed that they received arms training in Venezuela.

"We have no reason to assume that the Venezuelan government is not going to cooperate," she said.

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