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Trade News

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History will severely judge a rejection of FTAs

By CARLOS M. GUTIERREZ

Carlos M. Gutierrez is U.S. Secretary of Commerce. This article is adapted from a speech delivered at the Americas Conference, co-sponsored by The Miami Herald, at the Biltmore Hotel, Sept. 20, 2007.

Last week, in Medellin, Colombia, a bipartisan U.S. delegation rode high above a once violent and poverty-stricken neighborhood of Santo Domingo Savio in El Metro Cable, a modern mass-transit cable system. We saw a revitalized community driven by leaders like Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and Medellin Mayor Sergio Fajardo, who are cleaning up the streets, fighting narco-terrorists and attracting investment.

A community once in the hands of drug lords has been transformed. Children today can play in the streets, and parents have the opportunity to work and make a life for their families. Colombia is a stunning example of bipartisan foreign policy success. The United States has contributed almost \$5 billion to Plan Colombia, an initiative to promote the peace process, combat the narcotics industry, revive the economy and strengthen democracy. Since 2000, kidnappings are down by 76 percent, terror attacks by 61 percent and homicides by 40 percent. And, Colombia has made great strides in the healthcare and education of families and children.

Colombia and its neighbors Panama and Peru all have pending free trade agreements (FTAs) with the United States. Combined, these markets represent more than 75 million consumers and \$246 billion in GDP. They are three of the fastest growing economies in the world. These FTAs will boost U.S. exports to these growing markets.

With our help, Colombia can continue moving forward, embracing the principles of democracy, justice, rule of law and expanding prosperity -- or return to the years of violence and corruption. In the past, Latin American countries being overrun by guerrilla movements and drug cartels have reacted with dictatorships, martial law and canceled elections. Remarkably, Colombia's turnaround has been accomplished while staying true to democratic principles.

Colombia's economy grew 8 percent in the first quarter of this year and has grown 5.2 percent annually since 2002. Poverty has declined from 60 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2006. Colombia has far to go but should be applauded for its progress.

Congress should pass these FTAs. Congress already allows 90 percent of their goods to enter our markets duty free. These FTAs will give our farmers and workers the same preferences Congress has given their workers. We know that open markets benefit our economy. Since 2001, our trade with FTA countries in the hemisphere has skyrocketed by 60 percent.

FTAs not only boost U.S. exports, they help export good governance, good business practices and a healthy respect for the rule of law. These trade agreements strengthen key allies by promoting economic freedom and opportunity at a time when there are those in the Hemisphere who seek just the opposite.

The vast majority of our regional neighbors are on the right path. Now is not the time to turn away from friends in the region -- a region that includes Cuba, a country sadly mired in the past, self-isolated from democratic reforms and economic freedom.

History will severely judge a rejection of these trade agreements, especially Colombia. Not passing a free trade agreement with Colombia would be a glaring foreign policy blunder the United States cannot afford. For our exporters, for our national security and for our allies, now is the time for United States leadership. Our continued political and economic engagement will only serve to create a safer, more prosperous region and a future of hope and opportunity.



The Great Debate - The Future of U.S. Trade - November 7-9, 2007 - The National District Export Council will hold its annual conference, **The Great Debate: The Future of U.S. Trade** on November 7-9, 2007, in Tampa, Florida. Award winning journalist Gene Randall will moderate a debate designed to provide great insight into understanding the complexities of conducting business throughout the world in a period of heightened uncertainty. U.S. Department of Commerce Commercial Officers from U.S. Embassies across Latin America and Canada will deliver up-to-date information on developing opportunities for U.S. business. Sign up now to meet with these experts to discuss overseas business opportunities for your company. Private consultations are first-come, first-serve -- and filling up quickly -- register today while space is still available, please visit: <http://www.deconference.com/>

Trade Facts:

- **Peru** -- The United States is currently the leading source of Peru's imports, with a 16 percent market share. (Source: *World Trade Atlas*). U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Public Affairs, 202-482-8192
- **FTA Exports** -- U.S. Exports to our Latin American Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners (those whose FTAs are in force: Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) grew 20 percent from 2005 to 2006, significantly faster than the 14 percent increase in our exports to the world. (Source: *International Trade Administration*)

Trade Mission to Morocco, January 28 - 31, 2008 - Morocco offers excellent growth opportunities for US companies. Since the implementation of a free trade agreement in 2006, trade between the US and Morocco has increased by a striking 44%. In the next 3 years, major government-led projects totaling over \$10 billion will be funded. The U.S. Commercial Service in Morocco is supporting a 4-day business mission to Casablanca, Rabat and Tangier being organized by PHARE Associates, LLC, with participation of the Moroccan Embassy in Washington, DC. Join the mission to • Meet one-on-one with government officials and prospective representatives, buyers and partners. • Learn about the Moroccan market from U.S. Embassy officers, Ministry officials and industry experts. • Identify first-hand business opportunities. • Find out about the extensions of the Moroccan markets into Europe, the Mediterranean region and Africa. For further information, contact Fatiha Coulombe, Mission Coordinator, at Tel: (706) 882-0288, E-mail: fcoulombe@bellsouth.net.

\$250K Fine For Falsifying Value On SED -- P.R.A. World Wide Trading Co., Inc. (PRA), of Brooklyn, N.Y., has agreed to pay \$250,000 in civil penalties to settle charges that it violated the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) governing the export of dual-use items. BIS charged PRA, a freight forwarder, on 41 occasions conspired to make false statements in violation of the EAR and falsely represented the value of the items subject to the EAR on Shipper's Export Declarations (SEDs). Criminal penalties were imposed on company officials. See http://www.bis.doc.gov/news/2007/false_statement.html.

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Invites You to Participate in:

Innovative Technologies for Manufacturing (ITM) Expo
Hosted by the World Trade Center
Mumbai
Location: Mumbai, India - Expo Center
Dates: February 7-10, 2008

ITM Expo 2008 invites participation from companies and representatives interested in manufacturing from various industry sectors including:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Automation & Engineering _ Biotechnology _ Electronics & Electrical Engineering and related sectors _ Measuring Systems and Quality Management Systems _ Pharmaceutical & Chemical _ Tools & Mould Making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Agro Technology & Food Processing _ Construction & Infrastructure Technology _ Environmental Technologies _ Printing and Processing _ Transport Technology |
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ITM Expo 2008 will include various events such as, business-to-business match made meetings, thematic discussions, specialized presentations, and demonstrations of modern technologies and machines in operation.

For more information, please contact melanief@scwtc.org or call 843-852-9880, ext 27.



Mark Your Calendars for This Final 2007 Program in the...



**October 18th -
Managing Practical and
Legal Aspects of Overseas
Sales Channels**

Instructors: Dalhi Myers, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd PA, and David Cloer, President, International Industries, Inc.

Appointing and managing international trade representatives and distributors can be challenging, but these steps are just as important to your business as taking on a new partner.

When? Thursday, October 18, 2007 - 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Legal requirements for hiring, firing, and working with a network of foreign sales representatives and distributors can vary from one country to another, further complicating matters.

Where? Continuing Education Building, Room 113, Midlands Technical College - Harbison Campus

Learn from professionals with hands-on experience in dealing with international markets, in particular in managing sales channels and avoiding legal difficulties. Topics to be covered include:

Cost? \$50.00 per person.

- Locating and developing contacts and sales channels in foreign markets
- Using trade exhibitions
- Using government contact programs
- Screening - factors to consider
- Motivating and evaluating sales channels and improving performance

How Do I Register? Go to: <http://www.buyusa.gov/southcarolina/legal.html>

Co-sponsors: The U.S. Commercial Service-Columbia and th S.C. District Export Council.

**PHILIPPINES TO HOST FIRST ASIAN INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE CONFERENCE
“West Meets East Meets West”
Various States and Associations to Participate in the U.S. Pavilion at AIREEC**

The first ever Asian International Real Estate Convention and Expo kicks off in Manila, Philippines in December 2007. One of the World’s fastest growing real estate regions offers a platform for profitable networking in a forum for exploring new trends.



The multi-faceted event has already sparked interest worldwide gaining an impressive list of 50 participating countries and over 300 exhibitors. Influencers in real estate, investments, technology, building materials, architectural and engineering services and tourism will get the opportunity to meet their global counterparts under one roof for the networking event of the year. One of the highlights of the event is the 5000 sq. ft. U.S. Pavilion, which will feature the various American products, know-how, technology, expertise, services, projects and investments to showcase and promote. Tourist bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Redevelopment Agencies, and Professional Associations are all excited to be a part of this campaign.

AIREEC officially launches December 6 and continues through December 10, 2007 at the Philippine International Convention Center in the picturesque capital city, Manila. Participants can enjoy the kick off golf tournament for networking and fun or stick to motivational lunches and educational seminars. The full list of events, speakers and topics can be found at www.aireec.com.

For further information on **The Asian International Real Estate Expo and Conference** please visit www.aireec.com or www.iremag.net. For more information about the event; please contact Ms. Michelle Katz at (310) 800-4907 or Ms. Miko Calma at +63 2 729 2477. *A USDOC Trade Fair Certified exhibition. *