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FEATURED Q&A

Will the Summit of the Americas Lead to Lasting Change?



During the Summit of the Americas last week in Los Angeles, U.S. President Joe Biden called for progress on migration and other issues in the Western Hemisphere. // Photo: U.S. State Department.

Q The Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles featured a call from U.S. President Joe Biden for progress on issues including migration, economic development and climate change. Biden also used the gathering of Western Hemisphere leaders to announce the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, an effort to drive growth, and countries launched the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, a new framework for managing migration. How much progress did the Americas make on shared areas of concern at the summit? What will the gathering lead to in terms of policy changes and improved cooperation in the hemisphere? To what extent did the boycott of some leaders, including Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, over the U.S. decision not to invite Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua to the summit, hinder progress? Did the summit meet expectations and achieve its objectives?

A Dan Restrepo, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and former special assistant to the president and senior director for Western Hemisphere affairs at the U.S. National Security Council: "The success or failure of the 9th Summit of the Americas will not be measured by the absence of any leader or group of leaders, which had no impact on the most important issue addressed in Los Angeles. Rather, it will depend largely on the implementation of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, which has the chance to be the most meaningful achievement at a forum that, since its inception in 1994, has been long on personality dramas and short on substantive accomplishments. The Los Angeles Declara-

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Cuba Sanctions Nearly 400 Over Last July's Protests

Cuba's government said it had sanctioned 381 people, including 297 who were sentenced to prison time, in connection with last year's anti-government protests.

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POLITICAL

U.S. State Dep't Slaps Sanctions on Nicaraguan Officials

The U.S. State Department imposed sanctions on 93 Nicaraguan officials for their roles in the Ortega government's crackdown on civil society groups and other opponents.

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ECONOMIC

Indigenous Groups Protest Policies of Ecuador's Lasso

Indigenous groups in more than a dozen provinces blocked highways in protest of President Guillermo Lasso's economic policies.

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Lasso // File Photo: Ecuadorean Government.

POLITICAL NEWS

Cuba Sanctions Nearly 400 Over Last Year's Protests

Cuba's government said Monday that authorities had sanctioned 381 people, including 16 youths between the ages of 16 and 18, in connection to widespread anti-government protests in July of last year, Reuters reported. Of the people sanctioned, 297 were sentenced to between five and 25 years in prison after being convicted of crimes including sedition, sabotage, robbery with force and public disorder, the Cuban attorney general's office said in a statement to state-run media. "The Attorney General's Office continues to inform the public about the legal response to the events of July 11, 2021, which attacked the constitutional order and the stability of our socialist state," the office said in the statement. Eighty-four people, including 15 youths, were not sentenced to prison time, though those people did face harsher sentences if they committed new offenses or violated sanctions imposed upon them, authorities said, Reuters reported. In January, Cuba's government said authorities had charged 790 people, including 55 people younger than 18, in connection with the protests. Some of them are still awaiting sentencing or have appealed sanctions, the wire service reported. The U.S. government, the European Union and human rights groups have repeatedly called for the release of sentenced protesters and have said their trials are not transparent. "When thousands of Cubans took to the streets in July, the Cuban government responded with a brutal strategy of repression designed to instill fear and suppress dissent," Juan Pappier, the senior Americas researcher at Human Rights Watch, said last October, Al Jazeera reported. "Peaceful protesters and other critics have been systematically detained, held incommunicado and abused in horrendous conditions, and subjected to sham trials following patterns that indicate these human rights violations are not the actions of rogue agents," he added. Human Rights Watch also

accused the Cuban government of committing "arbitrary detention, ill treatment of detainees and abuse-ridden criminal prosecutions" in response to "overwhelmingly peaceful" protests. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) in the Dec. 6 issue of the Advisor.]

U.S. State Dep't Slaps Sanctions on 93 Nicaraguan Officials

The U.S. State Department on Monday imposed sanctions on an additional 93 Nicaraguan officials, restricting them from entering the United States, the Associated Press reported. Last year, Nicaraguan authorities imprisoned dozens of opposition leaders, allowing President Dan-

“The regime holds over 180 political prisoners, with many suffering from a lack of adequate food, proper medical care and even sunlight.”

— Antony Blinken

iel Ortega to run virtually uncontested in the country's presidential election last November. The election has been seen internationally as a sham. The officials that the State Department sanctioned include judges who convicted opposition leaders and legislators who have taken part in the suppression of civil society groups and nongovernmental organizations, the AP reported. "The regime holds over 180 political prisoners, with many suffering from a lack of adequate food, proper medical care and even sunlight," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement, Agence France-Presse reported. "The United States reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of those unjustly detained and the restoration of democracy and the rule of law in Nicaragua," he added. At last week's Summit of the Americas, Blinken questioned Ortega's recent decision to

NEWS BRIEFS

Indigenous Groups Protest Economic Policies of Ecuador's Lasso

Indigenous groups in at least 16 provinces throughout Ecuador on Monday blocked off highways as a start to a reportedly indefinite protest against President Guillermo Lasso's economic policies, Reuters reported. The Indigenous and civil society organizations have set a list of 10 concessions they want from the Lasso administration, including freezing gasoline prices, extending debt payoff deadlines for small farmers and putting a stop to any additional mining and oil development, the wire service reported.

LATAM Airlines Seeks Approval for New Loans to Exit Bankruptcy

Chile-based LATAM Airlines Group on Monday requested that a judge approve \$2.75 billion in new loans in an effort to fund the company's exit from Chapter 11 bankruptcy, Reuters reported. U.S. Bankruptcy Judge James Garrity in Manhattan is expected to review the request on June 23. The company has commitments to Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase Bank, BNP Paribas and Barclays Bank, among others.

APA Reports Unsuccessful Drilling Attempt at Well Off Suriname's Coast

Oil and gas producer Apache's parent company, APA Corp., said on Monday that an exploratory well off of Suriname's coast struck water, marking an unsuccessful drilling effort at the Rasper well, Reuters reported. The company will move its drillship to the next well in Block 53, of which APA holds a 45 percent stake. "We think the more impactful news will be the results from the Krabagu flow test that should include a resource assessment," said RBC Capital Markets analyst Scott Hanold.

allow Russian troops in the Central American country for anti-drug trafficking exercises and joint humanitarian assistance, saying that Russia does not “meet the credibility test” when it comes to these matters, AFP reported. [Editor’s note: See related [Q&A](#) in the Feb. 22 issue of the Advisor.]

Bachelet to Forgo Second Term as U.N. Human Rights Chief

Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said Monday that she will not seek a new four-year term, the Associated Press reported. “I am not a young woman anymore and after a long and rich career, I want to go back to my country, to my family,” Bachelet, 70, who served two nonconsecutive terms as Chile’s president, told reporters, the AP reported. Human rights groups and some Western governments, including that of the United States, criticized Bachelet over her visit last month to China, saying that the conditions Chinese authorities imposed on the trip did not allow for a thorough assessment of the human rights environment there. However, Bachelet said she made the decision to end her tenure as the U.N. human rights chief before her visit to China. Bachelet, whose term ends Aug. 31, announced the decision Monday in her opening address to the summer session of the Human Rights Council, the AP reported. U.N. Secretary General António Guterres affirmed his support for Bachelet after her trip to China, and on Monday praised her “relentless” service in the U.N. role.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Colombian, Chilean Pesos Vulnerable: Wells Fargo Note

Currencies in Colombia and Chile have become among the most vulnerable to depreciation

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tion opens the way to a coherent approach to addressing irregular migration that is almost certain to continue. Its successful implementation could both close 30 years of failed U.S. border-centric crisis management of migration and adequately resource efforts by countries across Latin America and the Caribbean to absorb millions forced to flee Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba and Nicaragua. It

“**The Los Angeles Declaration opens the way to a coherent approach to addressing irregular migration that is almost certain to continue.**”

— Dan Restrepo

could lead to an era in which efforts to catalyze economic stabilization and reactivation; expand legal pathways, including temporary labor and protection mechanisms; more effectively target human smuggling organizations; and coordinate rapid response to emergent migration events could usher in a new era in hemispheric migration management. Beyond the declaration, a series of key U.S. government deliverables—the launching of the Central American Service Corps, the continued growth of the Partnership for Central America, significant investments in

this year among emerging market economies, San Francisco-based Wells Fargo told clients in a research note circulated Monday. “Our framework identifies ... the Colombian peso and Chilean peso as the most vulnerable and the currencies likely to come under the most pressure,” economists at the bank wrote. Other high beta currencies such as the Mexican peso and Indonesian rupiah could also see depreciation pressures build, the economists said. “Lower down on the vulnerability scale but still exhibiting signs of sensitivity is the Brazilian real,” they added. The Turkish lira, South Afri-

food security—also contribute to the possibility of the Los Angeles summit being a clear turning point toward a more integrated hemisphere-wide effort to mitigate, manage and order migration.”

A Roberta Lajous, former Mexican ambassador to Cuba, Bolivia and Spain: “This Summit of the Americas will be remembered for being the first one to address migration as a crisis that affects all countries of the hemisphere. From Alaska to Patagonia, most countries are either losing the most dynamic agents of change in society or are absorbing migrants outside the law, creating a vulnerable and exploited underclass. The measures proposed by the Los Angeles Declaration, which at first sight appear meager, must be carefully analyzed and experienced on the ground in order to measure their impact and, if necessary, improved. The Los Angeles summit also addressed changes in the world order that have shown the fragility of global supply chains after the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic sanctions that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Amid growing competition from China, the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, announced by President Biden, will hopefully bring new opportunities for the hemisphere through ‘nearshoring’ or ‘ally-shoring.’ U.S. conflict with other world powers has increased regional cooperation

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can rand and currencies in Eastern Europe may also see sizable selloffs, they added. Meanwhile “emerging Asia could be less vulnerable,” the economists added. A flare-up in Covid-19 cases in Beijing has added to fears over global economic growth amid rising inflation and concerns of faster interest rate hikes from the U.S. Federal Reserve, Reuters reported Monday. As a result, a basket of Latin American currencies slipped 2.5 percent on Monday, hitting their lowest levels in four weeks, led by a 2.8 percent drop in Brazil’s real, the wire service reported.

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in the past, and the current conflict with Russia over the war in Ukraine will probably be no exception. The absence of President López Obrador from the summit fortunately has not hindered the advancement of bilateral or regional agendas: he will visit Washington in July. Also, the Joint Statement on Canada-Mexico-United States Cooperation, which resulted from the meeting of the three foreign ministers in Los Angeles, announced that the next North American Leaders Summit will take place in Mexico next December.”

A Rubens Barbosa, former ambassador of Brazil to the United States: “The 9th Summit of the Americas happened at a difficult moment for the United States, with a clear priority on the war in Ukraine and the disputes with China. The central idea of the United States in the summit was the proposal of an Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, which is intended to challenge the growing Chinese influence in the region. The package included a declaration on immigration, the creation of a health corps for the Americas and \$12 million to Colombia and Brazil for preservation of the Amazon. All proposals need to be refined in a more detailed way and have not shown how cooperation could be improved. The decision

not to invite Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua proved to be detrimental to U.S. interests given the negative reaction from Mexico and four other countries that decided to boycott

“**The decision not to invite Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua proved to be detrimental to U.S. interests...**”

— Rubens Barbosa

and downplay the summit for this reason. Given the low priority of the summit and the way in which it was prepared, the expectations and objectives of the countries of the hemisphere were not high. Its poor results reinforced this perception. The United States missed a good opportunity to retake leadership in the region when it is facing a growing economic and trade challenge by China and Russia. The dialogue between the United States and Latin America and Caribbean countries is today at one of its worst moments since the end of the Cold War.”

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta at gkuleta@thedialogue.org.

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