



The U.S.-Colombia and U.S.-Panama Trade Agreements: A National Security Imperative

These agreements will not only bolster trade between the United States, Colombia and Panama, they will also reinforce a vital political and security partnership.

Partnerships with Worldwide Reach

- Colombia is playing an important role in building police capacities in Mexico, Honduras and Haiti, among others; setting up aerial narcotics interdiction capabilities in Panama and the Dominican Republic; establishing maritime interdiction structures in 13 countries around the region; establishing a united front in the fight against narcotics trafficking with 12 West African countries, and chairing the UN committee implementing sanctions against Iran and Sudan.
- From the time of the canal's construction, the United States and Panama have made common cause on issues from security to commerce.
- The trade agreements with Colombia and Panama enjoy the support of a huge range of former officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, including at least four former Secretaries of State, three former Secretaries of Defense, four former White House Chiefs of Staff, three former National Security Advisors, six former U.S. Trade Representatives, ten former Assistant Secretaries of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, and five former Commanders of the United States Southern Command. See [here](#) and [here](#).

Commitment to Development and the Rule of Law

- More than three million jobs have been created in Colombia since 2002, when the U.S. Congress opened the U.S. market to Colombian exports through the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act — underscoring the power of trade as an effective alternative development program. The trade agreements will build on this foundation.
- The agreements will enhance U.S. efforts to strengthen democracy in Latin America by lending direct support for the rule of law, internationally recognized workers' rights, and transparency in business and government.

Success in Fighting Narcotics Trafficking

- A June 2010 report issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has found that coca cultivation in Colombia last year reached its lowest level in 15 years, with a 13% drop from the previous year and a 40% drop since "Plan Colombia" was launched with U.S. assistance in 1999.
- Since 1995, Panama and the United States have had a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. This treaty recently helped Panama and the United States cooperate in the largest known maritime cocaine seizure ever (22 tons with an estimated market value \$500 million).