

Correa May Skip Americas Summit to Protest US Meddling



Quito, March 26 (teleSUR-RHC) Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño stated Wednesday that President Rafael Correa may skip the Summit of the Americas in Panama next month to protest the provocative statements made recently by the United States government.

Patiño has expressed serious concern regarding comments made by the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson during her testimony to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, where the White House requested \$2 billion in “aid” for Latin America.

In her presentation, Jacobson explained that an amount of that money would include “support for freedom of the press, human rights, and democracy in the hemisphere, including in Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Nicaragua.”

“If anyone in the world needs a lesson in human rights, it is the United States,” Patiño stated in a press release. The Ecuadorean foreign minister said the statements by Jacobson were a sign of disrespect. “We insist that the government of the United States should stop ... deliberately damaging relations with the countries of Latin America.

In order to have a friendly Summit of the Americas, they must stop making absurd and ridiculous statements, which did not deal totally with reality,” said Patiño. “The United States has nothing it can

teach Ecuador about democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression.”

Although President Correa is scheduled to attend the Summit of the Americas in April, Patiño said that the president might change his plans and skip the meeting in protest. Relations between the United States and Ecuador have been further damaged due to imposition of unilateral sanctions against Venezuela by the U.S.

The Ecuadorean government has been one of the most vocal defenders of the elected government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Patiño reiterated his earlier criticism of U.S. sanctions against Venezuela, stating, “If there is a threat to democracy and human rights on this continent, it is from the United States.”

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of America (ALBA) have all publicly rejected U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to unilaterally impose sanctions on Venezuela.

The 7th Summit of the Americas, set to take place next month in Panama, will be the first to include Cuba. Ecuador chose to skip the last summit due to the exclusion of Cuba and the disproportionate influence of the U.S. and Canada on the activities of the summit in past years.

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