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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2010 10:11 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Ecuador Stop

----- Original Message -----

From: Valenzuela, Arturo A
To: Abedin, Huma; Sullivan, Jacob J; Bennett, Virginia L; Kelly, Craig A
Cc: Gonzalez, Juan S
Sent: Thu May 20 00:18:39 2010
Subject: Ecuador Stop

As we discussed in the trip meeting-- I feel that we might miss an important opportunity if we don't try to fit Ecuador into the Andean trip (Venezuela and Bolivia are out of the question). We could stop in Ecuador by leaving Peru early Tuesday morning after the OAS GA. The Secretary could deliver her speech in Ecuador, visit w the President and arrive in Colombia in the late afternoon. Delivering the speech in Quito would avoid upstaging the OASGA FMs in Lima.

The visit to Ecuador would advance already positive areas of cooperation, as well as underscore our desire to see Correa succeed in achieving constructive institutional reform, while respecting and preserving democratic governance. Correa's promise to reform Ecuador's political system and address social inequities resonates with a public disillusioned by decades of corruption and political instability. His agenda is principally driven by nationalism, not anti-Americanism, and although some of his economic policies mirror those of Venezuela, he is not following a recipe laid down by Chavez.

Despite its rhetoric, the Correa government has cooperated closely with the USG in many areas, including counter narcotics, anti-corruption, and alternative development assistance. Although Ecuador can be a challenging partner, our efforts to engage constructively with him are paying off. We had an excellent conversation during my April visit to Quito, including an open and candid conversation on sensitive issues like freedom of the press and maintaining a constructive dialogue with civil society. (The gift I gave him for his birthday, an edition of Living History signed by the Secretary, had a strong positive impact on him. He said that his mother-- who lived much of her life in California is a great admirer of the Secretary.) Reporting after my meetings in Quito was very positive and seemed to indicate that Correa is ready to move beyond the stale rhetoric surrounding the Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement. Indeed, there is a terrific opportunity to work tri-laterally with Peru, Ecuador and Colombia not only on counter drug matters-- but also on environmental issues like deforestation and climate change given the enormous extension of the amazon basin in those three countries. All three presidents welcomed the suggestion when I raised as a possibility. Working with them helps to pull Ecuador away from Venezuela while helping to improve cooperation w Colombia.

In sum, a visit to Ecuador would add a sub-regional theme to the trip, engaging with the Andean countries in Lima, Quito, and Bogota; and then with CARICOM in Barbados. The Secretary has been to Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Southern Cone.