



04-16-09

President Obama touts renewables in message to Latin America

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With his promises printed in English, Spanish and Portuguese, “Presidente Barack Obama” published an op-ed Thursday in the *St. Petersburg Times*, the *Miami Herald* and another dozen newspapers in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, México, Perú, Puerto Rico, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Just before traveling from a stop in México to Trinidad & Tobago for the April 17-19 Summit of the Americas, Obama blanketed his southern neighbors with the message that “our hemisphere is faced with a clear choice. We can overcome our shared challenges with a sense of common purpose, or we can stay mired in the old debates of the past. For the sake of all our people, we must choose the future.”

Calling for “a Better Future in the Americas,” Obama wrote that “Too often, the United States has not pursued and sustained engagement with our neighbors. We have been too easily distracted by other priorities, and have failed to see that our own progress is tied directly to progress throughout the Americas.” He said he is committed instead to “renew and sustain a broader partnership between the United States and the hemisphere on behalf of our common prosperity and our common security.”

Obama said he’s already initiated a more open policy toward Cuba because “we don’t need a debate about whether to have a rigid, state-run economy or unbridled and unregulated capitalism – we need pragmatic and responsible action that advances our common prosperity.” He said he will work with Latin America’s leaders to build “a renewed partnership of the Americas that makes progress on fundamental issues like economic recovery, energy, and security.”

Along with promising that U.S. economic recovery measures will include provisions to boost prosperity throughout the Americas, Obama said his administration is working on “tough, clear 21st century rules of the road to prevent the abuses that caused the current crisis.”

Obama singled out energy as “One area that holds out enormous promise.” He said “Our hemisphere has bountiful natural resources that could make renewable energy plentiful and sustainable, while creating jobs for our people. In the process, we can confront

climate change that threatens rising sea levels in the Caribbean, diminishing glaciers in the Andes, and powerful storms on the Gulf Coast of the United States.” He said he looks forward to “pursuing a new Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas that will help us learn from one another, share technologies, leverage investment, and maximize our comparative advantage.”

On the security front, Obama promised to support “those who are courageously battling drug cartels, gangs and other criminal networks throughout the Americas.” He said this support includes a U.S. commitment to “reducing demand for drugs and curtailing the illegal flow of weapons and bulk cash south across our border.”

Obama concluded by writing that that the Summit of the Americas “offers the opportunity of a new beginning. Advancing prosperity, security and liberty for the people of the Americas depends upon 21st century partnerships, freed from the posturing of the past. That is the leadership and partnership that the United States stands ready to provide.”

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