

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

**The President's News Conference With President Juan Manuel Santos
Calderon of Colombia in Cartagena, Colombia**

April 15, 2012

President Santos. Good afternoon to you. I'd like to announce that we have had a bilateral meeting with President Obama and his team. This has been highly productive. Colombia and the U.S. have been successful partners in fighting against the drug trafficking, fighting against the terrorism, and in defending democracy.

In this meeting, we have made even more progress. Our countries have moved from being just good friends and partners to become real allies. We are allies in building a new world order. The world of the 20th century is behind; it is in the past. Now there is a new international reality, and we cannot simply be passive observers of this reality. Only joint work of those who share the ideals of freedom and democracy made sure a peaceful transition towards a better world. And we feel that we must work together.

We have talked with President Obama about bilateral problems and world problems, and we have also worked at the Security Council coordinating our positions. And we have been doing this—and we will do it at the G–20, where we will meet in a few months and here in the summit, in this Summit of the Americas—and we have had very positive results. And I'm not only saying this as president of the summit, but most of the heads of state and government who were present said the same thing. And one of the reasons why it has been so successful was thanks to the presence of President Obama, who stayed here for 2 nights. And we discussed openly and candidly, and with respect and cordiality, all problems. Everything was discussed, and that was really appreciated by Latin America and the Caribbean in a very special fashion. So I'd like to thank you, President Obama. This was part of the success of the summit.

We all have the feeling that there are enormous opportunities to work together in a more integrated fashion. North and South America will be able to find the common denominators that will create synergies for the benefit of the North American and Latin American peoples.

In bilateral relations, I think that we have also made ways as never before, and I'd like to thank you, President Obama, for your permanent willingness and not only working with Colombia, but with Latin America. You said something that really touched us, and you—that was that you did not see Latin America as a problem or Latin Americans living in the U.S. as a problem, but the country—as a contribution, as a supplement to the dynamics that make the U.S. what they are today. And that has a lot of value. We would like to thank you for this. We would like to thank you, not only as Latin Americans who live south of Rio Grande, but those who live—the millions of Latin Americans who live in the U.S.

As for bilateral relations, finally, after working together for a long time in between two countries and their delegations, we can announce today that on May 15, precisely in 1 month, the new FTA with the U.S. will be enforced, which means that there will be thousands and millions of jobs created for the U.S. and Colombia. It is a dream we had for a lot of time. Since I was a Minister of Commerce 20 years ago, we were dreaming of having free trade with the U.S. And this has become a reality today, here in Cartagena, and right here where not so many years ago, about 10 to 12 years, the Plan Colombia was launched.

We were about to be considered a failed state. And today—thanks to the Plan Colombia and thanks to the U.S. and many others and thanks to you, President Obama, for your permanent support that you have always given us—today, we have a very strong democracy that is producing specific results for our peoples and that has been recognized by the world as a whole.

Number two, we also agreed with President Obama to work together so as to help Central American countries in fighting against organized crime and drug trafficking. The experience that we have gathered through Plan Colombia, together with the United States, is something that we have the obligation of sharing with our brothers in Central America who are going through difficult times. So that is a reason why we have decided to strengthen and improve joint assistance mechanisms for these countries.

Number three, we have agreed to work together so as to ensure energy interconnection of the whole continent. And this is something we discussed during the summit, but it concerns us very specifically here. Both the U.S. and Colombia may contribute to that interconnection. I am dreaming that at some point in time no individual living in the Americas will be out of this interconnection, because that will help us a lot in fighting against the poverty and for development.

Number four, we would like to thank the American Government for a decision, which is that as of now visas given to Colombians will be extended to 10 years, which is a proof of trust in the country. And we would like to thank you very much for this not only on behalf of the Government, but on behalf of the 46 million Colombians and the millions of Colombians who would love to go to the U.S.

And that is why I think that we are strengthening this wonderful relations that we have always had with the United States and with you personally, President Obama. You have not only an ally, but a friend. You can count on us. And let's continue working together. We've been able to attain many goals up to date, and I'm sure that we will be able to be more successful in the future.

So again, on behalf of these 46 million people in Colombia and all Latin Americans, thank you very much. Thank you very much for your interest. Thank you very much for coming to the summit and to this bilateral meeting. I think this has been a very important step forward in trying to work together in the Americas and the U.S. and Colombia. Thank you very much.

President Obama. Well, thank you, President Santos, for those warm words. Most of all, thank you and thanks to the First Lady and the people of Colombia and Cartagena for your unbelievable hospitality. This is a beautiful city. And I'm going to do my best to bring Michelle and the girls back to come visit.

This will be remembered as a summit that brought the nations of our hemisphere closer together, and it will be remembered that we advanced the prosperity and the security and dignity of our peoples. And I believe it will be remembered that our progress was made possible in no small part by the outstanding commitment and leadership of President Santos and his team. So, Juan Manuel, *muchas gracias*.

As I said to my fellow leaders yesterday, there was a time not so long ago when few could have imagined holding a summit like this in Colombia. That we have and that the summit was such a success is a tribute to the remarkable transformation that's occurred in this nation. There's a level of security that's not been seen in decades. Citizens are reclaiming their

communities. The economy is growing, as you can see in the skylines of Cartagena and Bogota. Democratic institutions are being strengthened. In Colombia today, there's hope.

And this progress, once unthinkable, is a tribute to Colombian leaders, including President Santos. It's a testament to the extraordinary courage and sacrifices of Colombian security forces and the Colombian people. And now, as conflict begins to recede, this nation is embracing a new task: consolidating the gains it has won and building a just and durable peace that unlocks Colombia's incredible potential.

Today I pledged to President Santos that as Colombia forges its future, Colombia will continue to have a strong partner in the United States. When we met for the first time 2 years ago, we agreed to take the partnership between our two countries to a new level. This is part of my broader commitment in the Americas to seek partnerships of equality that are based on mutual interest and mutual respect. Here in Colombia and across the region, that's exactly what we've done. And today President Santos and I reviewed our progress and, I'm pleased to say, reached agreement on several new initiatives.

First, as has already been mentioned, we're moving ahead with our landmark trade agreement. In our meeting at the White House last year, we approved an action plan to ensure the protection of labor rights. We all know that more work still needs to be done, but we've made significant progress. And as a result, and given the actions taken by President Santos and the Colombian legislature, I can announce that the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will enter into force next month on May 15.

As I've said before, this agreement is a win for both our countries. It's a win for the United States by increasing our exports by more than \$1 billion, supporting thousands of U.S. jobs, and helping to achieve my goal of doubling U.S. exports. It's a win for Colombia by giving you even greater access to the largest market for your exports: the United States of America. And I'd add that this agreement is a win for our workers and the environment because of the strong protections it has for both, commitments that we are going to fulfill. So, President Santos, thank you for your partnership in getting this done.

Colombia's economic progress puts this nation on the path to join the ranks of developed nations. President Santos has made it a goal to seek membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. And today I can announce that when Colombia is ready to seek it, the United States will strongly support Colombia's candidacy for the OECD. Moreover, we will actively encourage other members of the OECD to join us in supporting Colombia's membership, which would be another symbol of Colombia's transformation.

Alongside our deeper economic cooperation, we're strengthening our security cooperation. The United States has been proud to stand with the Colombian people in their fight against a terrorist insurgency that took the lives of so many innocent civilians. I reaffirmed to President Santos that the United States will continue to stand with Colombia, shoulder to shoulder, as you work to end this conflict and build a just and lasting peace. And that includes supporting President Santos's very ambitious reform agenda, including reparations for victims and land reform. And this afternoon I look forward to joining President Santos as he presents land titles to two Afro-Colombian communities, advancing the vision of a Colombia that is just and equitable.

As Colombia grows stronger at home, it's increasingly playing a leadership role across the region, a third area where we're deepening our partnership. Colombia has shared its expertise in security by training police officers in countries from Latin America to Afghanistan. Today

President Santos and I agreed that our two countries will work together to support our partners in Central America as they pursue a regional strategy to improve the security of their citizens.

And this is just one more example of how Colombia is contributing to security and peace beyond its borders, including as a current member of the U.N. Security Council. I want to take this opportunity to salute Colombian leadership, from supporting the recovery in Haiti to supporting sanctions against Iran, to standing up for the rights and freedoms of people in the Middle East and North Africa. And this week in Brazil, we'll join nations from around the world in advancing the Open Government that empowers citizens and makes governments more accountable.

Finally, I'm very pleased that we're deepening the ties between our peoples. As it now stands, visas for Colombians to visit the United States expire after 5 years. As was just mentioned, I'm announcing that these visas for Colombians will now be valid for 10 years, and this will make it easier for more Colombians to visit and experience the United States. And this is one more very tangible example of Colombia's transformation and the transformation in the relationship between our two countries.

So again, President Santos, thank you to you for your leadership. Thank you to the people of Cartagena and the people of Colombia for this outstanding summit and your great hospitality, the warmth that you've extended us and the other leaders who gathered here. It makes me very confident about Colombia's future.

Cuba/Falkland Islands

President Santos. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Well, there are some questions. I think, RCN TV, Juan Carlos, you have a question.

Q. Presidents, good afternoon. President Obama, today at the closing of the Summit of the Americas, there was great expectation because we never—you never came up with a document that would reflect a decision, and many people would say that Cuba and the Malvinas issue weren't taken up as they should have. Does this have to do in any way with the electoral environment, the electoral context in the United States?

And to President Santos, today that the State Department announced a new security plan for the region. What benefits do you see coming from this plan? Thank you very much.

President Obama. Well, first of all, what it reflects is a lack of consensus among those who participated in the summit. The issue of Cuba I've discussed before. Since I came into office, we have made changes to our Cuba policy. We've increased remittances that are permissible from Cuban Americans sending money to their families to help support them back home. We've increased travel by family members to Cuba. And we have discussed in the OAS the pathway whereby Cuba can fully participate in some of these regional forums. But the fact of the matter is, is that Cuba, unlike the other countries that are participating, has not yet moved to democracy, has not yet observed basic human rights.

I am hopeful that a transition begins to take place inside of Cuba. And I assure you that I and the American people will welcome the time when the Cuban people have the freedom to live their lives, choose their leaders, and fully participate in this global economy and international institutions.

We haven't gotten there yet. But as I indicated to President Santos and all the other leaders in—sitting around the table, we recognize that there may be an opportunity in the

coming years, as Cuba begins to look at where it needs to go in order to give its people the kind of prosperity and opportunity that it needs, that it starts loosening up some of the constraints within that country. And that's something that we will welcome.

I'm not somebody who brings to the table here a lot of baggage from the past, and I want to look at all these problems in a new and fresh way. But I also deeply believe in those principles that are contained not just in the OAS charter, but in the United Nations Charter: that respect for individuals, respect for rule of law, respect for human rights that I think is part of the reason that we're seeing an incredible transformation here in Colombia.

And in terms of the Maldives [Malvinas]* or the Falklands, whatever your preferred term, our position on this is that we are going to remain neutral. We have good relations with both Argentina and Great Britain, and we are looking forward to them being able to continue to dialogue on this issue. But this is not something that we typically intervene in.

President Santos. I would just like to repeat something that I said during the press conference this morning—early this afternoon, saying that the important thing of the summit is that we openly discussed all the issues—all issues. This didn't happen before. There were some issues that garnered agreement, others that didn't. We reached an agreement on the five fundamental issues that were identified from the very outset, and the discussion on other issues was an open, candid discussion. It was fully respectful and productive, I would say.

And that is what I—why I believe that in the aftermath of this summit, we will have a better understanding of these challenges. Some will be solved in the short term; others in the longer term. There are others that we will—naturally won't be able to resolve. But that is only natural. And summits such as these, where 33 countries participate, each one bringing to the table their own interests, each one bringing their own prism through which they look at things. But the positive thing is that we discuss these issues candidly and productively, a number of issues that were not even on the table before.

On the issue of security, with the United States, we have very close coordination, and perhaps we don't have this close relationship with any other country in the world. We have learned mutually from each other. They have helped us a great deal. As I said before, Plan Colombia was launched a few years ago. And it's not just the amount of money that was offered through Plan Colombia, it was the quality of the assistance. And to us, that was a very important step. And anything that we can do along that road to improve security in the United States and Colombia and to share our experiences will be more than welcome.

Cuba/U.S. Secret Service/Narcotrafficking

Q. Thank you, both of you. President Obama—

[At this point, there was feedback from the microphone.]

—I'm a little close there. Following up on my Colombian colleague's question, could you address—he had referred to the electoral pressures that you face in the United States. Could you address the issue of how big Florida looms in terms of the United States policy towards Cuba?

And I wanted to ask quickly about—the issue that has sort of hung over this summit for the Americans is the controversy that involved members of the detail that is sworn to protect you. What did you—were you angry when you heard about this as you came here? And do you

* White House correction.

feel like there's any—this is indicative of any broader cultural problem within the Secret Service, such as a leading Republican Congressman suggested?

And President Santos—which, President Obama, you could also address this as well—I'm curious as to why you made drug trafficking such a prominent part of this summit when it could be argued that it detracted some from the attention you wanted to bring to the great progress that Colombia has made on economic and security issues. Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, my position on Cuba has been consistent. It hasn't wavered before I was elected for President the first time; it didn't change after I was elected for President; it hasn't changed now. So let me repeat, separate and apart from whatever electoral concerns you're describing: I want the people of Cuba, like people throughout this hemisphere, to have the opportunity to work, to raise their families, to start a business, to express themselves, to criticize their leaders—something that we in America take full advantage of—to replace them if they're not working, which presumably is the aspiration of, I think, most people throughout Latin America.

And as I indicated in an interview earlier, I am sometimes puzzled by the degree to which countries that themselves have undergone enormous transformations, that have known the oppression of dictatorship or have found themselves on the wrong side of a ruling elite and have suffered for it, why we would ignore that same principle here.

But, Jackie [Jackie Calmes, New York Times], as you know, I tend to be an optimistic person. And it is my hope that as Cuba looks at what's happening in countries like Colombia and Brazil and Chile and throughout the region, they're going to start saying to themselves, maybe there's a new path to take in the 21st century. And when that happens, they're going to have a welcome hand extended by the United States of America.

On the Secret Service, these men and women perform extraordinary service on a day-to-day basis protecting me, my family, U.S. officials. They do very hard work under very stressful circumstances and almost invariably do an outstanding job. And so I'm very grateful to the work that they do.

What happened here in Colombia is being investigated by the Director of the Secret Service. I expect that investigation to be thorough, and I expect it to be rigorous. If it turns out that some of the allegations that have been made in the press are confirmed, then of course, I'll be angry, because my attitude with respect to the Secret Service personnel is no different than what I expect out of my delegation that's sitting here. We're representing the people of the United States. And when we travel to another country, I expect us to observe the highest standards because we're not just representing ourselves, we're here on behalf of our people. And that means that we conduct ourselves with the utmost dignity and probity. And obviously, what's been reported doesn't match up with those standards. But again, I think I'll wait until the full investigation is completed before I pass final judgment.

The final point I'll make, just on the issue you raised with President Santos, about the issue of drug trafficking. I think it is wholly appropriate for us to discuss this issue because Colombia obviously has gone through a wrenching number of years dealing with this issue. It has been successful because of the courage and leadership not only of President Santos and his predecessors, but also because of Colombian security forces.

But you now have a number of countries in the region, in Central America and in the Caribbean, that are smaller, that have fewer resources, and are starting to feel overwhelmed. And obviously, we've been following what's been happening in Mexico and the violence that's

been taking place there as a consequence of these narcotraffickers. So I think it wouldn't make sense for us not to examine what works and what doesn't and to constantly try to refine and ask ourselves, is there something we can do to prevent violence, to weaken these drug traffickers, to make sure that they're not peddling this stuff on our kids and they're not perpetrating violence and corrupting institutions in the region? And I thought it was a good and useful and frank discussion.

As I said a couple of days ago, Jackie, I'm not somebody who believes that legalization is a path to solving this problem. But I do think that we can constantly ask ourselves, are there additional steps we can take to be more creative? And are there ways that we can combine the law enforcement and interdiction approaches that we've successfully partnered with Colombia on with the public health approach that, I think, is important back home, making sure that we're trying to reduce demand, even as we try to choke off supply.

And so I'm looking forward to continuing to have that conversation. And based on the best evidence and the best ideas out there, hopefully, we can continue to strengthen these efforts.

President Santos. If I understood your question correctly, why—it is, why did we place drugs on the agenda when there are other more important things for the summit or things that we should highlight about our country, such as the progress that we've achieved economically and in strengthening our democracy?

The question is well put, but the answer is in your court. The media were the ones that placed such a high level of attention on this issue. I said many times in the interviews that I conducted before this summit; I said I don't want this issue to be the summit's issue; I have no interest in having this issue as the sole summit issue. This is one of many issues that some countries want to put on the table for negotiations.

And what I said before is that, fortunately, during this summit there were no issues that were left off the table, everything was open, and this was one of the issues that was discussed. We discussed it frankly, candidly. We heard positions from President Obama, from the United States, and positions from other countries. And they were all laid out on the table. And I think this is a positive step, and if we can find paths that will provide more effective and cheaper mechanisms to fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, well, let's work on that. But we—it was never our intention for this issue to be the issue of the summit.

Caracol Television.

President's Visit to Colombia/Colombia-U.S. Relations/Trade

Q. President Obama, good afternoon. President Santos, good afternoon, sir. President Obama, you are the first U.S. President who comes to Colombia and stays 3 days, 2 nights, in the beautiful city of Cartagena. How should Colombia and the world interpret this gesture? Is it an acknowledgment of the levels of security that we have here? Is it a gesture of trust in what President Santos has done? Or can we interpret it as a new phase beginning in relationships—the relations between two countries?

And, President Santos, there are small-business people who are very concerned about the FTA. And what is your plan to deal with that, Mr. President?

President Obama. Well, I think the answer is all of the above. It is—this represents my confidence in the security of Colombia and the progress that's been made. It represents my confidence in President Santos and the work that we've done together, as a culmination of the efforts that we began when we first met a couple of years ago. It highlights the deliverables

coming out of this summit, not just the free trade agreement, but all the other work that has been done, such as the increase in the length of visitor visas. And it is consistent with the approach that I indicated I would take when I first came into office when it comes to Latin America and Central America.

This is a fast-growing part of the world. It is our—one of our largest trading partners, the entire region. We have Colombian Americans, Americans who originate from the Dominican Republic, from Guatemala, from Mexico, who are constantly contributing to the vitality and the strength of the United States. And so there is a natural bond that already exists. And it's important that our governments build on that natural bond for the mutual benefit of both nations.

And my expectation is, is that we will continue to see the progress that's been made in this summit in subsequent meetings that we have with Colombia. And I think that Colombia increasingly, precisely because it went through difficult times over these last several years, can end up being a role model for a lot of countries around the region. Because they'll see: You know what, there's hope—even in the midst of violence, even in the midst of difficulty—there's the possibility of breaking through to the other side and achieving greater citizen security and greater prosperity.

And let me just mention, I know you asked the question of President Santos, but on the issue of small businesses, one of the things that I brought to the summit was a proposal that, I think, people are embracing throughout the region, and that is that we begin to focus more on small and medium-sized businesses, on women's businesses, making sure that the benefits of trade don't just go to the largest companies, but also go to smaller entrepreneurs and businesspeople.

Because in today's globalized world there's an opportunity for a small business or a medium-sized business to access a global marketplace and grow rapidly, and that means more jobs here in Colombia, and that means more jobs in the United States. So we don't want trade to just be taking place at this layer up here. We want it to be taking place at every level because we think that's going to be good for both our economies.

President Santos. You asked me about what contingency plan we had to help companies and people who were going to be adversely affected by the FTA. All free trade agreements have winners, and they have losers, and in this case, we have many more winners than losers. Employment wins. We will create jobs in Colombia. We estimate that more than 500,000 jobs will be created. We will benefit economic growth. We will—we have estimated that between .5 and 1 percent will be added to our growth rate over the long term, and that will be translated into benefits for the economy—for the Colombians. And we estimate that everybody will benefit from this.

Obviously, there are some sectors that don't traditionally benefit. But small and medium enterprises can be the ones that benefit the most. That happened in Peru, for example, when the Peru-U.S. FTA—we saw a major uptick of the number of SMEs that benefited from this free trade agreement. We hope that that happens in Colombia as well, because thus far, Colombia has per capita exports which are very low. But we still have the great potential to bolster our free trade and our exports in those sectors that are vulnerable—which have been identified as vulnerable—are the focus of a series of policies and efforts that will help them weather the storm, to be transformed, to be more competitive, and to be able to face the competition that will open up with this new FTA. That has happened with every free trade agreement that has been signed in the past. What's important is that the final results yields

more benefits than otherwise. And we have no doubts that in this case, it will have more benefits for everyone.

National and Global Economy/Iran

Q. Thank you, sir. Yesterday the President of Brazil was talking about the importance not only of growing the economic pie, but making sure that it's divided more equitably. I wonder how you think that applies within the United States, where the idea of spreading the wealth around isn't always warmly greeted, and how, for example, with this free trade agreement, you make sure that the benefits are widely shared. And if I may, sir, on an unrelated topic, if I could get your reaction to the Prime Minister Netanyahu's comments that the P-5-plus-1 had given Iran a freebie with this additional time.

And for President Santos, what responsibility do you believe the countries of Latin America, especially those that have become more democratic, have for helping to bring Cuba into the democratic fold?

President Obama. The goal of any government should be to create security for its citizens and to give them opportunity to achieve prosperity and to pass that prosperity on to their kids. And I'm a strong believer that the free market is the best tool ever invented to create wealth.

But what's true in every country is that we always have to think about whether every single person is getting a fair shot, where they actually have opportunity. Is everybody doing their fair share to support the common efforts that are required to create a platform for growth? Is everybody playing by the same set of rules? And I think the history of the United States, the reason we became an economic superpower is because—not always perfectly, not always consistently, but better than any other country on Earth—we were able to give opportunity to everybody. That's what the American Dream was all about.

So when we have debates now about our tax policy, when we have debates now about the Buffett rule that we've been talking about, where we say if you make a million dollars a year or more you shouldn't pay a lower tax rate than your secretary, that is not an argument about redistribution. That is an argument about growth. Because the history of the United States is we grow best when our growth is broad-based. We grow best when our middle class is strong. We grow best when everybody has opportunity. And that means that somebody who has a great idea and is selling a great product or service, we want them to get rich. That's great. But we also want to make sure that we as a society are investing in that young kid who comes from a poor family, who has incredible talent and might be able to get rich as well.

And that means we've got to build good schools, and we've got to make sure that that child can go to college. And we also want to make sure that we keep our scientific edge, and that means we've got to invest in basic research. And that means that we've got to have some basic safety net, because people are more willing to take risks that are required for the free market to work if they know that if they fall on hardship, if something happens, that there's still some floor that they can't fall beneath and that they'll be able to retire with some dignity and some respect.

And so one of the things that we're going to be talking about over the next several months as we debate the budget and government spending and the proper role of Government, is just—I want everybody to remember, I'm going to say this repeatedly—this is not an argument about taking from A to give to B. This is not a redistributionist argument that we're making. We're making an argument about how do we grow the economy so that it's going to be prospering in this competitive 21st-century environment. And the only way we're going to do

that is if people like me, who have been incredibly blessed, are willing to give a little bit back so that the next generation coming along can succeed as well. And the more people that succeed, the better off the country is going to be.

With respect to the Iranian talks, I've been very clear on this. Iran has violated U.N. Security Council resolutions. They're the only country that's a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the NPT, that cannot convince the international community that they are abiding by the rules governing the NPT. And not just the United States, but the world community is now imposing some of the toughest sanctions that we've ever seen, and there are more to come. And it is my view that it would be contrary to the security interests of the United States and destabilizing for the world and the region, if Iran pursues, develops, obtains a nuclear weapon. So I've been very clear, and I've been talking about this quite a bit lately.

What I've also been clear about is that the best way to resolve this issue is diplomatically and my belief that we still have a window in which to resolve this conflict diplomatically. That window is closing, and Iran needs to take advantage of it. But it is absolutely the right thing to do for the U.S. Government, working in concert with the other permanent members of the Security Council, with Germany, with the rest of the world community, to pursue this path.

Part of the reason we've been able to build a strong international coalition that isolates Iran around the nuclear issue is because the world has confidence that I've been sincere and my administration has been sincere about giving Iran an opportunity to pursue peaceful nuclear energy while foreclosing the pursuit of a nuclear weapon. That strengthens our hand. That's part of the reason why we've been able to execute on these strong sanctions. And we're going to keep on seeing if we make progress.

Now, the clock is ticking. And I've been very clear to Iran and to our negotiating partners that we're not going to have these talks just drag out in a stalling process. But so far, at least, we haven't given away anything other than the opportunity for us to negotiate and see if Iran comes to the table in good faith. And the notion that somehow we've given something away or a freebie would indicate that Iran has gotten something. In fact, they've got some of the toughest sanctions that they're going to be facing coming up in just a few months if they don't take advantage of these talks. I hope they do.

Was there a—you guys ask too many questions. I start forgetting.

President Santos.

President Santos. Any foreign policy has a formula: Interests plus principles equals a foreign policy. So how do you combine these interests and principles, and how you defend those principles is what makes a foreign policy. In our case and in the case of many countries—countries that believe in freedom and democracy—we have the obligation to make sure that those principles are applied in every form possible and in every place possible.

But there are different formulas to defend and apply those principles as well. There are certain paths that are more effective than others. In some cases, sanctions may work. Generally, they don't, but they may work in some cases. In some other cases, it has been proven that sanctions are not the solution, and in these cases, we need to then pursue the defense of those principles through other ways.

And in our case, Colombia and other Latin American countries that believe in democracy and believe in freedom, we have the obligation to pursue those principles following the most effective paths. And I believe that that can yield the best results.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

President Santos. Muchas gracias.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:30 p.m. in the Courtyard at Casa de Huespedes. In his remarks, the President referred to Maria Clemencia Rodriguez de Santos, wife of President Santos Calderon. A reporter referred to President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil; and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. President Santos and some reporters spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences :: Colombia, President Santos Calderon.

Locations: Cartagena, Colombia.

Names: Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Rodriguez de Santos, Maria Clemencia; Santos Calderon, Juan Manuel; Sullivan, Mark J.

Subjects: Argentina : Malvinas, conflict with United Kingdom; Argentina : Relations with U.S.; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Business and industry : Small businesses :: Promotion efforts; Business and industry : Women-owned businesses; Colombia : Afghanistan, role; Colombia : Counternarcotics and drug interdiction efforts; Colombia : Counternarcotics efforts, cooperation with U.S.; Colombia : Economic growth and development; Colombia : Free trade agreement with U.S.; Colombia : Land ownership and property rights; Colombia : Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, membership bid; Colombia : Political reform efforts; Colombia : President; Colombia : President Obama's visit; Colombia : Relations with U.S.; Colombia : Security cooperation with U.S.; Colombia : United Nations Security Council, role; Colombia : Visa policy, U.S.; Cuba : Human rights issues; Cuba : U.S. policy changes; Drug abuse and trafficking : Addiction treatment and reduction efforts; Drug abuse and trafficking : Decriminalization and legalization; Drug abuse and trafficking : Education and prevention efforts; Drug abuse and trafficking : Foreign narcotics traffickers; Economic Co-operation and Development, Organisation for; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Environment : Quality and improvement efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Democratization; Homeland Security, Department of : U.S. Secret Service; Immigration and naturalization : American "melting pot"; Immigration and naturalization : Visa policy, U.S.; Iran : International and U.S. sanctions; Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iran : Nuclear weapons development; Labor issues : Unions :: Labor movement and organized labor; Mexico : Counternarcotics and drug interdiction efforts; Open Government Partnership; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; United Kingdom : Falklands, conflict with Argentina; United Kingdom : Relations with U.S.; United Nations : Security Council; Western Hemisphere : Organization of American States; Western Hemisphere : Summit of the Americas.

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