

Latin American and Caribbean leaders agree to Create Latam Bloc

Excludes the US and Canada.

By [Global Research](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Global Research, February 24, 2010

[Al Jazeera](#) 24 February 2010

Latin American and Caribbean leaders have agreed to create a new regional bloc that excludes the US and Canada.

The announcement came at the close of a two-day summit of 32 leaders in Cancun, Mexico on Tuesday.

The new bloc “must as a priority push for regional integration ... and promote the regional agenda in global meetings,” Felipe Calderon, the Mexican president, said on Tuesday.

Further details of the new bloc, including its name, are to be decided on at a meeting in Caracas, Venezuela, next year.

The grouping is expected to serve as an alternative to the Organisation of American States (OAS), which includes Washington and Ottawa, and has been the main forum for regional affairs over the past 50 years.

Arturo Valenzuela, the US assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, said the US did not see the new grouping as a problem, but added that it “should not be an effort that would replace the OAS”.

The Latin American and Caribbean leaders also called for fresh talks on the sovereignty of the Falklands-Malvinas Islands.

Support for Argentina

Expressing “support for the legitimate rights” of Buenos Aires in the dispute, they said it was in the region’s interest that Argentina and the UK resume talks “in order to find a just, peaceful and definitive solution”.

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the Brazilian president, called for the UN to reopen the debate over the islands’ sovereignty, which has re-ignited in recent days after oil drilling began off the remote, British-controlled southern Atlantic archipelago claimed by Argentina.

London recently rejected Argentina’s latest claim to the islands, which Britain has held since 1833.

Argentina lost a short but bloody war to Britain over the south Atlantic archipelago in 1982,

which cost around 1,000 lives.

Tensions

Meanwhile, regional tensions were also highlighted at the summit as Evo Morales, the Bolivian president, accused his Colombian counterpart Alvaro Uribe of being a US agent looking to stall the creation of the new regional bloc.

Morales said Uribe provoked a heated discussion with Hugo Chavez, the Venezuelan president, during a private meeting on Monday.

The dispute highlights the left-right divides in the region and drew calls for unity by leaders such as Michelle Bachelet, the Chilean president.

“We must protect our people, be more inclusive ... construct the paths and networks necessary so we don’t live with our backs turned toward each other,” she said.

Colombia, a close ally of the US, and Venezuela, whose president is one of the fiercest critics of the US in the region, are locked in a growing political and trade dispute.

Chavez has repeatedly accused the US of planning to invade Venezuela with the help of Colombia, a charge Washington and Bogota deny.

The original source of this article is [Al Jazeera](#)
Copyright © [Global Research](#), [Al Jazeera](#), 2010

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca