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Stephen Walt

Professor of International Affairs at Harvard Kennedy School of Government

"Doomed to Fail: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy"

September 16, 2010



POSTPONED: Stephen M. Walt to address Obama

The event was postponed due to the inclement weather conditions in upstate New York. A new date of Stephen M. Walt's visit to Cornell will be announced when arrangements have been made.

Stephen M. Walt, professor of international affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government will give the lecture, "Continuity You Can Believe In: Obama's Foreign Policy After One Year." The lecture will be held February 25th, 2010 at 4:30pm in G10 Biotech. The talk is part of the Einaudi Center's Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series.

Stephen M. Walt is the Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he served as Academic Dean from 2002 to 2006. He previously taught at Princeton University and the University of Chicago. Walt received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Walt developed the "Balance of Threat" Theory, which defined threats in terms of aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions. In 2009, he ranked among the 20 most influential academics in international relations, according to a biannual survey of international relations faculty conducted by the Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations at The College of William and Mary. Additionally, Walt served as a resident associate of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace and a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution.

He is a contributing editor for Foreign Policy magazine, co-editor of the Cornell Studies in Security Affairs, and co-chair of the editorial board of International Security. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in May 2005. He is also a regular blogger at foreignpolicy.com.

Stephen M. Walt is the author of numerous articles and books on international relations, national security policy, and U.S. foreign policy. He authored, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy*, a finalist for the Lionel Gelber International Affairs Book Award and the Arthur Ross Book Prize. His most recent book, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, co-authored with John J. Mearsheimer, was a New York Times bestseller and has been translated into nineteen foreign languages.

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[Slope Media Video](#)

Václav Klaus

President of the Czech Republic

"A Return to Cornell: Personal Remarks by the Czech President"

September 24, 2010



Václav Klaus Speaks in a Presidential Homecoming to Cornell

Despite unseasonably warm weather on a Friday afternoon, a near capacity crowd packed the Statler Auditorium on September 24 to hear Václav Klaus deliver a speech entitled, "A return to Cornell: Remarks by the President of the Czech Republic." Klaus, who was a visiting scholar at Cornell in the spring of 1969, made his return on Cornell's homecoming weekend as the guest of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and the Cornell Institute for European Studies. In his remarks, given as part of the Einaudi Center's Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series, he spoke of the broad perspective he had gained while at Cornell and told the audience how this perspective had impacted his professional and political life ever since.

After an introduction from Dean Peter LePage, Klaus began by looking back to the days of his arrival in Ithaca, shortly after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August of 1968. Pointing out that this occupation was the only military act undertaken by the Warsaw Pact during the cold war period, Klaus said, "Moscow rightly understood that the Czechs wanted to get rid of communism." The subsequent resumption of authoritarian rule, he continued, "...led to a feeling of deep frustration that lasted until the fall of communism in 1989. But the beginning was the worst."

When arriving at Cornell, Klaus said, "I hoped I had come to a quiet university where students were here to learn and professors were here to teach." The occupation of the Willard Straight Hall by the Afro-American Society and subsequent SDS takeover of Barton Hall, however, quickly showed him that, "This was not the case." Klaus reflected that the student activists at Cornell reminded him of activists in his own country with whom he did not agree, on both grounds of philosophy and methodology.

Klaus said that he left Cornell as a devoted monetarist and with mistrust in the ability of the state to control or regulate the economy. "Government failure," he said, "is always much bigger and much worse than private failure."

Klaus then went on to speak about his role in the "Velvet Revolution" of August 1989, when he was placed in charge of the reform of Czechoslovakia's economic institutions. "I didn't want to reform them," he said, "but transform them." In addition to dismantling the Soviet-style planned economy, Klaus wanted to re-integrate the Czech economy with the rest of Europe as it had been prior to communism. He explained that in the 1950s the European Community had been created as an intergovernmental organization. In the past 20 years, however, as it evolved into something resembling "supra-nationalism", he lost faith in its ability to solve Europe's economic problems and started to see many institutional similarities with Soviet economic regulation.

Next, Klaus addressed his writings on the economy and the environment. Having been deprived of freedom for 50 years, he said, Czechs are cautious of any loss of freedom and the rise of "-isms." In a book entitled "Blue Planet in Green Shackles", Klaus warns of the growth of environmentalism as another all-encompassing belief system that does not respond well to analysis or doubt. "Freedom is in danger," Klaus said, "but the climate is OK."

Klaus closed his remarks by saying that he has enjoyed his time in Ithaca and had learned quite a bit during his studies at Cornell but had not had a chance to say "thank you" until now, and that he appreciated being given the opportunity to do so.

Klaus then responded to a number of questions from students in the audience, moderated by Dean LePage. When asked if he thought it was dangerous to act in an environmentally conscious way, he replied that he was most sensitive of all to a loss of personal freedom and being told what to do and

how to behave, and he cautioned the audience to avoid any sort of belief system that did not allow itself to be questioned.

When asked by another student why he had vetoed the Treaty of Lisbon and nearly caused the agreement to fail, only to have the Czech Republic subsequently join the European Union. Klaus reiterated that there was no way for the Czech Republic to be on the outside of European integration looking in, and with the fall of communism, the Czech Republic wanted to be a “normal European country.” Though he viewed the treaty of Lisbon as the final movement in the transition of the European Union from intergovernmental cooperation to “supranationalism”, he thought it best for the Czech Republic to try to influence its evolution from the inside as a voting member.

When asked to comment on the current global economic crisis, Klaus responded that recent events in the economy have been portrayed as an economic failure, but it is clear that the global downturn can be seen as normal economic change and the market regulating itself. Rather, he said, attention should focus on the failures in the monetary policy of the Federal Reserve Board, and not a failure of the market.

When asked a final question, “What do European leaders expect of the United States in the 21 st century?” Klaus responded that this was a big question. However, he continued, the most important consideration was that there was no need to duplicate NATO, and that the transAtlantic relationship between Europe and the United States would continue to be important for the foreseeable future.

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Carolina Barco Isakson

Ambassador of Colombia to the United States (2006-Sep 2010); Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia (2002-2006)

"The United States and Colombia: An important regional partnership"

November 15, 2010



Carolina Barco Isakson to speak at Cornell

Carolina Barco Isakson, Ambassador of Colombia to the United States from August 2006 to September 2010 and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia from 2002-2006, will speak at Cornell on the important partnership between Colombia and the United States as a part of the Einaudi Center's Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series. The talk will take place on Monday, November 15 at 4:30 PM in Hollis Cornell Auditorium, Goldwin Smith Hall. Admission is open to the public.

Carolina Barco was appointed Ambassador of Colombia to the United States in August 2006 by President Alvaro Uribe. As Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carolina Barco focused her objectives in three specific areas: to strengthen the ministry's diplomacy in order to get more efficient actions, mainly towards a direct support for the Colombian community living abroad; to develop an strong communication policy in order to improve the image of Colombia in foreign countries and contribute to a real understanding of what is happening in the national life; and to promote trade and international cooperation specially for development programs.

She has also worked as advisor for international cooperation to the United Nations Development Program, as researcher at Los Andes University, as well as a member of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's Board of Directors. She is well known in the fields of formulation and adoption of public policies.

Carolina Barco has a Bachelor Degree in Social and Economic Sciences and a Masters Degree in Business Administration and Urban and Regional Planning. She has always worked in the public sector, as Director of the City Planning Department in Bogotá, and as adviser to the ministries of Development, Culture, and the Environment, as well as to the National Planning Department and the Office of the Mayor of Bogotá.

Ambassador Barco Speaks on the Mutually Beneficial Relationship Between the United States and Colombia

Students, faculty and members of the broader Cornell community filled Hollis Cornell Auditorium in Goldwin Smith Hall on November 15, 2010 to hear Colombia's former ambassador to the United States Carolina Barco Isakson give a talk entitled, "The United States and Colombia: an Important Partnership." The talk was given as a part of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series.

Barco spoke on 3 general themes; the origins of Colombia's well documented problems with narco-trafficking, the steps Colombia took to recover from them and how the United States assisted, and how a new partnership between Colombia and the United States could help in forming the future of the South American region.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia from 2002-2006, one of Barco's most important roles was to get information out to change the public perception of Colombia abroad. She began her discussion of Colombia's recovery by saying, "I always felt like I needed to talk about the drugs, because this is a challenge to our country and our democracy," said Barco, but she joked that she would rather talk about literary great Gabriel García Márquez, international musical giants Shakira and Juanes or the biodiversity that was making Colombia more popular as a tourist destination.

In the 1980's, she said, Colombia began to experience a rise in cocaine production and usage. Initially, she said, cocaine was grown in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador and refined in Colombia to be exported to the

US and sold to "middlemen" there. During the 1990's however, Barco said that the Colombian cartels had perfected the "vertical integration" of the cocaine export market to the United States.

This rise in cocaine production aided the rise of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The organization started with the merging of several illegal Marxist groups that had grown out of the "export" of the Cuban revolution. Although FARC was urban and intellectual in its origins, it was pushed into rural areas where it became involved in cocaine production and trafficking as a means of funding itself. With the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, most South American leftist guerilla groups collapsed as their primary source of funding dried up. FARC, Barco said, was a "...left wing group that morphed into a narco-trafficking group." She continued, "Much of what you see today in Mexico, Colombia lived in the 1980s."

Barco continued her talk by discussing the means by which Colombia confronted this crisis. By the year 2000, she said, Colombia was reaching a critical point. The economy had been fairly orthodox and had suffered no hyperinflation, however, with very little investment in new ventures the overall size of the economy shrank and with it came a decline in social indicators. It was at this point that the Clinton Administration began working with the government of President Andres Pastrana on "Plan Colombia." In one last effort at a peace process, a 3 year amnesty was declared for FARC who were allowed full control, of a "Free Zone" in the interior of Colombia roughly the size of Switzerland. FARC showed no interest in negotiating peace and used the "Free Zone" to increase their strength in these 3 years, so in some ways the plan was a failure. However, said Barco, "The world now saw that Colombia wanted peace."

According to Barco, upon the election of Pastrana's successor President Alvaro Uribe, Colombia gained a strong leader who took steps to restore public confidence. His offensive against the FARC was built on 3 pillars; a program of exfoliant spraying to send the message the cultivation of coca was unacceptable, a widespread program of development spending to provide economic alternatives for the campesinos who were active in the production of cocaine and finally a strengthening of the justice system to make it less corrupt and harder to intimidate judges, prosecutors and witnesses alike.

The fight against drug traffickers is a challenging one, said Barco, because the cartels are always changing tactics to stay on top of their quite lucrative business. However, the first 8 years of Plan Colombia have seen a 40% decrease in cultivation of coca, the street price of cocaine in the United States has increased 50% in the past 2 years due to its scarcity, and the cocaine being seized in the United States is less pure as it is diluted by traffickers as a way to make up for decreasing supply. Better intelligence networks and less money flowing to the guerillas has weakened the FARC. Defections and lack of safe havens have led to several high profile hostage rescues such as that of Ingrid Betancourt. Barco shared her hope that this loss of influence would gain momentum as FARC's means of funding itself are eliminated.

To capitalize on this momentum, said Barco, Colombia has undertaken a "Consolidation Program". The government works with the campesinos to give them alternatives to coca production, planting alternative crops and supporting them while these replacement crops are established. This direct aid is buttressed by the establishment of a strong government presence in these areas, with institutions like the police and human services agencies filling the void left by FARC's retreat.

Another program called "Invest Colombia" has brought 9-10 companies per year and \$6 billion in direct investment to Colombia and has matched them with local resources. This has helped to increase the quality of life in rural areas in particular, with basic education and health care being extended to all of

Colombia's people. "It's important for long term success to not only invest in security but also health care and human services," said Barco.

Additionally, the criminal justice system has been changed from the Spanish-style inquisitorial system to one of oral arguments in court, causing cases to go faster and resulting in more successful sentencing, said Barco. Colombia now spends \$42 million per year on its witness protection program, and human rights related cases are now tried in the civil courts rather than before a military tribunal. The net result, Barco said, is a judicial system that is more responsive, more transparent, and ultimately stronger and more able to face the challenges imposed upon it.

The combined impact of these reforms, claimed Barco, has enabled Colombia to climb to the top of the list of tourist destinations in the New York Times, with a 400% increase in tourism over the past 8 years. Disney cruises are back in Colombia, and quipped Barco, "If Minnie and Mickey can go to Colombia, so can you!"

Colombia has also placed in the top 10 for environmental performance indicators. She said that this is in part due to Colombia's renowned biodiversity, with more species of flora and fauna than the U.S. and Canada combined. Public funds spent on education and health have moved Colombia up 5 spots in the human development index. "Colombia is one of the oldest democracies in Latin America, with a very strong institutional and civil society," she said. "I think that is what has allowed us to address and be successful in moving away from the challenges posed by drugs and drug trafficking.

Finally, Barco discussed the future of the relationship between the United States and Colombia, and how she thought it might best evolve. According to Barco, now is the moment for the two partners to work together to bring more stability and economic growth to the entire region. The drug trafficking problem, she argued, is a regional problem. Colombia has already begun helping Mexico, Guatemala and Haiti implement police reforms to counter endemic corruption in those countries, "...sharing expertise that we unfortunately had to gain," said Barco. She added that in all of these cases, aid was being given not only in security-related matters, but also in education and risk prevention through social programs.

Crucial to the growth of the new regional cooperation, Barco said, was passage to the Free Trade Agreement between the U.S and Colombia which is stalled in Congress despite being ratified twice in Colombia. Barco believes this agreement is ultimately to the benefit of the U.S., since 98% of the goods exported from Colombia to the US are currently tariff-free and the agreement would do the same for US goods being exported to Colombia. "We are a large agricultural importer ... and we [currently] have free-trade agreements with Argentina, Brazil, Canada," Barco said. "Half of what we use to import from the U.S. is now coming from these countries ... and a free-trade agreement would only work for the benefit of all of us." Moving beyond bilateral cooperation to multilateral collaboration, she reasoned, will strengthen the entire region.

In conclusion, Barco pointed out that the United States and Colombia have had a very long and mutually beneficial relationship. She said it was time to work together from a new regional perspective where Colombia can play an important leadership role in helping to strengthen US ties to South America, an area of great growth and even more potential.

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Ian Buruma

Henry R. Luce Professor of Democracy, Human Rights, and Journalism at Bard College
"Enemies of Democracy"
February 10, 2011



[Cornell Chronicle](#)

Eliot Cohen

Robert E. Osgood Professor of Strategic Studies, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

"On Giving Strategic Advice to Leaders "

April 1, 2011



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[Cornell Chronicle](#)

G. John Ikenberry

Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University in the Department of Politics and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

"The Future of Liberal Internationalism"

April 11, 2011

