



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 20, 2009

Summit of the Americas Ends in Uncertainty

After being heavily criticized by some of the left-leaning leaders in Latin America, the meeting's 97-point final declaration was essentially relegated to an unceremonious signing ceremony by Trinidad Prime Minister Patrick Manning, who supposedly signed it on behalf of everyone after an official ceremony was canceled. The declaration covers everything from "intensifying the fight against poverty" to promoting the use of bio-fuels, environmental "sustainability," and "public security."



Obama listened carefully to the various anti-American tirades emanating from the likes of Daniel Ortega, the president of Nicaragua. Ortega spent nearly an hour blaming every possible Latin American problem of the last 200 years on Washington. Obama also smilingly accepted a gift from Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez: *The Open Veins of Latin America* by Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano, a book that essentially blames Latin American poverty on "U.S. Imperialism." "It was a nice gesture," Obama commented later to reporters, "I'm a reader." Chavez also suggested renewing diplomatic relations.

President Obama on Sunday called the summit "very productive," adding that it proves "hemispheric progress" is possible if countries set aside "stale debates and old ideologies." The president also commented on the importance of using diplomacy and taxpayer-funded "development aid" in "more intelligent ways." In addition, Obama noted that "a more constructive relationship" with Venezuela would not endanger the strategic interests of the United States. "If we confess to having strayed from [our] values, it strengthens our hand [and] allows us to speak with greater moral force and clarity," he said.

At the last Summit of the Americas four years ago, President Bush was met by stone-throwing angry mobs in Argentina and an "alternative" summit hosted by Hugo Chavez designed to criticize "the evil empire." President Obama, on the other hand, was greeted by enthusiastic supporters carrying Cuban flags and posters of Chavez and Obama, presidents and prime ministers seeking an autograph, and even Hugo Chavez, who twice told Obama "I want to be your friend." Reuters even quoted a Brazilian diplomat who said, "This is the Obama summit."

A column by Mary O'Grady in the *Wall Street Journal* noted that "if President Barack Obama's goal at the fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago this weekend was to be better liked by the region's dictators and left-wing populists than his predecessor George W. Bush, the White House can chalk up a win." She added that this summit was even worse than the last one with the "region's bullies hogging the limelight and Mr. Obama passing up a priceless opportunity to defend freedom."

Contrary to Obama's assertions about the need to use unconstitutional foreign aid more "intelligently," a better way to deal with these Latin American nations would be to allow truly free trade and stop giving them taxpayer money at all. It would make America and the rest of the hemisphere more



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prosperous. But since Clinton first set up the Summit of the Americas in 1994, it has been used as a tool to promote the “Free Trade of the Americas” scheme and further erode national sovereignty as well as a pulpit for dictators and left-wing leaders to criticize U.S. “imperialism” and capitalism. Instead of defending American principles like limited government, Obama just listened and jotted notes. Perhaps it is time for a new approach.



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