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NomineeAlert



this issue:

Arturo Valenzuela, Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs

Valenzuela's Background

Professor of Government and Director of the Center for Latin American Studies, Georgetown University

Director, Corpbanca S.A. American Depository Shares, Santiago, Chile

Visiting Scholar at Oxford University, The University of Sussex, The University of Florence, and Catholic University of Chile

Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs, National Security Council

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Michael Dukakis for America

EDUCATION

B.A., Drew University
M.A., Columbia University
Ph.D., Columbia University

Who is Arturo Valenzuela? Wrong man for the job...

On June 8, 2009, President Obama nominated Arturo Valenzuela to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Zelaya was a "military coup," Colombia needs to respect human rights, abortion should be legal, and restrictions on travel to Cuba should be eliminated. Fn.1.

Valenzuela serves organizations with views that are quite controversial. Valenzuela is a member of an advisory board at Human Rights Watch, a member of the National Democratic Institute, as well as, a member of The National Council of La Raza (The Race). These organizations espouse views which directly contradict United States law and harm relationships with important allies.

Valenzuela serves on the advisory board of Americas Watch with George Soros. The chairman of the board, Lloyd Axworthy, is a former Canadian diplomat who loathed President George W. Bush. Americas Watch seems to take the standard liberal line on Latin American relations: the removal of

"Valenzuela's flaws are so patently obvious that even a prominent, hardened Obama supporter opposes his nomination. Obama should withdraw Valenzuela's nomination, replacing him with someone who can competently represent us."

-Bill Wilson, President, Americans for Limited Government

Mick Andersen, a prominent Obama supporter, staunchly opposes Valenzuela's nomination. Andersen has held a number of jobs, including ones at *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Congressional Quarterly*, and the staff of Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA). His writings have also appeared in *The London Economist*, *The Washington Times*, *The Miami Herald*,

The Christian Science Monitor, and *The Los Angeles Times*. He has lectured at Georgetown University, American University, the Marine Corps University, and the U.S. Foreign Service Institute. Andersen states as follows regarding Valenzuela, "When it comes to Latin America, I truly hope the Obama team will give a pass on including

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What you really need to know about Valenzuela

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former Hillary Clinton supporter Arturo Valenzuela on its foreign policy team. Not only is Valenzuela's dandyish personal style both boorish and pedantic; he has been proven dead wrong on several issues critical to democracy in Latin America and to U.S. security." Fn.2.

Andersen continues:

Three years earlier, in 2005, I resigned in protest as the senior analyst for Latin America for the human rights group Freedom House--who I had worked for since 1997-- over the treatment they planned to give Mexico in their annual "Freedom in the World" report. Valenzuela was Freedom House's academic advisor on Latin America.

I had given Mexico low marks in its country write-up due to the violence and fear created by drug mafias and their police protectors in the northern states bordering the U.S. More than 900 people had been killed in the first nine months of that year and journalists, in particular, had fled several cities in fear.

Against all evidence, Valenzuela demanded on giving Mexico a pass on the issue.

Valenzuela, a Georgetown University professor, claimed that violence wasn't a major issue in Mexico, that there was nothing approaching a state of terror in major cities of the north in the U.S.'s southern neighbor, and that, of all the countries in Latin America, it was Mexico that he knew best.

I had previously clashed with Valenzuela for **his being an apologist for Argentina's corrupt president Carlos Menem** (after the Argentine's corruption was well known, Valenzuela nonetheless sonorously declared that the "The Western world owes a debt of gratitude to Carlos Menem"). **He had also loudly defended Venezuela's narcissist-leninist Hugo Chavez on press freedom** in previous meetings at Freedom House. (Emphasis added.) *Id.*

Andersen also states, "Like Henry Kissinger, Valenzuela has made a career of rising up the bureaucratic ladder while leaving a string of questionable judgments in his wake." *Id.* Andersen notes "[Valenzuela] telling us a couple of years ago that Venezuela's **Chavez wasn't that bad an hombre**" and "**Arturo lacks not only collegiality, but also good sense about the region** [Latin America]." (Emphasis added.) *Id.* See Fn.2 for more of Andersen's comments.

Finally, "Valenzuela has long argued in favor of 'dialogue and an opening towards Cuba'." Fn.3.

Sources for further reading:

Fn.1. *Board of Directors*, Human Rights Watch. Available online at: http://www.hrw.org/en/node/76172%23_Americas. (Accessed July 7, 2009.)

Fn.2. Martin Edwin Andersen, *Should Arturo Valenzuela get a post in Barack Obama's new government?*, OFFNEWS.INFO, November 16, 2008. Available online at: <http://www.offnews.info/verArticulo.php?contenidoID=12157>. (Accessed July 7, 2009.)

Fn.3. *Another Clinton hand joins Obama's team as head of hemispheric affairs*, MERCOPRESS, May 13, 2009. Available online at: <http://en.mercopress.com/2009/05/13/another-clinton-hand-joins-obamas-team-as-head-of-hemispheric-affairs%22>. (Accessed July 7, 2009.)

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