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## ***Venezuela-Colombia, a new challenge for peace diplomacy***

An open path for Caracas and Bogotá to restore military relations. Another great challenge for the Bolivarian peace diplomacy, which will be able to claim the importance of the civic-military union.



Venezuela and Colombia have re-established mutual relations. It's official. The respective ambassadors Félix Plasencia for the Bolivarian Republic and Armando Benedetti for the Colombian Republic have arrived at their headquarters. Upon his arrival in Bogotá, Plasencia expressed his firm will *"to advance in peace diplomacy, in this second opportunity offered by the story of the restart of diplomatic relations between two sister nations,"* and promised to *"work seven days a week to respond to the interests of both countries and redeem Venezuelan spaces in Colombian jurisdiction."*

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The reference is, mainly, to the company Monomeros, stolen from the Bolivarian government through the scam of the self-proclamation of Washington's puppet Juan Guaidó as *"interim president"* of Venezuela, recognized by the previous Colombian government of the unrepresentable and questioned Iván Duque, at the behest of the United States, in 2019.



The ambassador of Colombia, Armando Benedetti, presented on August 29 the credentials to the president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, at the Miraflores Palace.

The other fundamental issue is that of the reopening of the border. A border of more than 2,000 km that separates the two countries, completely closed to vehicles since 2015 and reopened only to pedestrians since the end of 2021.

In 2006, trade between Colombia and Venezuela totaled \$2 billion, according to official figures. In 2008 it reached US\$ 5,000 million. Now it does not exceed US \$ 300 million and the goal of the new relationship, following colombian ambassador Armando Benedetti, is to reach US \$ 10,000 million.

The president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, has announced that he will propose to his Colombian counterpart the development of a vast commercial-productive zone on the border of the two countries, between the Colombian department of Norte de Santander and the Venezuelan state of Táchira. An experiment, Maduro said, that could then be extended to Zulia, Apure, Amazonas. We aim, the President continued, *"at an economy that produces goods and services and meets domestic needs and demand. An economy that*

*produces the physical and monetary wealth necessary for the investments that the country needs to recover." In that sense, he said, "it is a priority to monetize reserves and end the oil persecution against Venezuela. This is an area, he added, where entrepreneurs can do a lot with their U.S. relations, lobbying the U.S. Congress, the State Department and the Office of Foreign Assets Control. Enough is enough, leave Venezuela alone! It has not been possible to bring her to her knees, nor will it ever be possible," Maduro concluded.*



*"Relations with Venezuela should never have been interrupted: we are brothers and an imaginary line cannot separate us," Ambassador Benedetti said, echoing a statement by President Petro, who had defined the rupture of relations with Caracas as "a tremendous mistake."*

A mistake that comes from afar, and that has persevered in a disastrous way in recent years. The main attacks on the Maduro government and the Venezuelan people have come from the border with Colombia, from a country that is practically a US military base, whose soldiers do not have to ask permission from anyone to do what they like best. Imperialist hypocrisy passes off as "security" operations the instruments of a true colonization of the country.

The Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, a body created as a result of the Peace Agreement between the FARC guerrillas and the Colombian State, in 2016, showed how the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Prosecutor's Office in the time of the questioned Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira, made a montage of false accusations of drug trafficking against the former guerrilla Jesús Santrich, who served as a congressman, to induce him back into hiding, where he was later assassinated.

And, again recently, 10 police officers were convicted of organizing a "*false positive*," killing three people with no criminal record, posing as "*terrorists*" and justifying the big business of "*security*."

#### Breaking with violence

The Indepaz research center has just denounced a new massacre that occurred in the city of Barranquilla, in the department of Atlántico: number 71 since the beginning of the year, with which there are already 121 social leaders killed. A mechanism that reaches its apogee in border areas and indigenous territories, and that Petro wants to break.

For this reason, the Government has begun to install Unified Command Posts for Life (PMU) in Cauca, one of the most devastated regions: to bring the presence of the State to 77 most affected areas and respond to the demand for security of communities, especially indigenous people and women, by rebuilding the social bond. In his inauguration speech, Petro said that the anti-narcotics policy applied so far has failed and that his government will apply a different one, anticipating that there will no longer be fumigation of illicit crops with glyphosate.

He also promised to accommodate gender politics, personally taken by Vice President Francia Márquez, and the appointment of a renowned internationalist feminist like Gloria Inés Ramírez to the Ministry of Labor. And a first positive sign came with Colombia's decision to abandon the "*Geneva Consensus*," made up of a group of 36 countries whose governments oppose the termination of pregnancy.

Another point of contact with Bolivarian peace diplomacy comes from the resumption of the peace process with the guerrillas, of which Venezuela has been one of the main supporters. For this reason, the Colombian president suspended the existing arrest warrants against several commanders of the National Liberation Army (ELN), currently in Cuba, and appealed to the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUG), paramilitaries merged with the drug trafficking of the cartel called Clan del Golfo, to adhere to the benefits provided for in his proposal for "*total peace*." . And it has decided that the Colombian Armed Forces will no longer carry out aerial bombardments to attack armed groups.



The Colombian Foreign Ministry through its official Twitter account welcomed the new ambassador of Venezuela in Bogotá, Félix Plasencia.

With this in mind, [Petro renewed the military leadership](#), with a view to defending peace and human rights, and in this way not continuing the doctrine of National Security imposed by Washington. Most of the Colombian Army is trained at the School of the Americas, a criminal torture and destabilization training center run by the United States, which manipulates its historical anti-communism.

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*Geraldina Colotti*

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