

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Esta copia es sólo para su uso personal, sin fines comerciales. Para ordenar copias con formato de presentación para distribución entre sus colegas o clientes, por favor visite <http://www.djreprints.com>.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/santos-panics-with-the-election-of-trump-1479076435>

THE AMERICAS

## Santos Panics With the Election of Trump

The Colombian president's deal with FARC terrorists, six years in the making, is 'fixed' in six weeks.



Former Colombian Agriculture Minister Andrés Felipe Arias. PHOTO: EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

Por **MARY ANASTASIA O'GRADY**

domingo, 13 de noviembre de 2016 17:33 EDT

Donald Trump's trade agenda is extremely worrying to Latin America. But on issues of regional security the Republican president-elect's approach is likely to be a welcome change for democratic forces in the hemisphere.



That hypothesis gained currency on Saturday night when Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos appeared on television to tell his compatriots that his government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have agreed on an amended version of their “peace” deal. Mr. Santos promised that the new text would address many of the objections that Colombians had with the original version, which the nation rejected in an Oct. 2 plebiscite.

This is a man in a hurry. That it took his government, as he acknowledged in his speech, six years of negotiations to make the deal that Colombians said “no” to and only six weeks to make it palatable to the nation stretches credulity. Even Mr. Santos doesn’t appear to believe it, which would explain why he now seems to have abandoned his pledge that no deal will be completed without national approval at the ballot box in a fair contest. The BBC reported on Saturday night that Mr. Santos would only go to Congress (which he controls) to make it law.

Mr. Santos told the nation that completing his agreement is urgent. But his Saturday night speech, when few Colombians would have been tuned in, suggests that he is no longer trying to convince his own people. He appears to be betting on international backing to salvage his agenda. For that he needs to seal it before Barack Obama leaves office.

He needs backing from someone. On Wednesday the former head of criminal investigations in Colombia gave credible testimony to the Supreme Court that he was part of a 2014 Santos re-election campaign effort to smear opposition candidate Óscar Iván Zuluaga with allegations of illegal wiretapping, in a tight race that Mr. Zuluaga lost. The investigator’s claim rocked the nation and it casts doubt on the legitimacy of Mr. Santos’s second term.

Mr. Santos has relied heavily on Mr. Obama to advance his “peace” agenda. That support has not been limited to the U.S. president’s decision to send an envoy to sit at the negotiating table in Havana. In the U.S. extradition case of former Colombian Agriculture Minister Andrés Felipe Arias, who will have a hearing in the Southern District of Florida federal court on Thursday, the Obama Justice Department is invoking a treaty that does not exist—in an attempt to help Mr. Santos put a political enemy behind bars. It’s hard to imagine a Trump government doing the same sort of favor for Mr. Santos.



Mr. Arias was a leading candidate to succeed President Álvaro Uribe in 2010 until murky allegations linking him to a corruption scheme surfaced mysteriously in the Colombian press. As I wrote in a September column, he was later convicted by Colombia's Supreme Court of benefiting a third party illegally, despite zero evidence that he knew about any scam or enriched or benefited himself or his family.

This "crime" in Colombia does not exist in U.S. law. A key witness also admitted during the trial that the whole thing had been a set up to destroy Mr. Arias's political career. Mr. Arias had only one shot to prove his innocence at the high court. There is no appeal process. So he fled to the U.S. in June 2014 and applied for asylum.

On Aug. 24 U.S. federal marshals took him into custody on Mr. Santos's extradition request. The timing of the Miami arrest—the same day Mr. Santos announced his deal in Havana, backed by Raúl Castro and Mr. Obama—seemed an unlikely coincidence given that the Santos government had asked for the extradition two years earlier.

Colombians read it as a message to Mr. Uribe, who remains close to his young protégé and who was leading the opposition to the FARC agreement. It would have been a step too far for Mr. Santos to arrest Mr. Uribe. But the U.S. arrest of Mr. Arias was a blow to the *uribistas*.

The Justice Department argues that Mr. Arias has to be returned pursuant to an extradition treaty with Colombia. Yet the Colombian Supreme Court has twice ruled that the treaty, calling for reciprocity, is not in effect because it was never properly ratified. Colombia's foreign ministry does not recognize it and Mr. Santos has stated that he has no obligation to satisfy U.S. extradition requests. Mr. Uribe has filed a statement with the federal court in Miami saying that there is no treaty.

The persecution of Mr. Arias, with the help of Mr. Obama, is the kind of dirty trick that has made Mr. Santos unpopular and distrusted at home. Even he doesn't seem to think he can recover. Mr. Santos's bet is on international support, which is why he is trying to push through his deal while he and the Castro brothers still have backing for it in Washington.

*Write to O'Grady@wsj.com.*