

Colombia President Calls Lula 'Champion of Integration'

Contributed by Lílían de Macedo
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The president of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe, called Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, "the great champion of South American integration" after their first meeting today.

Uribe said that the two countries are studying projects for the construction of a hydroelectric power plant on the Calderon River and roads that will link Brazil to the Pacific Ocean. The construction would be financed by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES).

Uribe also spoke of Brazilian experience with biodiesel fuel and said his country was interested in the technology. "Integration in the energy area is of great importance. We are completing a study of biofuels and our model is Brazil," he declared.

The two heads of state have also agreed to arrange a meeting in the second half of 2006 of the Brazil-Colombia Task Force on Crime and Terrorism.

Colombia just recently announced the purchase of Brazilian Embraer aircraft to patrol its borders.

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