

Uribe Asks Brazil's Lula: Venezuela Can Sell to the US, Why Can't We?

Contributed by Nelson Motta
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During his visit to Brazil's capital Brasília, the President of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe, asked Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to intercede in the Andean Community crisis.

The crisis started when the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, threatened to renounce membership in the organization, which is formed by Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador, because of free trade agreements that Colombia and Peru have recently signed with the United States.

During the working meeting the two presidents had on Tuesday, April 25, Uribe explained to Lula that the agreement with the US will not interfere with trade agreements between the Andean Community and Mercosur.

"If Venezuela can sell petroleum to the US, why can't we sell farm goods?" asked Uribe, adding that the existence of the Andean Community was absolutely essential because it was part of the dream of Simon Bolivar, the leader of Spanish-speaking South American independence movements at the beginning of the 19th century.

"A Bolivian Andean Community will seek to eliminate poverty in our countries," explained Uribe.

"And any greater integration movement, joining the Andean block with the rest of the South American community, must be led by Colombia because of its geographical position."

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