

THE  
CARTER CENTER



## **FINAL REPORT**

Second Meeting  
of Media Professionals  
From Colombia and Venezuela

**Bogotá, Colombia  
February 15, 2011**

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## 1. Introduction

In order to analyze and discuss characteristics of coverage of issues related to bilateral relations between Venezuela and Colombia by the media in both countries – and thus contribute to efforts to improve diplomatic relations between the two nations – the Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum’s Media Working Group, in conjunction with the Program to Strengthen Journalism in Venezuela, organized three major meetings of professionals from key media outlets in both countries.

The meetings targeted high-level members of media outlets, particularly directors, managers and editors. Based on the format designed for the meetings, academics specializing in the study of bilateral relations between the two countries were also invited.

This report summarizes the topics discussed at the second meeting, held in Bogotá on February 15, 2011.

## 2. Summary of the Second Meeting



Participants at the second meeting of journalists from Colombia and Venezuela

The second meeting of journalists from Venezuela and Colombia was held in Bogotá, Colombia, on February 15, 2011. It opened with a keynote address on the characteristics of coverage of bilateral Colombian-Venezuelan issues by the press in the two countries.

The keynote address was done by Germán Rey, a Colombian academic and expert on media analysis, and was based on a

content analysis of media coverage of issues related to bilateral relations in some of the major Venezuelan and Colombian media between 2007 and 2010. The purpose of the study, which was carried out by the Georgia State University and The Carter Center, was to provide participants with solid data about characteristics and trends of coverage, so they could compare their perceptions with the data and base their discussion on verified information.

The presentation was followed by comments from the director of the Venezuela chapter of the Media Observatory and member of the Andean – U.S. Dialogue Forum, Maryclen Stelling, and the director of the Journalism Studies Center (*Centro de Estudios de Periodismo*, CEPER) at the University of the Andes in Colombia, Omar Rincón. The

discussion moderators were journalists Omar Lugo (Venezuela) and Javier Darío Restrepo (Colombia).

The meeting was attended by nine Venezuelan and ten Colombian professionals, all from major media outlets. As in the previous meeting, both delegations included academic experts. Representatives of the Foundation for the Freedom of the Press (*Fundación de Libertad de Prensa*, FLIP) and Media for Peace (Medios Para la Paz, MPP), both in Colombia, attended as observers.

### ***2.1. Characteristics of coverage of Colombian-Venezuelan relations***

The content analysis presented by Professor Germán Rey was the result of the efforts of a group of people and organizations and responded to a request from participants at the first meeting in Caracas, who expressed the need for research or studies to produce a body of specific knowledge that could provide a solid, “scientific” basis for discussions at the meetings.

The study was done by Georgia State University and The Carter Center by a team supervised by Jennifer McCoy and covered the period between 2007 and 2010. Fifteen significant events (both “positive” and “negative”) in bilateral relations were selected, and the coverage of those events by eight media (four Venezuelan and four Colombian, including one from the border region in each country) was then monitored. Once the data were compiled and processed, they were sent to Professor Rey, who was responsible for the analysis, interpretation and presentation of the results.



From left to right: Héctor Vanolli and Jennifer McCoy (Carter Center), Germán Rey (Colombia) and Maryclen Stelling (Venezuela).

Using a study on the same subject done in the past decade by the Binational Academic Group as a reference, Rey divided his presentation into two major areas: elements that had remained constant over time, and changes, or new elements that had appeared between the two studies.

***Constant elements.*** Regarding elements that had remained constant, Rey noted the following:

a) Throughout those years, the media focused on two major issues: the armed conflict and diplomacy. Even 10 years after other similar studies, those two topics remained the main issues, indicating that the media agenda in both Colombia and Venezuela continues to focus excessively on political elements, to the detriment of what could be called “citizens’ positions.”

b) Media coverage tended to follow relations between the capitals, focusing on Bogotá and Caracas, and ignoring “the social, economic and cultural dynamism of the borders.”

c) Coverage of issues of bilateral interest mainly responded to the perception of conflict. It continued to prioritize tension and conflict, with the border appearing in the media as a conflict zone or “hot border.”

d) There was a great deal of information about particularly conflictive episodes, but little follow-up of the structural processes underlying relations between the two countries. The coverage focused on events, peaks or crisis points. Although it is the media’s task to inform about moments of crisis, the coverage neglected – or completely ignored – the development of events or processes that marked relations between the countries once the crisis subsided. As the speaker noted, “*moments trumped processes.*” Or as one participant put it, “coverage remained episodic.”

e) There was little thematic diversity on either side, although information about Colombia in the Venezuelan media was more diverse than information about Venezuela in the Colombian media.

**Changes.** With regard to changes, Rey noted the following:

a) Ten years after the last studies, the personalities of the presidents dominated much of the information. During the period under study, coverage mainly revolved around the figures of Presidents Chávez and Uribe. The exception to that trend was found in the media on the



From left, Francisco Miranda, Catalina Lobo, Vladimir Villegas and Carmen Rosa Pabón.

border. Unlike the “metropolitan” focus of media in the capitals, the thematic agenda of the border media tended to downplay the importance of “the presidents” and focus more on the conflict’s repercussions for the economy and personal security. For example, the dailies *La Opinión*, in Cúcuta, and *Panorama*, in Zulia, were the media in the study that placed the least importance on “the presidents.”

b) Although the tendency to emphasize tensions persisted, it revolved around Presidents Uribe and Chávez. Nevertheless, following the pattern of events, it later decreased significantly with the election of current President Juan Manuel Santos (accompanied by an accentuation of a “diplomatic” view of relations).

c) A similar phenomenon occurred with “topics” of coverage. Although the issues persisted, in general, the content changed somewhat as the situation changed. The issue of diplomacy, for example, shifted away from the border conflict to accentuate the breakoff and subsequent reestablishment of relations.

d) Finally, although thematic diversity remained low, information about Venezuela in the Colombian media increased during this period (although it remained excessively focused on the conflict between the two countries).

## ***2.2. The role of the media***

The representatives of the border media were critical of the way in which information about border issues was covered by the media in Bogotá and Caracas. As one of those participants put it, information published by media in the capital tended to contradict the views – and be contrary to the interests – of the people living in the region. For residents of the border region, that participant said, the most important thing is not “the presidents” and the relationship between them, but the impact of changes in bilateral relations on life in the border regions. In keeping with those observations, another media representative from the border urged the media in the capitals to resist “political pressures” related to events in binational relations and strengthen coverage policies that address the interests of people living in the area.

In the view of at least one participant, the divergence of agendas or visions between the media in the capitals and those on the border is mainly due to a structural problem, a phenomenon the participant called “natural” and, therefore, “not controllable.” Omar Rincón noted that this phenomenon is seen not only in Colombian-Venezuelan relations, but in relations between any countries. In the capitals, there is generally a tendency to focus on politics, while in the border regions there is a concept of “everyday life.” They are two different approaches, he said – “Not good or bad, simply different.”

The insistent focus on “the presidents” sparked some significant comments from Javier Darío Restrepo. This phenomenon, in Restrepo’s view, evokes the “depressing” image of journalists taking dictation from what presidents say, and of media that give the greatest priority to everything the president says, with no critical judgment. “This is the image of a press driven by presidential agendas, a press without the ability – or the independence – to set its own agenda, a press basically trained to take the news releases distributed by the president’s office, change the headlines, include a small summary, and publish them,” he said. In other words, this is “a press dedicated – like a transmission line – to disseminating news releases, without its own initiative, without the ability to include – in that dissemination process – other elements, other considerations, other sources about the topics addressed in those news releases, other issues on the agenda.”

As with the first meeting in Caracas, the second meeting in Bogotá was extraordinarily rich in discussion and the sharing of views, not only about the topics raised in the meeting, but also about other major issues related to journalism. The topics that arose included the limits that circumstances such as having a certain national identity – being Colombian or Venezuelan – impose, or could impose, on journalism. One participant noted that because

they are also citizens, journalists are vulnerable to the “appeal” of rhetoric about “national interest.” In times marked by conflict, tense relations, economic difficulty or other crises, the national interest – or the perception of what could be considered the “national interest” – plays a decisive role. This left an important question floating in the air: How far removed is journalism from what is considered the “national interest”?

Another participant noted that when interests affecting the country are at stake, journalists inevitably face a dilemma that comes with a heavy emotional burden. If journalists take a critical stance that runs counter to nationalist sentiment, they risk going against not only “popular sentiment,” but also the views of their audience.

Another participant gave another example. What would have happened if a Colombian journalist had found out about Operation Phoenix (in which the Colombian Air Force planned the bombardment that killed Raúl Reyes in a camp in Ecuadorian territory) ahead of time? That journalist, the participant suggested, would have thought twice before jeopardizing the operation. If the journalist had been Ecuadorian, however, he or she might not have hesitated, and might have revealed the information right away, not only because of journalistic principles, but also because, as an Ecuadorian, he or she would probably perceive the operation as an “invasion” of the country. Inevitably, the participant concluded, such an event will be judged differently depending upon the journalist’s nationality.

**The truth.** That discussion led to another of the major issues discussed during the meeting in Bogotá: truth in journalism. What is truth? Can it be attained? And if so, how? How is the truth determined? The discussion arose out of a statement by one participant, who considered the inescapable – and inherent – role of journalism to be the search for truth. “Journalism’s compass is the search for truth.”

There were various positions on this issue. Some participants expressed skepticism, although they nuanced their views. There are many sides to the truth and many ways of viewing it, one said, which makes it very difficult to pin down. Journalists can only show elements that can contribute to “shaping” that truth, because there are many ways of looking at it. Another said that journalists cannot talk about “the truth;” they can only talk about things that can be proven.



Javier Darío Restrepo and Aram Aharonian

Other participants said that at the heart of discussion about dilemmas posed by the search for truth lies the dichotomy between “loyalty” and “truth.” What is under discussion, really, is the issue of loyalty – loyalty of journalists as Colombians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians, or Venezuelans. And, in the case of the Venezuelans, their loyalty as supporters or opponents of President Chávez. When an event is observed or considered, it is always “mediated” by the sense of loyalty. “To what am I more loyal – my country or my journalistic

principles?” In Venezuela, one participant noted, polarization has led journalists to be more loyal to their political position than to the “representation of reality.” Another participant pointed to a possible way of dealing with the struggle. “We might not know a lot about truth,” he said. “What we can’t do is fall into lies, manipulation and distortion.” That is what truth is, he said – an initial truth. That participant alluded to the need for tools such as what he called “evaluative neutrality,” which enables journalists to report on events without trying to abandon all subjectivity.

Javier Darío closed the discussion from the standpoint of principles. The dilemmas under discussion indicate the need to analyze an internal willingness to address the truth, which he called “emotional independence from events.” Only that independence can ensure that “my Colombian feeling or my Venezuelan feeling” does not predominate when providing information, he said. If emotions are controlled, the truth wins, reinforcing the media’s influence. Information, he said, never does harm.

### **3. Achievements and agreements**

The second meeting again brought together high-profile directors and editors of public and private media in the two countries, who addressed critical issues related to both coverage of matters of binational interest and journalism in general. The fruitful discussions led to valuable learning for all participants, as well as the production of new knowledge.

As a result of this second meeting, the participants agreed to issue a communiqué,<sup>1</sup> in which they urged the governments of the two countries to provide more information about bilateral relations, including the results of the work of bilateral commissions, “so both peoples are duly informed about processes that interest and affect them.”

#### **3.1. Recommendations**

To promote continued dialogue about the issues raised in the meetings, the participants made the following recommendations:

- Hold a meeting to build on the progress made in the first two sessions, to leverage the exchange of ideas, perceptions and differences.
- Because of the importance of border issues, it was suggested that the third meeting be held in a city on the border between the two countries (Cúcuta or Maracaibo). The goal of the third meeting should be to discuss the coverage of border issues and how that coverage affects people living in those areas.
- Expand and finish the content analysis begun by the Georgia State University and The Carter Center, for deeper analysis of coverage of issues of binational interest. This would involve continuing with studies of the type presented at the second

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<sup>1</sup> See communiqué in Annex D.

meeting, so the participants can analyze and compare the work done by their media and determine if it has been done well.

- Expand the content analysis to include other media, such as television or radio.
- Include case studies of how newsrooms (both Colombian and Venezuelan) handle key events, to facilitate comparison.
- Continue the dialogue begun at the first two meetings, through the use of new technologies. Participants suggested the creation of virtual forums, the use of social networks such as Facebook, blogs that offer a space for sharing experiences, discussing issues of mutual interest, and suggested readings, to enrich the dialogue and deepen mutual understanding. The idea would be to create a forum among the participants in these meetings, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and direct, face-to-face discussion, via internet, about good coverage and errors committed by Colombian and Venezuelan media in addressing issues of binational interest.
- Using the tools mentioned above, create a network uniting the 20 or 30 Colombian and Venezuelan journalists who participated in the meetings, to create an ongoing platform for communication so participants can exchange and comment on news about the two countries, facilitate the sharing of information, promote discussion, enrich news agendas, distribute or share documents and materials, and facilitate the sharing of collaborative work, articles, analysis pieces, and sources of information about stakeholders who have unusual views that are different from the ones that usually appear in the media.
- Create mechanisms to facilitate collaboration between journalists from the two countries.
- Create a media observatory in each country to review and analyze coverage of relations and the sharing of information, as well as to examine the quality of information and journalistic coverage.
- Include discussion of the structure of the media, to analyze how that affects coverage in Colombia and Venezuela.
- Hold training and discussion workshops for journalists from both countries to foster analysis and understanding of the media and the role of the journalist, as well as the role of ethics.
- Establish a mechanism for dissemination of these discussions, so they are not limited to a small group of journalists. This mechanism need not be restricted to journalists, but should also include the two governments, so they know that journalists in both countries are discussing these issues.

- Design and create an exchange system for journalists. One possibility would be to send Colombian journalists to Venezuelan media to cover Colombia for a certain time period (at least 15 days), and vice versa. The idea would be to “put oneself in the other’s shoes” to increase understanding of the issues being covered.
- Create a system that allows cross-publication of articles about Colombia and Venezuela. This would involve a commitment by which Venezuelan media would publish articles about binational relations that come from Colombia, and vice versa, as was done in Colombia with the Antonio Nariño project or the Manizales project partnership.

## ANNEXES

### *Annex A: Meeting agenda*

**Second Meeting of Journalists  
from Venezuela and Colombia  
Bogotá, Colombia, February 15, 2011**

<b>PROGRAM</b>		
Morning session	9:00	<b>Opening remarks</b> Jennifer McCoy Director of the Americas Program, The Carter Center
	9:10	<b>Summary of first meeting: Key agreements and conclusions</b> Héctor Vanolli Coordinator of the Program to Strengthen Journalism, The Carter Center
	9:30	<b>Introduction of participants</b>
	9:40	<b>Keynote address: Media coverage of Colombian-Venezuelan relations: Constants and change</b> Germán Rey Director, ATICO Center, Javeriana University <b>Comments:</b> Maryclen Stelling Coordinator, Global Media Observatory, Venezuela Chapter Omar Rincón Director, Journalism Studies Center, University of the Andes, Colombia
	10:30	<b>Discussion among participants</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Omar Lugo Director, <i>El Mundo</i> , Venezuela
	12:40	<b>Lunch</b>
Afternoon session	14:00	<b>Role of the media in Colombian-Venezuelan relations</b> <b>Positive points, problems and challenges</b> <b>Challenges for the future</b> <b>Recommendations for future coverage</b>  <b>Observations and conclusions</b> <b>Discussion among participants</b> Moderator: Javier Darío Restrepo Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano,
	17:30	Cocktail
Hotel los Héroes, Calle 74 No. 15-60, Barrio El Lago		

***Annex B: Participant list***

<b>SECOND MEETING OF JOURNALISTS FROM COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA-FEBRUARY 15, 2011</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>CITY</b>
Aram Aharonian	Columnist	Independent	Caracas
Silvia Allegrett	President	Colegio Nacional de Periodistas (CNP)	Caracas
Maria Ines Delgado	Assistant managing editor	Diario Panorama	Maracaibo
Eleazar Díaz Rangel	Director	Ultimas Noticias	Caracas
Omar Lugo	Director	El Mundo Economía y Negocios	Caracas
Elsy Barroeta	Information chief	Globovisión	Caracas
Elides Rojas	Managing editor	El Universal	Caracas
Vladimir Villegas	Journalist	Unión Radio	Caracas
Ana María Sanjuán	Academic		Caracas
Maryclen Stelling	Academic	Observatorio de Medios	Caracas
Javier Darío Restrepo	Teacher	FNPI	Bogotá
Ricardo Avila	Director	Portafolio	Bogotá
Carlos Cortes	Editor	La Silla Vacía	Bogotá
Catalina Lobo-Guerrero	Columnist	Independent	Bogotá
Sergio Ocampo	Columnist	Independent	Bogotá
Francisco Miranda	Editor	El Tiempo	Bogotá
Socorro Ramírez	Academic		Santa Marta
Cicerón Flórez	Assistant director	La Opinión	Cúcuta
Carmen Rosa Pabón	Editor	La Voz del Cinaruco	Arauca
Rodrigo Pardo	Editorial adviser	Semana	Bogotá
Germán Rey	Director	ATICO Center, Javeriana University	Bogotá
Omar Rincón	Director	CEPER, U.L.A	Bogotá
Jennifer McCoy	Director	Americas Program, Carter Center	Atlanta
Héctor Vanolli	Coordinator	Program to Strengthen Journalism	Caracas
<b>GUEST OBSERVERS</b>			
Rocío Castañeda	Director	Medios Para la Paz	Bogotá
Adriana Blanco	Director	FLIP	Bogotá
Claudia Mejía		FLIP	Bogotá

## *Annex C: Participant biographies*

### *Participants from Venezuela*

**Eleazar Díaz Rangel.** Former president of the Venezuelan Association of Journalists, director of the National Union of Media Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Prensa*) and founding president of the Latin American Federation of Journalists (*Federación Latinoamericana de Periodistas*, FELAP). He has also served as director of the daily *Punto* and the magazine *Tribuna*, and director of the School of Social Communication at the Central University of Venezuela (*Universidad Central de Venezuela*, UCV). Currently director of the daily *Ultimas Noticias*, Venezuela's largest-circulation daily.

**Elides Rojas.** A lawyer and journalist, he has been managing editor of the daily *El Universal* since 1996. Before that, he served as managing editor of the daily *El Nacional* (1979-1990) and managing editor and news and information director of the daily *Economía Hoy* (1972-1978). He has received various awards for his journalistic work in recent years, including the National Journalism Award in the Opinion category in 1999; the National Scientific Journalism Award in 1985; the Society of Newspaper Design's Excellence Award in 1991; and the Inter-American Press Association's International Award in the Opinion category in 2005.

**Aram Aharonian.** A native of Uruguay, he has worked as a journalist in his native country, as well as in Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela. He has worked as a correspondent for the agencies PL and IPS, and as editor for the agency UPI and the dailies *El Espectador* (Bogotá), *Proceso* (Mexico) and *Brecha* (Uruguay). In Venezuela, he served as president of the Foreign Press Association (*Asociación de la Prensa Extranjera*, APEX). He is known for having played a key role in the creation of Telesur, where he served as the first director general. He currently teaches graduate-level communications courses in academic institutions in Argentina and Venezuela, edits the Question Digital and Surysur portals, and directs the Latin American Observatory on Communication and Democracy at the Latin American and Caribbean University (*Universidad Latinoamericana y del Caribe*).

**Omar Lugo.** He began working in economic journalism in 1988 at the dailies *El Nacional* and *El Universal* and the magazine *Número*. From 2002 to 2009, he was correspondent for the Spanish agency EFE in Rio de Janeiro, where he also worked for CNN, Radio El Espectador, the Xinhua Agency and the magazine *América Economía*. Earlier, he spent seven years as international correspondent for Reuters in Venezuela. He currently serves as director of the daily *El Mundo Economía y Negocios*.

**Maryclen Stelling.** A sociologist specializing in media studies, she is currently a sociology professor at the Andres Bello Catholic University (*Universidad Católica Andrés Bello*, UCAB) and the Social Management School Foundation (*Fundación Escuela de Gerencia Social*). Since 2009, she has also served as executive director of the Rómulo Gallegos Center for Latin American Studies (*Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos Rómulo Gallegos*, CELARG). In the area of media, she is general coordinator of the Venezuela Chapter of the Global Observatory on the Media (*Observatorio Global de Medios*, OGM). She also hosts the program *Primera Mano* on Radio Nacional de Venezuela (RNV).

**Vladimir Villegas.** Among other positions, he served as president of the state-run channel VTV between 2004 and 2005. In the public sphere, he served as a deputy in the national Congress (1993 and 1998), deputy in the National Constituent Assembly (1999), Venezuelan ambassador to Brazil (2002-2004) and Mexico, and vice minister of foreign relations for Asia, the Middle East and

Oceania (2007-2008). He currently directs political current affairs programs on Circuito Unión Radio and writes a weekly column for *El Nacional*.

**Silvia Allegrett.** Currently president of the Colegio Nacional de Periodistas de Venezuela (CNP), the country's professional association of journalists, she formerly served for six years as general coordinator of the NGO Expresión Libre. She has also worked in the Film Office of the former Development Ministry and the Audiovisual Media Office of the National Institute for Education Cooperation (*Instituto Nacional de Cooperación Educativa*, INCE). She subsequently served for six years as head of the Information and Public Relations Office of the Foundation for Educational Buildings and Equipment (*Fundación de Edificaciones y Dotaciones Educativas*, FEDE). Before becoming president of the CNP, she served as secretary general of its national board of directors (2008-2010). She currently directs the newspaper, *Entre Vecinos*.

**Elsy Barroeta.** Since 2005, she has worked as information director for Globovisión, one of the TV channels with the largest audience in metropolitan Caracas. She has more than 30 years of experience in journalism, including 15 at Globovisión. A licentiate in Social Communication from the Central University of Venezuela (*Universidad Central de Venezuela*, UCV), she specializes in the production of news for the television industry. She participated actively in the conception, design, planning, organization, implementation, evaluation and modernization of the Globovisión news unit.

**María Inés Delgado.** Currently assistant director of the print edition of the daily *Panorama*, in the state of Zulia, which has the largest readership and second-highest circulation in Venezuela. She has worked in journalism for 17 years, 14 of them at the daily *Panorama*, where she started in 1990 as an intern, later working as a feature writer and writer in the Culture section and editor of the Politics and Economy section. She is a licentiate in social communication from the University of Zulia (1993), and completed a Master's degree in Communication Sciences with a concentration in the socio-semiotics of communication in 1998.

**Ana María Sanjuán (professor).** A social psychologist, she has served as professor at the Central University of Venezuela (*Universidad Central de Venezuela*) and director of the university's Social Studies Center. She was also founder of the university's Colombia, Latin America and Caribbean chair and a member of the Binational Colombia-Venezuela Academic Group and the American Studies Center. She is a consultant on issues related to governance, security and international relations for international bodies such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Organization of American States (OAS), Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the Carter Center. She is currently an adviser to the office of the president of the Corporación Andina de Fomento.

### **Participants from Colombia**

**Ricardo Avila.** Journalist specializing in politics, economics and finance. He currently serves as director of the business and economics daily *Portafolio*, in Bogotá, and assistant editor of the opinion section of the daily *El Tiempo*, also in Bogotá. In the public sphere, he served as cabinet chief for the secretary general of the Organization of American States (OAS) during the administration of former President César Gaviria. He studied economics at the Javeriana University and holds a Master's degree in economics from the University of Pittsburgh.

**Javier Darío Restrepo.** He has had a long career in print and audiovisual media in Colombia, but his name is associated with discussion of journalistic ethics. He was a founding members of various journalism ethics commissions, including those of the Circle of Journalists of Bogotá (*Círculo de*

*Periodistas de Bogotá*) and the Institute of Communication and Culture Studies (*Instituto de Estudios sobre Comunicación y Cultura*), and is the author of various well-known books on this topic. Since 1995, he has been a professor for the Ibero-American New Journalism Foundation (*Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano*). He also worked for many years as ombudsman for the dailies *El Colombiano* (Medellín) and *El Tiempo* (Bogotá).

**Carlos Cortés.** A lawyer specializing in journalism, he graduated from the University of the Andes (*Universidad de Los Andes*) in Colombia. From 2005 to 2009, he directed the Freedom of the Press Foundation (*Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa*, FLIP). From 2003 to 2005, he worked in the Ombudsman's Office and also wrote for the magazine *Semana*. He is currently editor of *La Silla Vacía*, where he is also adviser for special projects and issues related to international cooperation. He is a professor of politics and media law in the Journalism and Public Opinion Program at the University of Rosario.

**Rodrigo Pardo.** Formerly director of the famed magazine, *Cambio*, which recently closed, and which was once co-owned by Gabriel García Márquez. Currently editorial director of *Semana*, the most important magazine in Colombia. Former general editor and assistant director of the daily *El Tiempo* and director of the daily *El Espectador*. In the public sphere, he served as Colombia's ambassador to Venezuela (1992-1994), and was later named foreign minister, a post he held until 1996, when he was appointed ambassador to France.

**Sergio Ocampo Madrid.** Writer and journalist. Born in Medellín, he worked as general editor of the daily *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla) until last year; he had held the same position at *El Colombiano* in Medellín. He was also political editor and national editor of *El Tiempo* (Bogotá). He studied psychology and social communication, with specialized studies in armed conflict at the University of the Andes (*Universidad de los Andes*). He is a professor at the Javeriana and Externado universities in Colombia, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in literature at the Javeriana University. He is a columnist for the daily *El Comercio* in Lima. He won the Simón Bolívar Award in 1998 and 2005, the *Semana-Petrobrás* Award in 2008, and the CPB Award in 1996. He recently published his first book of short stories with the Norma publishing house.

**Francisco Miranda Hamburguer.** A political analyst specializing in social economics, currently serving as editor of the opinion section of the daily *El Tiempo* in Bogotá. He is also a professor at the University of Rosario and the Business School of the College of Higher Studies in Administration (*Colegio de Estudios Superiores de Administración*, CESA), both in Bogotá. He has a Master's degree in public administration with a concentration in economic development and urban policy from Columbia University in New York. He was a Fulbright fellow in 2005.

**Catalina Lobo-Guerrero.** An anthropologist and journalist, she has worked as a reporter for the portals *Semana.com* (Bogotá) and *Clarín.com* (Buenos Aires), and for the *Noticias Uno* television news program. In recent years, she has worked as a stringer for various international media, and served as editor of the election coverage portal, *Votebien.com*. She currently works as a freelance journalist and researcher for a documentary series, *Women, War & Peace*, produced by PBS, the U.S. public television network.

**Carmen Rosa Pabón.** Currently director of information services at *La Voz del Cinaruco*, a radio station on the border in the department of Arauca. She also works as correspondent for the Freedom of the Press Foundation (*Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa*, FLIP) in that department. Her work as a journalist earned her the "Orlando Sierra" prize for "a journalist's courage," awarded by the magazine *Semana* and the Petrobrás company. She also received the Inocencio Chinca Award

from the government of the department of Arauca and the City of Arauca medal, awarded by the local government.

**Cicerón Flórez.** Currently assistant director of the daily *La Opinión* in Cúcuta. Formerly Cúcuta correspondent for the Bogotá daily, *El Tiempo* (1970-1980). Was also co-director of the radio magazine program, *Confrontación*, on Radio Guaimaral (1975-1982), and director of the news program, *Luces de la Ciudad*, on Radio San José (1985-1992). In 1970, he founded the magazine *Guía Internacional* in this border city, and served as director (1970-1975). He has taught journalism courses and seminars in the Cúcuta branches of the Libre and Antonio Nariño universities.

**Socorro Ramírez (professor).** Her studies and degrees include a post-doctorate at the Institut des Hautes Etudes de L'Amérique Latine (HEAL) at the Sorbonne University, a diploma in Advanced Studies in International Relations (Sorbonne University) and a Master's degree in Analysis of Political-Economic and International Problems from the Institute for Advanced Development Studies (*Instituto de Altos Estudios para el Desarrollo*). She is currently coordinator of the Regional Integration Group and the Latin America Group of the Project on Insertion of Colombia into the International System. She is also a member of the Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum, sponsored by International IDEA and the Carter Center.

**Germán Rey (academic).** Currently directs the journalism program at the Javeriana University and is director of the university's Atico Center, which promotes the use of information and communication technologies. Senior adviser to the Ibero-American New Journalism Foundation (*Fundación de Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano*, FNPI), and a member of the board of directors of the Freedom of the Press Foundation (*Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa*, FLIP) and the Advisory Council for the New Journalism Award (CEMEX-FNPI). He is author of various publications, including "Desde las dos orillas" (1997), "Balsas y Medusas: Visibilidad comunicativa y narrativas políticas" (1999), "Los ejercicios del Ver: Hegemonía audiovisual y ficción televisiva" (with Jesús Martín Barbero), "Las ciencias sociales en Colombia: discurso y razón" (con Francisco Leal-2000), and "El cuerpo del delito" (2005). Served as ombudsman for the daily *El Tiempo* in Bogotá.

**Omar Rincón. (academic).** Associate professor at the University of the Andes, where he is director of the university's Journalism Studies Center (*Centro de Estudios de Periodismo*, CEPE). He is also director of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's center for Competency in Communication. He is author of various publications, including "Narrativas Mediáticas o cómo Cuenta la Sociedad del Entretenimiento" (Gedisa, Barcelona, 2006), and "Televisión, Video y Subjetividad" (Editorial Norma, Buenos Aires, 2002). He is also editor of publications, such as "Televisión Pública: del Consumidor al Ciudadano" (La Crujía, Buenos Aires, 2005), "Los Tele-presidentes: cerca del pueblo, lejos de la democracia" (FES, Bogotá, 2008) and "Por Qué nos Odian Tanto? Estado y Medios de Comunicación en América Latina" (FES, Bogotá, 2010).

*Annex D: Communiqué*

**Communiqué**

“A group of editors and directors of media in Venezuela and Colombia held a second meeting in Bogotá on February 15 to examine coverage of bilateral relations. The first meeting was held in Caracas on November 23, 2010. Both meetings were sponsored by The Carter Center. As part of this meeting, the participants agreed to issue the following statement:

We acknowledge efforts to normalize relations and we consider their institutionalization important.

We state that we have engaged in analysis of and reflection on the role of the media in the recomposition of relations, in which we concluded:

That we see a tendency for the media to overemphasize presidential actions and rhetoric and issues related to security and the FARC, and downplay aspects of broader relations between the two societies.

We believe that the media and journalists should offer reports with a diversity of sources, placing relations in context and truthfully recounting events.

We ask both governments to provide more information about relations between the two countries, beginning with the results of the bilateral commissions, so people in both countries can be duly informed about processes that interest and affect them.”

**Signed**

**Journalists (Colombia)**

Javier Darío Restrepo  
Ricardo Avila  
Carlos Cortés  
Catalina Lobo-Guerrero  
Sergio Ocampo  
Francisco Miranda  
Rodrigo Pardo  
Cicerón Flórez (Cúcuta)  
Carmen Rosa Pabón (Arauca)

**Journalists (Venezuela)**

Aram Aharonian  
Silvia Allegrett  
María Inés Delgado  
Eleazar Díaz Rangel  
Omar Lugo  
Elsy Barroeta  
Elides Rojas  
Vladimir Villegas

**Academics**

Socorro Ramírez (Colombia)  
Maryclen Stelling (Venezuela)  
Ana María Sanjuán (Venezuela)

*Annex E: Selected events for the content analysis*

<b>TIME LINE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA</b>			
<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<p><b>November 21</b> : President Uribe withdraws the authorization granted in August to President Chávez to mediate jointly with Senator Piedad Córdoba in an effort to free hostages held by the FARC</p> <p><b>November 25</b>: President Chávez announces that he is freezing relations with Colombia.</p> <p><b>December 2</b>: Constitutional Reform Elections</p>	<p><b>January 10</b>: Liberation of FARC hostages with intervention of Venezuelan government</p> <p><b>January 18</b>: The Venezuelan Parliament grants belligerent force status to the FARC and National Liberation Army (ELN)</p> <p><b>March 2</b>: President Chávez orders the “closure” of his country’s embassy in Colombia and the mobilization of “10 battalions” to the border, in response to Colombia’s military raid against a FARC camp in Ecuador.</p> <p><b>March 9</b>: Diplomatic differences between Colombia and Venezuela are resolved at the 20th Rio Summit in the Dominican Republic</p>	<p><b>July 21</b>: President Chávez says he will review relations with Colombia because of the agreement Colombia is negotiating with Washington to allow the United States to use military bases in its territory</p> <p><b>July 28</b>: Sweden confirms that rocket launchers produced in that country and recovered from the FARC were sold to Venezuela in the late 1980s. President Chávez withdraws the Venezuelan ambassador from Bogotá, freezes diplomatic and trade relations, and warns that he will break off ties if there is “new aggression” from President Uribe</p> <p><b>July 30</b>: Diplomatic and trade relations between Venezuela and Colombia are frozen</p> <p><b>August 28</b>: Extraordinary summit of UNASUR</p> <p><b>November 13</b>: Colombia lodges protest with the OAS about Venezuela’s bellicose “threats”</p>	<p><b>Jun 21</b>: Santos invites the governments of Ecuador and Venezuela to pave the way for future cooperation</p> <p><b>June 25</b>: Foreign Minister María Ángela Holguín mentions the reestablishment of relations with Venezuela as one of her greatest diplomatic accomplishments</p> <p><b>July 15</b>: The Uribe Administration announces that it has proof of the presence of guerrilla leaders in Colombia</p> <p><b>August 10</b>: Reestablishment of diplomatic and trade relations between the two governments.</p>