

Sounds of Harmony from Colombia

By

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“Ceasefire in #Colombia would be ‘decisive step toward ending conflict’,” said a United Nations (UN) News Centre tweeting featuring Secretary General Ban Ki Moon’s picture standing in the Security Council on October 30, 2015. These words communicate demonstrable faith in the power of purpose driven diplomacy.

A day earlier, Colombian Ambassador Juan Carlos Pinzón met with US Senator Tim Kaine – fluent in Spanish and worked as a missionary in Honduras - who reportedly mentioned the importance of maintaining US support after the peace agreement. In his tweet, Ambassador Pinzón noted that Senator Kaine would like to see Colombia included in the landmark trade agreement known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In an earlier tweet, Ambassador Pinzón noted that *“@SpeakerRyan was an important supporter of the US-Colombia FTA which helped enhance our strategic partnership.”*

“Colombia is exemplary. Now they are nearing peace thanks to courage & determination of its Armed Forces– Gen Kelly,” is another promising tweet sent by Ambassador Pinzón a week earlier.

The official Twitter Page of Ambassador Pinzón show that he is an engaged diplomat reaching out to congressional leaders, think tanks, the administration, the military and investors. His biography tells the story of a leader in both the public and private sectors. In his prior role as Colombia’s Minister of Defense, he led the Colombian Armed Forces to deal a severe blow to armed groups like FARC and ELN. The defeat of the terrorists led to improved security conditions resulting in the lowest homicide rate in 35 years. The impressive background shows that Ambassador Pinzón is the man



with the gravitas and the intellect to represent his beautiful country at a critical juncture in history.

Diplomacy, however, is not one dimensional. Now that peace is within reach, there are boundless opportunities to project the real Colombia – with all its beauties, the richness of its culture and the opportunities to engage, invest and trade. So it is instructive to pay attention to the last tweet on October 29, 2015 from Ambassador Pinzón in which he wrote: “*Proud to host a concert by talented Colombian pianist Eduardo Rojas tonight as part of @EmbassySeries1.*”

Musical diplomacy may not be rocket science but it does require imagination, talent, tenacity and vision. Interestingly enough famous rocket scientist Dr. John Dassoulas – a recipient of the Technology Pioneer Award frequently attends the musical diplomacy events organized by the [Embassy Series](#) in cooperation with embassies in Washington.

Though the musical event at the Colombian Ambassador’s residence is local to



Washington, it is an opportunity for country’s like Colombia to not only showcase their cultural heritage, societal evolution and the business opportunities but also an excellent way to build relationships that could facilitate the path towards prosperity.

“*Music is the international language of peace,*” said US Secretary of State John Kerry not long ago while welcoming artists from Afghanistan, another war torn country. So his words matter both in the global context as well from Colombian perspective.

And, this kind of diplomacy is not a one way street either. Washington – the society, the economy and culture - benefits too. Just listening to the conversations and visiting friends gathered for the evening made one aware that people are concerned about the [World in 2050](#), the [future of food](#), the [future of jobs](#) or about the [developments in Egypt](#).

Mark Twain is supposed to have said "*History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme.*" Since there is perhaps to no way to bring back to this life legends like Senator and later Vice-President Hubert Humphrey and Representative Augustus Hawkins, seeing their descendants – Ann Howard-Tristani and Lisa Ransom -meet for the first time in life is an experience that would make recently resigned Speaker John Boehner reach out for the tissue box again to stem the flood of tears – not to mention, make Mr. Twain's spirit churn out some more pearls of wisdom.



The sour notes during the budget and policy formulation process sometimes give Washington a bad name. It is after all one of the most beautiful cities in the world.



Adding to the natural beauty of this city on the banks of Potomac River and the cutting edge of history are the diplomats sent to this city of increasing global importance with messages of the hopes and dreams nurturing in the far flung capital cities of the world.

As the diplomatic couple, the dashing young Ambassador Juan Carlos Pinzón and his charming wife Pilar Lozane de Pinzón present a hope filled message from Colombia gracefully moving towards stability and progress. Through the elegance of the Colombian Cultural attaché Tatiana de Germán Ribón some global citizens united under a historic roof [on Dupont Circle](#) heard the sweet sounds of harmony emanating from Colombia.