

Goldman Sachs, and those in Europe and Beijing will be beneficiaries of the policies of Timothy Geithner, Ben Bernanke and President Obama.

It will be the wealthy plutocracy, in whose interest Geithner, Bernanke, our president and most of our Congress operate, that will gain power, control and wealth from the ravages of the national debt. Their policies will further be enacted after the G-20 meeting in Pittsburgh.

Michael Guy Strahane, Pa.

Keeping car running best economic alternative

There's been a lot of talk about Cash for Clunkers," but for the majority of motorists, purchasing a new car is not an option. For many, their vehicle does not qual-

ify for Clunkers" incentive, maintaining your current vehicle is still the best economic option.

To help ensure reliability and safety, and extend vehicle life, the Car Care Council recommends these preventative maintenance steps:

■ Change the oil and filter every 3,000 to 5,000 miles or per the owner's manual. Periodic oil and filter changes keep your engine clean on the inside.

■ Check the tire pressure at least monthly, including the spare. Your car's tires affect its ride, handling, traction and safety. Schedule a tuneup annually to optimize your car's performance. A well-tuned engine delivers the best balance of power and fuel economy and produces the lowest level of emissions. Have the alignment checked at least annually.

The deal — south of the border — that flew under the radar

BY ALLEN MENDEMHALL

South American and Latin American leaders are in a tizzy over Colombia's recent decision to base seven military bases to the United States. The usual suspects — Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez — have voiced the loudest dissent. "Yankee forces could promote dirty war like they did in Nicaragua, even using soldiers from other nationalities trained by them," trumpeted Castro.

"I have the moral obligation to warn about the danger," echoed Chavez, adding, "this could be the start of a new tragedy" and "the winds of war are starting to blow."

President Obama, supposedly mired in the health care muddle, downplayed the criticism, calling it "anti-Yankee" rhetoric. "We have no intent in establishing a U.S. military base in Colombia," he explained. "We have no intention of sending large numbers of additional troops into Colombia."

Be that as it may, the arrangement has upset not only the predictable naysayers but also those south American leaders less inclined to knee-jerk reaction. On

over \$10,000. Even with the "Cash for Clunkers" incentive, maintaining your current vehicle is still the best economic option.

To help ensure reliability and safety, and extend vehicle life, the Car Care Council recommends these preventative maintenance steps:

■ Change the oil and filter every 3,000 to 5,000 miles or per the owner's manual. Periodic oil and filter changes keep your engine clean on the inside.

■ Check the tire pressure at least monthly, including the spare. Your car's tires affect its ride, handling, traction and safety. Schedule a tuneup annually to optimize your car's performance. A well-tuned engine delivers the best balance of power and fuel economy and produces the lowest level of emissions. Have the alignment checked at least annually.

Improves fuel economy and handling, and increases driving enjoyment and safety. Inspect the windshield wipers and lights on the car. Lights and wipers play a major role in safe driving, and they are normal wear items that need periodic replacement.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Aug. 10, for instance, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — "Lula" — called for a summit to address the U.S.-Colombian security plan. "As president of Brazil," he announced, "this climate of unease disturbs me."

Likewise, Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, a regional moderate, referred to the deal as "disquieting"; Argentinean President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner called the bases "not helpful"; and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, with whom Colombia broke ties after its cross-border raid on FARC rebels last year, complained that the deal could "destabilize the region."

Acting together, these leaders could impose crippling economic restraints on Colombia. The Obama administration has done little to reassure South American leaders that its deal with Colombia isn't fraught with ulterior motives. On Aug. 7, days after meeting with James Jones — Obama's national security adviser — Lula recommended that Obama join an upcoming meeting

that improves fuel economy and handling, and increases driving enjoyment and safety. Inspect the windshield wipers and lights on the car. Lights and wipers play a major role in safe driving, and they are normal wear items that need periodic replacement.

**Rich White
Car Care Council
Bethesda, Md.**

Union disputes sentiment about wages, benefits

This is a response to the letter from Joe Bell (DP-July 26). There are several inaccuracies and misrepresentations in his letter. First of all, the messages [he refers to] contained within the handbills and banner are completely accurate. The only thing "scurrilous, inflammatory and outright wrong" is Bell's letter.

government as the wage paid by employers in various building trades in a particular area.

The only response received by the union was a letter from Bell stating that the contractor will be paying competitive wages and benefits. As is obvious, he did not state that they were paying prevailing wages and benefits.

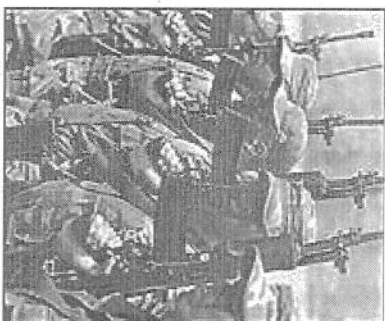
In his letter, Bell claimed that they are "paying for all workers' compensation insurance and all health benefits required by the state." These are empty words. First of all, anyone who conducts business in West Virginia is required to pay for workers' compensation for its employees. In other words, this is no special benefit but the same thing every worker in West Virginia is provided as a matter of law. Secondly, by saying that they are paying all health benefits required by the

Insatiable news cycle. Indeed, almost immediately, the *New York Times* had honed in on his remarks about the Lockerbie bomber. The *Los Angeles Times* led with his guarantee that "we are going to get health care reform done."

The Associated Press and Politico.com, however, weren't totally focused on "Cash for Clunkers" or health care. "Shhh ... Obama mum on what's in 'book of secrets,'" read the AP headline Friday morning. Politico posted video of that exchange. And "Inside Edition" was calling my house for an interview on his reaction to the movie.

Maybe my small talk is getting better.

MICHAEL SMERCONISH writes a weekly column for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Readers may contact him via the Web at mas@talk.com.



of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Obama is not likely to attend.

For his part, Colombian president Alvaro Uribe has met with several concerned neighbors, including Lula, to assuage political anxieties. His efforts have gone largely unrewarded.

Chavez, for instance, encouraged surrounding nations to join him in boycotting Colombian goods. Refuting suggestions that he's all talk and no action, Chavez

vowed Aug. 11 to reduce trade with Colombia. He immediately signed trade deals with Argentina, including one that would import \$1 billion of agricultural machinery, leather goods and poultry products.

The U.S.-Colombian deal purports to undercut drug-trafficking cartels in general and FARC in particular. Many South Americans, however, interpret the arrangement as pretext for U.S. imperialism.

U.S.-Colombian relations have a long and colorful history dating back to the 19th century. In recent decades, though, the partnership (for want of a better word) has taken on an increasingly militaristic tone, with the U.S. government providing troops, Black Hawk helicopters and money to the Colombian counterinsurgency movement. Since 2000, in fact, the U.S. has provided Colombia with more than \$5 billion in aid.

As early as March, Colombian leaders urged Obama to ramp up U.S. efforts in the region. Nothing if not savvy, Obama used the health care frenzy and congressional recess as an occasion to, so to speak, fly under the radar with

this controversial U.S.-Colombian collaboration. For Obama, who pitied himself as the anti-war candidate in the 2008 election, the military bargain seems hypocritical at best, conniving at worse especially as it comes after troop increases in Afghanistan and hints at potential U.S. involvement in Mexican drug wars.

So far, Obama's foreign policy seems cast from the same colonial mold as George W. Bush's — only it's more polite, rhetorical and less generative of media criticism. At least with the puerile grandstanding cowboy (Bush), the public knew what to expect. With the Obama administration, however, one can't be sure.

In the coming weeks, expect no chatter from South American leaders. And more precautions from the White House.

ALLEN MENDEMHALL completed his JD at WVU's College of Law this summer and is completing this master's degree in English at WVU. Next spring, he'll begin studying for the LL.M. in transnational law at Temple University. This commentary should be considered another point of view and not necessarily the opinion or editorial policy of *The Dominion Post*.

The deal — south of the border — that flew under the radar

ALLEN MENDENHALL

South American and Latin American leaders are in a tizzy over Colombia's recent decision to se seven military bases to the United States. The usual suspects Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez have voiced the noisiest dissent. "Yankee forces could promote thirty war like they did in Iraq, even using soldiers from other nationalities trained in them," trumpeted Castro.

"I have the moral obligation to warn about the danger," echoed Chavez, adding, "this could be the start of a new tragedy" and "the ends of war are starting to blow." President Obama, supposedly red in the health care muddle, wrung the criticism, calling "anti-Yankee" rhetoric. "We have no intent in establishing a 3, military base in Colombia," explained. "We have no intention of sending large numbers of additional troops into Colombia."

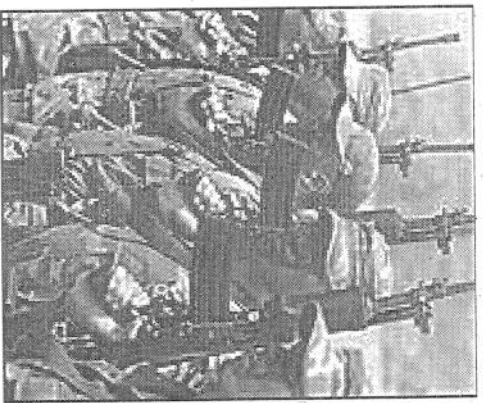
Be that as it may, the arrangement has upset not only the predictable naysayers but also those with American leaders less inclined to knee-jerk reaction. On

GUEST COMMENTARY

Aug. 10, for instance, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — "Lula" — called for a summit to address the U.S.-Colombian security plan. "As president of Brazil," he announced, "this climate of unease disturbs me."

Likewise, Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, a regional moderate, referred to the deal as "disquieting"; Argentinean President Christina Fernandez de Kirchner called the bases "not helpful"; and Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa, with whom Colombia broke ties after its cross-border raid on FARC rebels last year, complained that the deal could "destabilize the region." Acting together, these leaders could impose crippling economic restraints on Colombia.

The Obama administration has done little to reassure South American leaders that its deal with Colombia isn't fraught with ulterior motives. On Aug. 7, days after meeting with James Jones — Obama's national security adviser — Lula recommended that Obama join an upcoming meeting



of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Obama is not likely to attend.

For his part, Colombian president Alvaro Uribe has met with several concerned neighbors, including Lula, to assuage political anxieties. His efforts have gone largely unrewarded.

Chavez, for instance, encouraged surrounding nations to join him in boycotting Colombian goods. Refuting suggestions that he's all talk and no action, Chavez

vowed Aug. 11 to reduce trade with Colombia. He immediately signed trade deals with Argentina, including one that would import \$1 billion of agricultural machinery, leather goods and poultry products.

The U.S.-Colombian deal purports to undercut drug-trafficking cartels in general and FARC in particular. Many South Americans, however, interpret the arrangement as pretext for U.S. imperialism.

U.S.-Colombian relations have a long and colorful history dating back to the 19th century. In recent decades, though, the partnership (for want of a better word) has taken on an increasingly militaristic tone, with the U.S. government providing troops, Black Hawk helicopters and money to the Colombian counterinsurgency movement. Since 2000, in fact, the U.S. has provided Colombia with more than \$5 billion in aid.

As early as March, Colombian leaders urged Obama to ramp up U.S. efforts in the region. Nothing if not savvy, Obama used the health care frenzy and congressional recess as an occasion to, so to speak, fly under the radar with

this controversial U.S.-Colombian collaboration. For Obama, who pitted himself as the anti-war candidate in the 2008 election, the military bargain seems hypocritical at best, conniving at worst especially as it comes after troop increases in Afghanistan and hints at potential U.S. involvement in Mexican drug wars.

So far, Obama's foreign policy seems cast from the same colonial mold as George W. Bush's — only it's more polite rhetorical and less generative of media criticism. At least with the pueril grandstanding cowboy (Bush), the public knew what to expect. With the Obama administration, however, one can't be sure.

In the coming weeks, expect more chatter from South American leaders. And more prevarications from the White House.

ALLEN MENDENHALL completed his J.D. at WVU's College of Law this summer and is completing his master's degree in English at WVU. Next spring, he'll begin studying for the LL.M. in Transnational Law at Temple University. This commentary should be considered another point of view and not necessarily the opinion or editorial policy of *The Dominion Post*.

COLONIALE ...
 There's been a lot of talk about Cash for Clunkers," but for the majority of motorists, purchasing a new car is not an option. For many, their vehicle does not qual-

A well-tuned engine delivers the best balance of power and fuel economy and produces the lowest level of emissions. Have the alignment checked at least annually.

collaboration ...
 banner are completely accurate. The only thing "scurrious, inflammatory and outright wrong" is Bell's letter.

worker in West Virginia is provided as a matter of law. Secondly, by saying that they are paying all health benefits required by the

MICHAEL SHREVE ...
 column for The Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may contact him via the Web at mas@talk.com.

The deal — south of the border — that flew under the radar

BY ALLEN MENDELHALL

South American and Latin American leaders are in a tizzy over Colombia's recent decision to lease seven military bases to the United States. The usual suspects — Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez — have voiced the noisiest dissent. "Yankee forces could promote a dirty war like they did in Nicaragua, even using soldiers from other nationalities trained by them," trumpeted Castro.

"I have the moral obligation to warn about the danger," echoed Chavez, adding, "this could be the start of a new tragedy" and "the winds of war are starting to blow."

President Obama, supposedly mired in the health care muddle, downplayed the criticism, calling it "anti-Yankee" rhetoric. "We have no intent in establishing a U.S. military base in Colombia," he explained. "We have no intention of sending large numbers of additional troops into Colombia."

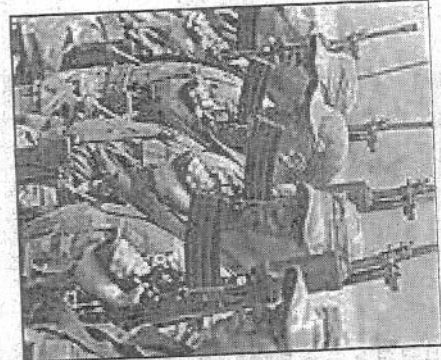
Be that as it may, the arrangement has upset not only the predictable naysayers but also those South American leaders less inclined to knee-jerk reaction. On

GUEST COMMENTARY

Aug. 10, for instance, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — "Lula" — called for a summit to address the U.S.-Colombian security plan. "As president of Brazil," he announced, "this climate of unease disturbs me."

Likewise, Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, a regional moderate, referred to the deal as "disturbing". Argentinean President Christina Fernandez de Kirchner called the bases "not helpful"; and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, with whom Colombia broke ties after its cross-border raid on FARC rebels last year, complained that the deal could "destabilize the region." Acting together, these leaders could impose crippling economic restraints on Colombia.

The Obama administration has done little to reassure South American leaders that its deal with Colombia isn't fraught with ulterior motives. On Aug. 7, days after meeting with James Jones — Obama's national security adviser — Lula recommended that Obama join an upcoming meeting



of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Obama is not likely to attend.

For his part, Colombian president Alvaro Uribe has met with several concerned neighbors, including Lula, to assuage political anxieties. His efforts have gone largely unrewarded.

Chavez, for instance, encouraged surrounding nations to join him in boycotting Colombian goods. Refuting suggestions that he's all talk and no action, Chavez

vowed Aug. 11 to reduce trade with Colombia. He immediately signed trade deals with Argentina, including one that would import \$1 billion of agricultural machinery, leather goods and poultry products.

The U.S.-Colombian deal purports to undercut drug-trafficking cartels in general and FARC in particular. Many South Americans, however, interpret the arrangement as pretext for U.S. imperialism.

U.S.-Colombian relations have a long and colorful history dating back to the 19th century. In recent decades, though, the partnership (or want of a better word) has taken on an increasingly militaristic tone, with the U.S. government providing troops, Black Hawk helicopters and money to the Colombian counterinsurgency movement. Since 2000, in fact, the U.S. has provided Colombia with more than \$5 billion in aid.

As early as March, Colombian leaders urged Obama to ramp up U.S. efforts in the region. Nothing if not savvy, Obama used the health care frenzy and congressional recess as an occasion to, so to speak, fly under the radar with

this controversial U.S.-Colombian collaboration. For Obama, who pitted himself as the anti-war candidate in the 2008 election, military bargain seems hypocritical at best, conniving at worst, especially as it comes after the increases in Afghanistan and hints at potential U.S. involvement in Mexican drug wars.

So far, Obama's foreign policy seems cast from the same color mold as George W. Bush's only it's more polite rhetoric and less generative of media criticism. At least with the puerile grandstanding cowboy (Bush) public knew what to expect. In the Obama administration, however, one can't be sure.

In the coming weeks, expect chatter from South American leaders. And more prevarications from the White House.

ALLEN MENDELHALL completed his law degree at WVU's College of Law this summer. He is completing his master's degree in English at WVU. Next spring, he'll begin his Ph.D. program in English at Temple University. This commentary is not necessarily the opinion of the editor of *The Dominion Post*.