

NEWS FROM LASA

LASA2013 Resolutions Results Resolutions Are Approved

As stated by the LASA By-laws, Article VI, Item #7: All proposed resolutions shall be automatically emailed for electronic voting to each individual who is a member during the year in which the Congress is held, no later than 15 days after the close of the Business Meeting. Votes must be received within 60 days of receipt of the email transmission. At least 20 percent of the current LASA membership must vote regarding a proposed resolution, and the majority must vote in favor of it for the resolution to pass. The results of the vote shall be posted in the subsequent issue of the *LASA Forum* and posted on the LASA Internet site.

The two resolutions approved by the Executive Council at its May 2013 meeting to be presented to the membership for a vote did meet the requirements specified by the LASA By-laws and therefore have passed. The resolutions were the following:

Resolution on Wikileaks and Whistleblowers

Whereas: the United States government has sought to censor the website Wikileaks, a publisher of classified documents that are shedding unprecedented light on U.S. actions overseas;

Whereas: the U.S. government has begun criminal proceedings against accused Army whistleblower Private Bradley Manning, whom it has held in military detention since May 2010 under conditions condemned by United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Méndez;

Whereas: Wikileaks has made a strenuous effort to avoid endangering persons named within the released documents by offering to let the U.S. government redact individuals' names, and has not released

information such as nuclear weapons codes which, unlike the documents released, actually could endanger global security;

Whereas: the Obama administration has prosecuted more government whistleblowers than all previous U.S. administrations combined, sending an ominous signal for the future of academic and journalistic freedom;

Whereas: open access to information about government activities is essential to the functioning of a democratic society, the enforcement of international law, and the pursuit of scholarly knowledge;

Whereas: scholarly organizations have a special responsibility to defend the principles of government transparency and academic and journalistic freedom;

Whereas: the Latin American Studies Association is the world's largest professional association devoted to the study of Latin America, a region that has been the target of frequent U.S. interventions and whose history is closely intertwined with that of the United States;

Therefore be it resolved:

1. The Latin American Studies Association calls upon the Obama administration to recognize Wikileaks's right to publish information in the public interest;

2. The Latin American Studies Association condemns the imprisonment and cruel treatment of Bradley Manning, including the period of over nine months in which Manning was kept in solitary confinement;

3. The Latin American Studies Association calls upon the Obama administration to extend protection for Bradley Manning and

other whistleblowers under the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989.

This resolution will be mailed to President Barack Obama, all members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, Secretary of State John Kerry and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*.

Resolution on Obama Policy

Whereas: The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the largest professional association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America and the Caribbean. With over 7,000 members, 45 percent of whom reside outside the United States, LASA is the one association that brings together experts on Latin America from all disciplines and diverse occupational endeavors, across the globe. For decades, LASA members have spoken in defense of democracy and human rights in the Western Hemisphere and in support of peaceful and respectful relations among states in the region.

Whereas: President Obama's policy toward Latin America has so far failed to fulfill the hopes engendered by his appearance at the Summit of the Americas in 2009 that the United States would strongly and consistently support democracy, human rights, social justice and national sovereignty; and

Whereas: the embargo of Cuba has not been lifted, despite the unanimous call by the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to end it, Cuba is still listed as a state sponsor of terrorism, and travel to Cuba by

U.S. citizens remains severely restricted; and

Whereas: the Obama administration has demonstrated persistent hostility toward progressive governments in Latin America, particularly toward Venezuela and Bolivia, and has pursued close relations with governments with poor human rights records, such as Mexico, Colombia, and Honduras; and

Whereas: the militarism of Plan Colombia and Plan Mérida and the deployment of the Fourth Fleet have been reinforced with the increasing militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and construction of new military and police bases as part of counter-narcotics policy, especially in Central America; and

Whereas: a number of current and former Latin American presidents as well as significant civil society organizations in the most affected countries oppose current U.S. counter-narcotics policies as ineffective and counterproductive with devastating consequences for the civilian populations;

Therefore be it resolved that:

1. The Latin American Studies Association urges President Obama to reduce the U.S. military presence in Latin America, to reverse the militarization of U.S. regional and border policies, especially counter-narcotics operations, and to suspend or reduce aid to military and police forces in countries with on-going human rights abuses, especially Mexico, Honduras, and Colombia;

2. The Latin American Studies Association urges President Obama to normalize relations with Cuba, including eliminating as many travel restrictions as possible by executive order, making the certifications

necessary to end Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism, and actively working to obtain congressional lifting of the embargo and restoration of full freedom of travel for U.S. citizens to Cuba;

3. The Latin American Studies Association urges President Obama to fully respect the sovereignty of Venezuela and Bolivia and to actively pursue improved relations, including resumption of full diplomatic relations;

4. The Latin American Studies Association urges President Obama to reject all direct and indirect United States participation in or support for actions or policies that undermine democratically elected governments in Latin America.

This resolution will be mailed to President Barack Obama, all members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, Secretary of State John Kerry and Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*.

Results

2013 Individual members
(as of August 19, 2013): 5650

Wikileaks and Whistleblowers:

Total votes received: 1465 or 26 percent of the membership
In favor: 1249 or 85 percent
Against: 216 or 15 percent

Obama Policy:

Total votes received: 1494 or 26 percent of the membership
In favor: 1304 or 87 percent
Against: 190 or 13 percent ■