

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Digital Network WSJ.com MarketWatch BARRON'S All Things Digital. FINS SmartMoney More ▾

Monday, December 20, 2010 New York 36° | 27

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL OPINION JOURNAL GET 2 WEEKS FREE SUBSCRIBE NOW! THE PRINT JOURNAL THE ONLINE JOURNAL

Welcome, Timothy D. Naegele Logout My Account My Journal Help

U.S. Edition Home Today's Paper Video Blogs Journal Community Log In

World U.S. New York Business Markets Tech Personal Finance Life & Culture Opinion Careers Real Estate Small Business

Leisure & Arts Book Reviews Letters to the Editor Political Diary Columns

TOP STORIES IN Opinion



Europe's Single Bailout Zone



Richard Haass: Let's Un-Surge in Afgh...



James Grant: Price and Punishment



REVIEW & OUTLOOK | DECEMBER 20, 2010

Obama Lets Colombia Hang

The White House says it won't submit the free trade pact to Congress.

Article

Comments (24)

MORE IN OPINION »

Email Print Save This Like 46 + More Text

Just when you think the White House may head in the right economic direction, someone reminds us why the unemployment rate is still 9.8%. In the latest example, spokesman Robert Gibbs disclosed late last week that President Obama plans to leave Colombia out in the cold when he pushes free trade deals in the next Congress.

Mr. Gibbs said the President will not send the Colombia deal, first signed by both countries in 2006, to Capitol Hill "because it doesn't have the votes." He then—inevitably—blamed Republicans, suggesting that some of the newly elected GOP Members with tea party support might be protectionists.

How would he know? Speaker-presumptive John Boehner will be responsible for winning on the House floor, and he's already invited Mr. Obama to combine the Colombia pact with the Panama and South Korea trade deals into a single package for one vote. This would allow trade supporters to concentrate their support, rather than make Members face the hostility of Big Labor three separate times.



View Full Image John Boehner Associated Press

Perhaps a few of the 84 or so Republican freshmen are skeptical of trade deals, though we don't recall many who campaigned against trade in the recent election. They ran on spending and tax cuts and against ObamaCare. Democrats ran as protectionists this year because they wanted to change the subject from their unpopular legislation. Mr. Obama also routinely denounced U.S. companies for doing business overseas.

As it happens, Mr. Gibbs's comments were reported on Friday, the same day Mr. Obama met with labor chiefs at the White House, including the AFL-CIO's Rich Trumka. The AFL-CIO has announced it is opposed even to the South Korea pact, which the White House recently renegotiated to appease labor and which the United Auto Workers now supports. Perhaps Mr. Obama has cut a deal with Big Labor and House Democrats to allow a vote on Korea but to let Colombia and Panama hang.

This makes no economic sense even on protectionist terms because Colombian goods already enter the U.S. duty free (assuming Congress extends these trade preferences this week). The trade pact reduces Colombian tariffs on U.S. exports, which are increasingly at a disadvantage to goods from other countries. The Colombian government wants to reduce its own trade barriers to make its economy and domestic industries more competitive while reducing costs to consumers. This is how wise leaders who want to raise their domestic standard of living behave.

MarketWatch

CEO of the YEAR & CEO of the DECADE

WHO ARE THIS YEAR'S WINNERS

Give the Gift of Living in the Know.

Purchase a gift subscription to The Wall Street Journal for the gadget lovers on your list.

ORDER TODAY!

Email Newsletters and Alerts

The latest news and analysis delivered to your in-box. Check the boxes below to sign up.

On the Editorial Page Best of the Web Today

SIGN UP

Manage Email Preferences

Most Popular on Facebook

Robert M. McDowell: The FCC's Threat to Internet Freedom – WSJ.com 2,648 people shared this.

Ernst & Young Faces Fraud Charges – WSJ.com 246 people shared this.

iPhone and Android Apps Breach Privacy – WSJ.com

Protectionists claim that Colombia doesn't adequately protect labor organizers, but the level of violence has fallen dramatically in recent years as the government has gained the advantage over left-wing FARC guerrillas and their nemesis, the paramilitary forces. Colombia is America's best ally in a bad Andean neighborhood. Failing to ratify the trade pact would be an act of willful strategic and economic stupidity.

MORE IN OPINION >

Email Printer Friendly Order Reprints

Share: Facebook Twitter LinkedIn YouTube Dribbble StumbleUpon Blogger Facebook RSS

Like 46 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

SPONSORED LINKS

EHSI Buys Biotech Leader

Breaking News- EHSI just acquired biotech leader celulas Genetica. www.TheStemCellGroup.com

Incredible News

Lady Gaga was found dead at railway station in GA www.flipppo.com

Mortgage Rates Hit 2.99%

With rates lower than ever, now is the time to refinance your home. www.SeeRefinanceRates.com

Add a Comment

JOURNAL COMMUNITY

We welcome your thoughtful comments. Please comply with our Community rules. All comments will display your real name.

Comment input field

Track replies to my comment

Go to Comments tab

CLEAR POST

Related Stories

Review & Outlook: Obama and Trade 12/6/2010

U.S., Korea Agree on Free-Trade Pact 12/3/2010

WTO Backs U.S. in Tire Dispute With China 12/13/2010

AFL-CIO, United Steelworkers Unions Oppose U.S.-South Korea Trade Deal 12/10/2010

Americans Sour on Trade 10/2/2010

U.S.-Korea Pact Hinges on Autos 12/3/2010

U.S., South Korea Fail to Seal Trade Pact 11/12/2010

South Korea Defends U.S. Trade Pact 12/5/2010

Related Videos



Opinion Journal: Worst Job Market in Decades -- Mary Anastasia O'Grady and Steve Moore discuss



Debate begins in Senate on START arms-reduction treaty



Obama, GOP Strike Grand Tax Bargain - News Hub

67 people shared this.



Ramallah, West Bank, Boom Bolsters Palestinian Statehood Hopes -- Photos - WSJ.com 89 people shared this.



Top Spine Surgeons Reap Royalties, Medicare Bounty - WSJ.com 97 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

Video >



Opinion Journal: Crisis Commission Crack-Up 7:57



Opinion Journal: How's the War Going? 5:59



What Are Taxes For? 2:16

More in Opinion

- Robert M. McDowell: The FCC's Threat to Internet Freedom
Manuel Hinds: The Case Against Floating Currencies
O'Grady: WikiLeaks, Honduras and the U.S.
The Wind Subsidy Bubble
Obama Lets Colombia Hang

Most Popular >

Read Emailed Video Commented Searches

- 1. 'Don't Ask' Vote Fallout
2. Your Apps Are Watching You
3. Opinion: Robert M. McDowell: The FCC's Threat to Internet Freedom
4. Joy Ride Ends for Cycling Backers
5. Phone-Wielding Shoppers Strike Fear Into Retailers

Most Read Articles Feed

Latest Headlines

- Top Spine Surgeons Reap Royalties, Medicare Bounty
Ending 'Don't Ask' Will Take Time
GOP Digs In on START
Photos Deepen 'Grim Sleeper' Mystery
Senate Poised to Vote on Funding Bill
Tax Fight Drives Detroit City to Brink
Emanuel's Mayoral Campaign Enlists Legal Heavyweights
A Madoff Son Looks Forward
Tech Revival Lifts Silicon Valley
Housing-Finance Head Unlikely to be Confirmed

More Headlines

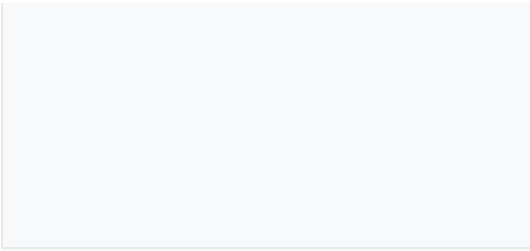
CLICK HERE for Full Article Access – and get

TWO WEEKS FREE

UPGRADE NOW

WSJ.com subscribers enjoy:

- Deeper core business, industry and market news
• Exclusive newsletters and alerts
• Save & share article functionality within the Journal Community



Editors' Picks



Holiday Help: People vs. Robots



A Holiday Message from Ricky Gervais: Why I'm An Atheist



The World's Most Expensive Noodles?



Hong Kong's Most-Expensive Homes



States Nip at Dog Breeders

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

[BACK TO TOP ▲](#)

WSJ.com Account:

- My Account
- Subscriber Billing Info

Create an Account:

- Register for Free
- Subscribe to WSJ.com
- Sign up for WSJ Professional

Help & Information Center:

- Help
- Customer Service
- Contact Us
- New on WSJ.com
- Tour the new Journal

About:

- News Licensing
- Advertising
- Advertise Locally
- Conferences
- About Dow Jones
- Privacy Policy - Updated
- Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use - Updated
- Copyright Policy
- Jobs at WSJ.com

WSJ.com:

- Site Map
- Home
- World
- U.S.
- New York
- Business
- Markets
- Market Data
- Tech
- Personal Finance
- Life & Culture
- Opinion
- Autos
- Careers
- Real Estate
- Small Business
- Student Journal
- Corrections

Tools & Formats:

- Today's Paper
- Video Center
- Graphics
- Columns
- Blogs
- Topics
- Guides
- Alerts
- Newsletters
- Mobile
- Tablet Edition
- Podcasts
- RSS Feeds
- Journal Community
- WSJ on Twitter
- WSJ on Facebook
- WSJ on Foursquare
- My Journal
- Portfolio

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Digital Network

- WSJ.com
- Marketwatch.com
- Barrons.com
- SmartMoney.com
- AllThingsD.com
- FINS: Finance, IT jobs, Sales jobs
- BigCharts.com
- Virtual Stock Exchange
- WSJ Radio
- ProfessorJournal.com
- WSJ U.S. Edition
- WSJ Asia Edition
- WSJ Europe Edition
- WSJ India Page
- Foreign Language Editions:
 - WSJ Chinese
 - WSJ Japanese
 - WSJ Portuguese
 - WSJ Spanish



Copyright ©2010 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved