8-1-1991

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Colombia: Airline Executive Critical Of Open Skies Agreement With Venezuela

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Category/Department: General
Published: Thursday, August 1, 1991

On July 31, Julio Leonzo, president of Aerovias Nacionales de Colombia (AVIANCA), criticized the recently implemented "open skies" agreement between the Colombian and Venezuelan governments. He asserted that the accord may cause the ruin of Colombian aviation. According to Leonzo, discussion of the open skies agreement were initiated last year by persons who know little of the aeronautics industry. Such policies, he asserted, are highly dangerous for the stability of all Colombian airlines. The agreement finalized in May by Colombian President Cesar Gaviria and Venezuelan counterpart Carlos Andres Perez went into effect July 8. Since then, the Colombian civil aviation administration has authorized regular flights between the two countries by Venezuelan airlines SERVIVENSA and AVENSA. Flights between the two countries were previously monopolized by AVIANCA and Venezuela's state-run international airline VIASA. Colombian officials are also studying a request for regular flight service by the Venezuelan airline Zuliana de Aviacion. Meanwhile, the Colombian airline Intercontinental has requested similar authorization for flights into Venezuela. (Basic data from EFE, 07/31/91)

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