

High-Level Book Talk and Discussion with Author Marie Arana

*Celebrating Pan American Day 2024:
Strengthening Inter-American Relations through Literature and Dialogue*

	<p><u>Date:</u> Tuesday, April 16, 2024</p> <p><u>Time:</u> 10:30 am-12:00 pm</p> <p>Hall of the Americas Organization of American States Main Building 17th Street NW & Constitution Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20006</p> <p>- Event Registration Link -</p>	
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In commemoration of Pan American Day, the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States (OAS) is honored to host – in partnership with the [OAS Columbus Memorial Library](#), and with the co-sponsorship of the [Hispanic and Latin Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies \(HECFAA\)](#) - a high-level book talk and discussion featuring acclaimed author Marie Arana in support of her latest book, [LATINOLAND: A Portrait of America’s Largest and Least Understood Minority](#) (Simon & Schuster). In it, Arana offers readers a sweeping, personal portrait of the largest racial and ethnic minority in the United States. “Latinos” does not represent a single group – they were once some of the earliest residents of what is now known as the US, and they are some of the country’s newest arrivals. In [LATINOLAND](#), Arana tells stories that often go ignored, encapsulating Latinos’ *“grand diversity that defies any one label.”*

As we celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the Pan American Union and reaffirm the shared commitment of the Americas to principles of democracy, human and civil rights, and social inclusion, this timely event serves as a platform for fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

Moderator:

Ambassador Francisco O. Mora, U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS

Speakers:

- **Marie Arana**, Author, Inaugural Literary Director of the Library of Congress
- **Ambassador Chet Donovan Neymour**, Ambassador of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and Chair of the OAS Permanent Council

- **Gonzalo Koncke**, Chief of Staff to the OAS Secretary General
- **Carolina Jiménez Sandoval**, President of the Washington Office on Latin America
- **Guillermo Morales**, President of the Executive Board, Hispanic and Latin Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA)
- **Maricarmen Plata**, Secretary for Access to Rights and Equity, OAS

AGENDA

Welcome: Guillermo Morales, Hispanic and Latin Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA)

Introduction: Ambassador Mora will set the stage for a dynamic conversation, providing context on the significance of Pan American Day and its role in promoting unity and cooperation among the nations of the Americas.

Opening Remarks by Marie Arana: Marie Arana provides insights into her latest book, LATINOLAND, offering a nuanced perspective on the Latino population in America and its contributions to the social fabric of the hemisphere, while also highlighting the importance of diverse voices in shaping collective identity in the Americas.

Facilitated Discussion: "Perspectives on Inter-American Relations: Building Bridges Through History and Culture"

- Ambassador Mora will moderate a conversation among the speakers, exploring the intersections of literature, democracy, and social inclusion in fostering mutual understanding and collaboration.
- Marie Arana, Ambassador Neymour, Chief of Staff Koncke and Carolina Jiménez Sandoval engage in an interactive dialogue, sharing experiences and insights related to the promotion of democratic values and social justice.

Audience Engagement and Q&A Session: Attendees and online viewers are invited to participate in the discussion by posing questions and sharing perspectives on the topics explored, reflecting Inter-American principles of democracy and social inclusion.

Closing Remarks: Secretary Plata concludes the event with reflections on the shared commitment of OAS member states to democracy, rights, and inclusion, and the importance of ongoing dialogue and collaboration in advancing these principles. This includes continued engagement and cooperation in promoting a more democratic, inclusive, and prosperous hemisphere.

Livestream and Recording: The event will be livestreamed and recorded for dissemination on the OAS website, ensuring broader access to the discussions and promoting engagement with a

wider audience. It will also feature simultaneous interpretation services in both English and Spanish to ensure accessibility for all attendees.

Audience: Open to the general public, through registration, reflecting a broad spectrum of stakeholders from various backgrounds and sectors. This inclusive approach seeks to ensure that this discussion reaches a wide audience, allowing for diverse perspectives and community engagement.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Marie Arana is a distinguished author, journalist, historian, and cultural advocate. She is the Inaugural Literary Director of the Library of Congress, where she has championed the promotion of literature and cultural exchange. With a career spanning decades, Arana has written extensively on topics ranging from Latin American history to contemporary social issues. Her works, including LATINOLAND, Bolívar: American Liberator, and Silver, Sword, and Stone, have garnered critical acclaim and shed light on the rich tapestry of Latino identity in the Americas.

Ambassador Chet Donovan Neymour is a seasoned diplomat and public servant with extensive experience in international relations. As incoming Chair of the OAS Permanent Council, Ambassador Neymour brings a wealth of expertise in economics, finance, and policy development to his role. His dedication to promoting cooperation and dialogue among member states underscores his commitment to advancing the principles of democracy and human rights throughout the hemisphere.

Gonzalo Koncke is the Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS). With over two decades of diplomatic experience, including serving as Uruguay's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Koncke brings extensive expertise in international relations to his role. He holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations from the Universidad de la República in Montevideo, Uruguay. In his current position, Koncke plays a key role in promoting dialogue, cooperation, and democracy throughout the Americas.

Ambassador Francisco O. Mora serves as the United States Permanent Representative to the OAS. With a distinguished career in academia and public service, Ambassador Mora brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his diplomatic role. As a former Professor of Politics and International Relations, he has authored numerous books and articles on hemispheric security and U.S.-Latin American relations. His leadership at the OAS reflects a steadfast commitment to promoting cooperation and mutual understanding among the American nations.

Carolina Jiménez Sandoval serves as the President of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), leveraging over two decades of experience in advocating for human rights across the Americas. Prior to her current role, she held pivotal positions, notably as Deputy Research Director for the Americas at Amnesty International in Mexico City. During her tenure there, she led initiatives addressing human rights violations, advocating for migrant and refugee rights in

Central America, Mexico, and the United States. Her commitment to human rights advocacy was also evident during her time at the OAS Trust for the Americas, where she managed a regional initiative promoting the rights of migrants in Central America and the Caribbean.

Maricarmen Plata serves as the Secretary for Access to Rights and Equity at the OAS, a role she assumed in March 2021. Prior to her OAS appointment, Plata practiced law as a partner at Anzola Robles and Associates, where she focused on civil society engagement and gender equity. A citizen of Panama, she holds an LLM from the University of Cambridge and has been recognized for her contributions by Chambers Diversity & Inclusion. At the OAS, Plata oversees initiatives promoting rights, equity, and civil society engagement, reflecting her commitment to advancing democracy and social inclusion throughout the Americas.

About the Hispanic and Latin Employee Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA):

Founded in 1982, HECFAA is a non-profit organization supporting employees affiliated with the U.S. Department of State. HECFAA works to promote the recruitment, retention, and career advancement of Hispanics and promote a foreign affairs workforce that reflects the diversity of the United States.



Abbie Rowe. White House Photographs. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

In April 1962, U.S. President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy hosted a White House dinner following Pan American Day to honor forty-nine Nobel Prize winners from the Western Hemisphere, including authors. The list was comprised of the hemisphere's luminaries, including writers Robert Frost, James Baldwin, the spouses of Ernest Hemingway and Pearl S. Buck, and diplomat Ralph J. Bunche. [Kennedy expressed](#) his hope that the engagement would "encourage young Americans and young people in this hemisphere to develop the drive and deep desire for knowledge and peace."