

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Taps Peace Negotiator as Vice Presidential Choice



Bogota, January 14 (RHC)-- Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos has named former national police chief and peace negotiator General Oscar Naranjo as his pick to replace Vice President German Vargas Lleras, who is expected to stand down to pursue the presidency in the 2018 elections.

Santos, whose second four-year term ends next year and who is barred from running again, said in an interview with Caracol Radio Thursday that Naranjo would be named vice president once Vargas Lleras leaves office in March to campaign. However the appointment of Gen. Naranjo will have to be approved by Congress.

For his part, Vargas Lleras, grandson of former President Carlos Lleras Restrepo, has not announced his resignation, but his exit from the post has been anticipated for months.

Naranjo was part of the government negotiating team in Havana that worked for more than four years to

clinch a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. The accord reached last year has ended more than five decades of war, and rebels are making their way to camps across the nation to hand over their weapons and transition into civilian life.

Meanwhile, the FARC, which is set to become a political party after signing a landmark peace deal with the government, announced it will seek a national consensus for peace, instead of seeking the presidency, in the 2018 elections.

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