NEWSLETTER | ISSUE #7 | AUGUST 2026

A Rightward Turn in the Andes
Colombia, Peru, and Arizona's Strategic Interests
Commercial Openings and Institutional Constraints

Two nail-biting presidential elections have shifted political alignment in the Andes. Keiko Fujimori took office in Peru on July 28 after winning by 49,641 votes. Abelardo De La Espriella was sworn in as Colombia's president on August 7 after winning by less than one percentage point. Both leaders campaigned on stronger public security, private investment, and closer relations with the United States.

The transitions carry different implications. Colombia's new administration has begun a substantial policy reversal from Gustavo Petro's approach to armed groups, fiscal policy, oil and gas, and the role of the state. Peru remains broadly market-oriented, while Fujimori inherits a decade of political turbulence, a fragmented Congress, and regional conflict over crime and mining.

For Arizona, the opportunity is sector-specific. Peru offers the clearest near-term channel through mining equipment, water technology, mine safety, and workforce development. Colombia could generate demand in cybersecurity, civilian security technologies, critical-mineral exploration, and energy services. Arizona brings a major copper ecosystem, established mining research and training assets, and more than 1,250 companies in its aerospace and defense supply chain.

An Arizona–Peru commercial channel is already visible. From April 28–30, a PROMPERÚ trade mission organized by the Arizona District Export Council in partnership with the University of Arizona brought 12 Peruvian mining suppliers together with Arizona mining companies and service providers. The political changes create an opening to convert that contact—and emerging interest in Colombia—into qualified projects and sustained partnerships.

Executive Takeaway

- **Peru presents Arizona's clearest near-term opportunity:** Its mining economy and the April 2026 Peruvian mining delegation to Arizona provide an existing foundation for follow-up.
- **Colombia offers a broader but conditional opening:** The U.S. government's intended US$1 billion security package and the new administration's energy and mining agenda may expand demand, but funding, procurement, and safeguards will determine what is actionable.
- **Arizona should pursue targeted engagement:** The strongest initiatives will connect a verified need, a capable Arizona partner, a local counterpart, and a measurable pilot.

Top Developments

1. The two political transitions will follow different paths

Fujimori and De La Espriella took office after close electoral victories and share an emphasis on order, investment, and cooperation with Washington. Fujimori won by 0.27 percentage points; De La Espriella prevailed by less than one point after a campaign centered on security and economic recovery.

Their governing environments differ. Fujimori's party holds the largest minority bloc in Peru's new Congress; the governing coalition leads the Senate, and the opposition leads the Chamber of Deputies. De La Espriella faces a divided Colombian Congress in which his opponent's Historic Pact remains the largest party. Coalition building will shape both agendas.

Why this matters: *Arizona organizations should evaluate each country through its own institutions, project pipeline, and implementation capacity. A common political direction does not produce the same market conditions. Sector fit, procurement rules, and implementation capacity are more useful guides to near-term opportunity than ideological alignment alone.*

Further reading: *Colombia's National Registrar: 2026 Presidential Results*; *Peru's National Electoral Jury: Proclamation of Keiko Fujimori*; *Reuters: Colombia's New President Takes Office*; *Reuters: Fujimori Takes Office in Peru*; *Atlantic Council: Colombia's Path to Growth and U.S. Cooperation*.

2. Peru's mining agenda creates Arizona's clearest opportunity

Peru is one of the world's three largest copper producers, and the Ministry of Energy and Mines' 2026 portfolio includes 66 projects representing an estimated US$64.1 billion. Fujimori campaigned on a fast track for strategic projects and a larger direct share of royalties for host communities. Her first address emphasized fiscal discipline, private investment, infrastructure, public security, and stronger action against illegal mining.

Arizona produced more than 70 percent of U.S. copper output in 2024. Its ecosystem includes equipment suppliers, engineering firms, water technologies, environmental services, and research in robotics, AI-assisted exploration, processing, and mine safety. The April 28–30 visit by 12 Peruvian mining suppliers provides a practical starting point for follow-up.

Why this matters: *A strong Arizona proposition is a mining-services corridor focused on productivity, water efficiency, safer operations, environmental monitoring, and technical workforce development—not mine financing or ownership.*

Further reading: *Pima County: Peruvian Mining Suppliers Tour Arizona*; *Reuters: Fujimori's Mining Proposals and Peru's Project Pipeline*; *Peru's Ministry of Energy and Mines: 2026 Mining Investment Portfolio*; *U.S. Geological Survey: Arizona Copper and Critical Minerals*; *University of Arizona: Future of Sustainable Mining and Critical Minerals*.

3. Colombia's policy pivot could create demand for Arizona

In his August 7 inaugural address, De La Espriella pledged a harder response to armed groups and drug trafficking, a freeze on public spending, and renewed oil and gas exploration, including responsible fracking. The National Mining Agency also launched bidding in December 2025 for 14 strategic mining areas covering copper, gold, and polymetallic minerals. On August 7, the U.S. State Department said that, working with Congress, it intends to provide US$1 billion as part of a security package for the new administration.

The U.S. Commercial Service identifies commercial opportunities in security procurement, cybersecurity, autonomous systems, communications, geospatial technology, and critical-mineral exploration services. Arizona's aerospace and defense supply chain includes more than 1,250 companies. Market entry will require clear distinctions between civilian, dual-use, and defense applications, plus procurement knowledge, export-control review, end-use verification, and human-rights safeguards.

Why this matters: *Colombia may become an important market for selected Arizona technologies, but opportunity should be assessed transaction by transaction. Intended U.S. support improves the near-term outlook but does not eliminate congressional, procurement, legal, reputational, or operational risk.*

Further reading: *Reuters: De La Espriella's Security and Energy Agenda*; *U.S. Commercial Service: Colombia Defense and Security*; *U.S. State Department: New U.S.–Colombia Security Package*; *U.S. Commercial Service: Colombia Critical Minerals*; *Arizona Commerce Authority: Aerospace and Defense Supply Chain*.

4. Education and digital skills can build durable engagement

Workforce partnerships provide a lower-risk path for Arizona engagement. Colombia's digital economy is generating demand for cybersecurity, cloud services, and digital-skills certification. Peru's existing national digital policy emphasizes AI, digital identity, cybersecurity, rural connectivity, and human capital. Mining modernization also requires training that connects engineering, operations, safety, and environmental performance.

Arizona universities, community colleges, training providers, and industry associations can offer short-cycle programs in mining automation, water management, cyber defense, technical English, entrepreneurship, and public-sector innovation. Strong programs will be co-designed with employers and local institutions, tied to a defined occupational need, and measured through completion and employment outcomes.

Why this matters: *Education can sustain relationships when political cycles change. A successful workforce pilot can also establish the trust and institutional connections needed for later commercial projects.*

Further reading: *U.S. Commercial Service: Colombia Digital Economy*; *U.S. Commercial Service: Peru Digital Economy*; *U.S. Commercial Service: 2025 Education Resource Guide*; *University of Arizona: Mining Engineering*; *Arizona Commerce Authority: Aerospace and Defense Workforce Accelerator*.

5. Political fragmentation and social conflict will determine execution

Both presidents entered office after narrow victories. Colombia's divided Congress, armed groups, illegal mining, and weak state presence will complicate implementation. Fujimori faces a fragmented legislature, public distrust, and opposition in several mining regions. A study by the Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Peru, an environmental-advocacy nonprofit, found that most major mining regions voted against Fujimori, raising conflict risks if projects advance without credible local benefits.

Arizona organizations should separate presidential intent from executable opportunity. A viable project needs a responsible local counterpart, financing, transparent procurement, regulatory clarity, community engagement, and an operating environment that supports delivery. Security initiatives also require rigorous export-control and end-use compliance.

Why this matters: *The more market-friendly orientation can improve access and policy dialogue, but durable Arizona engagement will depend on institutions, implementation, and local legitimacy.*

Further reading: *Reuters: Colombia's Divided Congress and Security Test*; *Reuters: Peru's Fragmented Congress and Political Constraints*; *Reuters: Mining Expansion and Social Conflict in Peru*; *U.S. State Department: FY2025 Blue Lantern End-Use Monitoring*; *U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security: Interactive Country Chart*.

HERE'S THE CHALLENGE

Turning Political Change into a Qualified Arizona Commercial Pipeline

Political alignment may open doors, but opportunity begins when a government priority connects to an actionable project, a qualified Arizona capability, a reliable local counterpart, and a credible procurement or financing path. Arizona needs a disciplined pipeline rather than a broad sector list.

The key question is: Which mining, security, digital, or workforce opportunities can move from political interest to a verified pilot or commercial engagement within the next 12 months?

Mistakes to avoid

- Treating Colombia and Peru as versions of the same political and economic transition
- Presenting campaign proposals as funded projects or confirmed market demand
- Engaging in mining or security without social license, procurement, and export-control review

Where Arizona organizations can act

- Organize a business mission to both countries to explore opportunities for collaboration
- Map Colombia's cyber, civilian-security, and critical-mineral opportunities with vetted partners
- Propose a 90-day workforce pilot tied to a specific employer and measurable outcome

How the Arizona Institute for the Americas Can Help

The Arizona Institute for the Americas translates political transitions in Colombia and Peru into Arizona-specific market intelligence, partner selection, and executive engagement strategy.

About the Arizona Institute for the Americas

The Arizona Institute for the Americas is an independent strategic intelligence institute analyzing developments across the Americas that shape Arizona's economy and regional position. We turn policy and market change into business intelligence, partnerships, and sustained initiatives.

Contact

Contact us to build a focused Arizona engagement strategy for Colombia and Peru.

Jesús Rodríguez Dávalos | *jesus.rodriguez@arizonamericas.com*
Miguel Sigala | *miguel.sigala@arizonamericas.com*
Rhett Price | *rhett.price@arizonamericas.com*
Website: *arizonamericas.com* | LinkedIn: *Arizona Institute for the Americas* | Newsletter: *Subscribe*