

For Six Month Period Ending FEB 28 2006
(Insert date)

I - REGISTRANT

1. (a) Name of Registrant (b) Registration No. 5609
Venezuela Information Office, LLC
(c) Business Address(es) of Registrant
2000 P St. NW, Ste. 240
Washington, DC 20036

2. Has there been a change in the information previously furnished in connection with the following:

- (a) If an individual:
 - (1) Residence address Yes No
 - (2) Citizenship Yes No
 - (3) Occupation Yes No
- (b) If an organization:
 - (1) Name Yes No
 - (2) Ownership or control Yes No
 - (3) Branch offices Yes No

(c) Explain fully all changes, if any, indicated in items (a) and (b) above.

In January, 2006, The Venezuela Information Office moved.
The new address is:
2000 P St. NW, Ste 240
Washington, DC 20036

IF THE REGISTRANT IS AN INDIVIDUAL, OMIT RESPONSE TO ITEMS 3, 4, AND 5(a).

3. If you have previously filed Exhibit C¹, state whether any changes therein have occurred during this 6 month reporting period.

Yes No

If yes, have you filed an amendment to the Exhibit C? Yes No

If no, please attach the required amendment.

N/A

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¹ The Exhibit C, for which no printed form is provided, consists of a true copy of the charter, articles of incorporation, association, and by laws of a registrant that is an organization. (a waiver of the requirement to file an Exhibit C may be obtained for good cause upon written application to the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Internal Security Section, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530.)

4. (a) Have any persons ceased acting as partners, officers, directors or similar officials of the registrant during this 6 month reporting period? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position	Date Connection Ended
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(b) Have any persons become partners, officers, directors or similar officials during this 6 month reporting period? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Residence Address	Citizenship	Position	Date Assumed
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5. (a) Has any person named in item 4(b) rendered services directly in furtherance of the interests of any foreign principal? Yes No

If yes, identify each such person and describe his service.

(b) Have any employee or individuals, who have filed a short form registration statement, terminated their employment or connection with the registrant during this 6 month reporting? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position or connection	Date terminated
Elizabeth Rodriguez	Delegations Coordinator	03-07-06
Stacy McDougall	Congressional Outreach Coordinator	10-14-05

(c) During this six month reporting period, has the registrant hired as employees or in any other capacity, any persons who rendered or will render services to the registrant directly in furtherance of the interests of any foreign principal(s) in other than a clerical or secretarial, or in a related or similar capacity? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Residence Address	Citizenship	Position	Date Assumed
Olivia Groumbri	11200 Lakewood Dr. #217 Silver Spring, MD 20901	U.S.A.	Congressional Outreach Coordinator	11/22/05
Edward A. Mercado	1507 6th St. NW Washington, DC 20001	Venezuela	Communications Coordinator	11/22/05

6. Have short form registration statements been filed by all of the persons named in Items 5(a) and 5(c) of the supplemental statement? Yes No

If no, list names of persons who have not filed the required statement.

II - FOREIGN PRINCIPAL

7. Has your connection with any foreign principal ended during this 6 month reporting period?
Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name of foreign principal

Date of termination

8. Have you acquired any new foreign principal² during this 6 month reporting period?
Yes No

If yes, furnish following information:

Name and address of foreign principal

Date acquired

9. In addition to those named in Items 7 and 8, if any, list foreign principals² whom you continued to represent during the 6 month reporting period.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

10. EXHIBITS A AND B

(a) Have you filed for each of the newly acquired foreign principals in Item 8 the following:

Exhibit A³ Yes No
Exhibit B⁴ Yes No

N/A

If no, please attach the required exhibit.

(b) Have there been any changes in the Exhibits A and B previously filed for any foreign principal whom you represented during this six month period? Yes No

If yes, have you filed an amendment to these exhibits? Yes No

If no, please attach the required amendment.

² The term "foreign principal" includes, in addition to those defined in section 1(b) of the Act, an individual organization any of whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized in whole or in major part by a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign organization or foreign individual. (See Rule 100(a) (9)). A registrant who represents more than one foreign principal is required to list in the statements he files under the Act only those principals for whom he is not entitled to claim exemption under Section 3 of the Act. (See Rule 208.)

³ The Exhibit A, which is filed on form CRM-157 (Formerly OBD-67) sets forth the information required to be disclosed concerning each foreign principal.

⁴ The Exhibit B, which is filed on Form CRM-155 (Formerly OBD-65) sets forth the information concerning the agreement or understanding between the registrant and the foreign principal.

III - ACTIVITIES

11. During this 6 month reporting period, have you engaged in any activities for or rendered any services to any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement? Yes No

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail your activities and services:

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
 All activities were of a political nature and are described
 in response to Item 12 of Section III
 - See Attachment -

12. During this 6 month reporting period, have you on behalf of any foreign principal engaged in political activity⁵ as defined below? Yes No

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail all such political activity, including, among other things, the relations, interests and policies sought to be influenced and the means employed to achieve this purpose. If the registrant arranged, sponsored or delivered speeches, lectures or radio and TV broadcasts, give details as to dates, places, of delivery, names of speakers and subject matter.

- See Log Attachment -

13. In addition to the above described activities, if any, have you engaged in activity on your own behalf which benefits any or all of your foreign principals? Yes No

If yes, describe fully.

⁵ The term "political activities" means any activity that the person engaging in believes will, or that the person intends to, in any way influence any agency or official of the Government of the United States or any section of the public within the United States with reference to formulating, adopting or changing the domestic or foreign policies of the United States or with reference to political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government, a foreign country or a foreign political party.

IV - FINANCIAL INFORMATION

14. (a) RECEIPTS-MONIES

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received from any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement, or from any other source, for or in the interests of any such foreign principal, any contributions, income or money either as compensation or otherwise? Yes No

If no, explain why.

If yes, set forth below in the required detail and separately for each foreign principal an account of such monies⁶

Date	From Whom	Purpose	Amount
9/5/05	Venezuela Embassy	Operating Expenses	325,000
1/17/06	Venezuela Embassy	Operating Expense	165,000
			<u>\$490,000⁰⁰</u>
			Total

(b) RECEIPTS - FUND RASING CAMPAIGN

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received, as part of a fund raising campaign⁷, any money on behalf of any foreign principal named in items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement? Yes No

If yes, have you filed an Exhibit D to your registration? Yes No

If yes, indicate the date the Exhibit D was filed. Date _____

(c) RECEIPTS-THINGS OF VALUE

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received any thing of value⁹ other than money from any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement, or from any other source, for or in the interests of any such foreign principal? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name of foreign principal	Date received	Description of thing of value	Purpose
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^{6, 7} A registrant is required to file an Exhibit D if he collects or receives contributions, loans, money, or other things of value for a foreign principal, as part of a fund raising campaign. (See Rule 201(e).)
⁸ An Exhibit D, for which no printed form is provided, sets forth an account of money collected or received as a result of a fund raising campaign and transmitted for a foreign principal.
⁹ Things of value include but are not limited to gifts, interest free loans, expense free travel, favored stock purchases, exclusive rights, favored treatment over competitors, "kickbacks," and the like.

15. (a) **DISBURSEMENTS-MONIES**

During this 6 month reporting period, have you

(1) disbursed or expended monies in connection with activity on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement. Yes No

(2) transmitted monies to any such foreign principal? Yes No

If no, explain in full detail why there were no disbursements made on behalf of any foreign principal.

If yes, set forth below in the required detail and separately for each foreign principal an account of such monies, including monies transmitted, if any, to each foreign principal.

Date	To Whom	Purpose	Amount
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See	Attachment	15 (a)	
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Total

(b) **DISBURSEMENTS-THINGS OF VALUE**

During this 6 month reporting period, have you disposed of anything of value¹⁰ other than money in furtherance of or in connection with activities on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement?

Yes

No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Date disposed	Name of person to whom given	On behalf of what foreign principal	Description of thing of value	Purpose
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(c) **DISBURSEMENTS-POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

During this 6 month reporting period, have you from your own funds and on your own behalf either directly or through any other person, made any contributions of money or other things of value¹¹ in connection with an election to any political office, or in connection with any primary election, convention, or caucus held to select candidates for political office?

Yes

No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Date	Amount or thing of value	Name of political organization	Name of candidate
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^{10, 11} Things of value include but are not limited to gifts, interest free loans, expense free travel, favored stock purchases, exclusive rights, favored treatment over competitors, "kickbacks" and the like.

V - INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

16. During this 6 month reporting period, did you prepare, disseminate or cause to be disseminated any informational materials¹²?
Yes No

IF YES, RESPOND TO THE REMAINING ITEMS IN SECTION V.

17. Identify each such foreign principal.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

18. During this 6 month reporting period, has any foreign principal established a budget or allocated a specified sum of money to finance your activities in preparing or disseminating informational materials? Yes No

If yes, identify each such foreign principal, specify amount, and indicate for what period of time.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Amount \$490,000

Period Aug. 2005 - Dec. 2005

19. During this 6 month reporting period, did your activities in preparing, disseminating or causing the dissemination of informational materials include the use of any of the following:

- Radio or TV broadcasts
- Magazine or newspaper articles
- Motion picture films
- Letters or telegrams
- Advertising campaigns
- Press releases
- Pamphlets or other publications
- Lectures or speeches
- Internet
- Other (specify) _____

20. During this 6 month reporting period, did you disseminate or cause to be disseminated informational materials among any of the following groups:

- Public Officials
- Newspapers
- Libraries
- Legislators
- Editors
- Educational institutions
- Government agencies
- Civic groups or associations
- Nationality groups
- Other (specify) _____

21. What language was used in the informational materials:

- English
- Other (specify) Spanish

22. Did you file with the Registration Unit, U.S. Department of Justice a copy of each item of such informational materials disseminated or caused to be disseminated during this 6 month reporting period? Yes No

23. Did you label each item of such informational materials with the statement required by Section 4(b) of the Act? Yes No

12 The term informational materials includes any oral, visual, graphic, written, or pictorial information or matter of any kind, including that published by means of advertising, books, periodicals, newspapers, lectures, broadcasts, motion pictures, or any means or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce or otherwise. Informational materials disseminated by an agent of a foreign principal as part of an activity in itself exempt from registration, or an activity which by itself would not require registration, need not be filed pursuant to Section 4(b) of the Act.

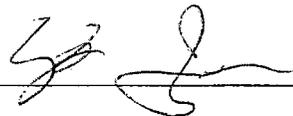
VI--EXECUTION

In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1746, the undersigned swear(s) or affirm(s) under penalty of perjury that he/she has (they have) read the information set forth in this registration statement and the attached exhibits and that he/she is (they are) familiar with the contents thereof and that such contents are in their entirety true and accurate to the best of his/her (their) knowledge and belief, except that the undersigned make(s) no representation as to truth or accuracy of the information contained in the attached Short Form Registration Statement(s), if any, insofar as such information is not within his/her (their) personal knowledge.

(Date of signature)

(Type or print name under each signature¹³)

3/27/06



Isaura Gilmond

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¹³ This statement shall be signed by the individual agent, if the registrant is an individual, or by a majority of those partners, officers, directors or persons performing similar functions, if the registrant is an organization, except that the organization can, by power of attorney, authorize one or more individuals to execute this statement on its behalf.



U.S. Department of Justice

Criminal Division

Washington, DC 20530

THIS FORM IS TO BE AN OFFICIAL ATTACHMENT TO YOUR CURRENT SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT -
PLEASE EXECUTE IN TRIPLICATE

SHORT-FORM REGISTRATION INFORMATION SHEET

SECTION A

The Department records list active short-form registration statements for the following persons of your organization filed on the date indicated by each name. If a person is not still functioning in the same capacity directly on behalf of the foreign principal, please show the date of termination.

Short Form List for Registrant: Venezuela Information Office, LLC

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name and Other Names</u>	<u>Registration Date</u>	<u>Termination Date</u>	<u>Role</u>
Gilmond	Isaura	03/18/2004	—	—
Wingter	Eric S.	05/24/2004	—	—
Rodriguez	Elisabeth S.	07/27/2005	03-07-06	Delegation Coord.
Goubri	Olivia B.	11/22/2005	—	—
Mercado	Edward A.	11/22/2005	—	—

Venezuela Information Office, LLC

Reg. #5609

Supplemental Statement - Financial Information - Insert for page 6

For Six Month Period Ending February 28th, 2006

Section IV , 15 (a) Disbursements

Expenses	Amount Paid
Operating Expenses	\$313,955.54
Travel & Transportation	\$29,897.23
Administrative Services	\$11,315.02
Office Suplies	\$8,893.12
Total	\$364,060.91

Complementary Information:

1- No U.S. Government Officials or media representatives were guest.

2- Disbursements made to sub-contractors:

Segundo mercado-Llorens: \$60,000.00

FARA Reporting Log-VIO Political Contacts and Outreach by Stasy McDougall (March 1, 2005- October 14, 2005)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Person Contacted</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Organization/Office</u>	<u>How Contacted</u>	<u>Subject Discussed</u>	<u>Position Advocated</u>
3/3/2005	Ian Campbell	Legislative Staff	Rep. Rush	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/5/2005	Jennifer Goedeke	Legislative Staff	Rep. Kaptur	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/8/2005	Peter Clark	Legislative Staff	Rep. Filner	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/8/2005	Sarah Martin	Legislative Staff	Rep. Cleaver	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/8/2005	Lucy Heenan	Legislative Staff	Rep. Capuano	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/8/2005	Jessica Battaglia	Legislative Staff	Rep. Lewis	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/11/2005	Greg Staff	Legislative Staff	Rep. Gutierrez	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/11/2005	Greg Adams	Legislative Staff	Rep. Watson	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/12/2005	Kimberly Ross	Legislative Staff	Rep. Cummings	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/12/2005	Norman Meyer	Legislative Staff	Rep. Owens	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/12/2005	Caleb Gilchrest	Legislative Staff	Rep. Davis	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/12/2005	Clint Carte	Legislative Staff	Rep. Sanchez	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/12/2005	Cynthia Cook	Legislative Staff	Rep. Udall	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/12/2005	Sean Hughes	Legislative Staff	Rep. McDermott	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/13/2005	Tannaz Haddadi	Legislative Staff	Rep. Tubbs-Jones	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/13/2005	Charles Dujon	Legislative Staff	Rep. Jackson, Jr.	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/13/2005	Carissa Fafia	Legislative Staff	Rep. Velazquez	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/13/2005	Jason Rosenberg	Legislative Staff	Rep. Davis	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/13/2005	Laura Hooper	Legislative Staff	Rep. Watt	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
4/15/2005	Will Vandorn	Legislative Staff	Rep. Moore	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy

4/21/2005	Senator Coleman & Staff	Senator/Staff	Senator Coleman	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	Boston Group Update
4/25/2005	Eric Powers	Legislative Staff	Rep. Woolsey	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/5/2005	Rene Muñoz	CHC	CHC	email	Ambassador Breakfast	Ambassador Breakfast
5/9/2005	Samantha Spinney	Legislative Staff	Rep. Kucinich	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/9/2005	Jabriel Ballentine	Legislative Staff	Rep. Mckinney	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/9/2005	Matt Haist	Legislative Staff	Rep. Jackson-Lee	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/11/2005	Samantha Spinney	Legislative Staff	Rep. Kucinich	email	Luis Posada Carriles	Extradition request should be granted
5/11/2005	Daniel Brito	Legislative Staff	Rep. Grijalva	tel	Luis Posada Carriles	Extradition request should be granted
5/17/2005	Jamilla Thompson	Legislative Staff	Rep. Lee	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/19/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	US Congress	email	Luis Posada Carriles	Extradition request should be granted
5/20/2005	Sean McCluskie	Legislative Staff	Rep. Stark	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/20/2005	David Simon	Legislative Staff	Rep. C. Brown	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/24/2005	Michelle Bogdonavich	Legislative Staff	Rep. Clay	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/24/2005	Clint Carte	Legislative Staff	Rep. Sanchez	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/24/2005	Ana Ma	Legislative Staff	Rep. Grijalva	in person	Venezuela Cultural event in Tucson	Venezuela Cultural event in Tucson
5/24/2005	Clint Carte	Legislative Staff	Rep. Sanchez	email	Drug interdiction	Vzla active in drug interdiction
5/25/2005	Daniel Brito/Ana Ma	Legislative Staff	Rep. Grijalva	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
5/25/2005	Jamila Thompson	Legislative Staff	Rep. Lee	email	Rule of Law	Rule of Law in Venezuela
5/26/2005	Clint Carte	Legislative Staff	Rep. Sanchez	email	Venezuela's record on drug interdiction	Venezuela's record on drug interdiction
5/27/2005	Max Sevilla	Legislative Staff	Rep. Nadler	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
6/2/2005	Murat	Legislative Staff	Rep. Johnson	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
6/2/2005	Marian Lawson	Legislative Staff	Rep. Pastor	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy

6/2/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	US Congress	email	Human Rights in Vzla	PROVEA letter to US Embassy in Caracas
6/3/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	US Congress	email	Embassy Statement in Human Trafficking Determination	Human Trafficking Determination politicized
6/7/2005	Eric Powers/Jamila Thompson	Legislative Staff	Reps. Woolsey, Lee	email	CPC Venezuela Briefing	CPC Venezuela Briefing
6/8/2005	Antonio Gonzalez	President	Willie Velazquez Institute	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/9/2005	Jamila Thompson	Legislative Staff	Rep. Lee	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/9/2005	Samantha Spinney	Legislative Staff	Rep. Kucinich	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/9/2005	Daniel Brito	Legislative Staff	Rep. Grijalva	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/9/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	CBC, CHC, CPC	in person	US/Vzla Business Round	Invitation for constituent businesses to participate
6/10/2005	Laura Marquez	Legislative Staff	Rep. Salazar	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/10/2005	Victor Torres	Legislative Staff	Rep. Cuellar	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/13/2005	Ian Campbell	Legislative Staff	Rep. Meeks	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	shift to more proactive foreign policy
6/14/2005	LAWG Members	working group members	LAWG	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/15/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	US Congress	email	Luis Posada Carriles	Luis Posada Carriles double acquittal myth
6/17/2005	Paul Oostburg	Counsel, HIRC Minority	HIRC/ Rep. Lantos	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
6/22/2005	Rep. Lee and Jamila Thompson	Congresswoman, Legislative Staff	Rep. Lee	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
7/1/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	CBC	email	US Warning to CARICOM countries	US should not interfere in regional integration efforts
7/8/2005	Javier De La Luz	Legislative Staff	Rep. Fortuño	email/tel	Fortuño Resolution	not helpful to human rights groups in Vzla
7/16/2005	Rep. Loretta Sanchez & Staff	Congresswoman / staff	Rep. Sanchez	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
7/16/2005	Rep. Damian Nuñez	Speaker of the House, State of California	Rep. Nuñez	in person	Venezuela-US Bilateral Relations	general information on Venezuela and US policy
7/16/2005	Sophia King, Ian Campbell	Legislative Staff	Rep. Meeks	email	Sumate case	information regarding Sumate case
7/25/2005	Ian Campbell	Legislative Staff	Rep. Meeks	email	Law of Social Responsibility/Radio and Tel	Law of Social Responsibility/Radio and Tel
7/25/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	CHC, CBC, CPC	email	Mack Amendment	What's on? Venezuela TV listings for DirecTV, CableVision, Local

7/27/2005	Matt Towson	Legislative Staff	Rep. Kirk	tel/email	Kirk's floor statements	Not based on fact. Vzla/US Business Round
8/5/2005	Matt Towson	Legislative Staff	Rep. Kirk	email	DOS-no new accusations	DOS NOT accusing state sponsorship of narcoterrorism
8/9/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	CBC, CHC, CPC	email	Baseball--Embassy of Venezuela Responds to Racist Comments	Baseball--Embassy of Venezuela Responds to Racist Comments

9/7/2005	Daniel Brito	Legislative Staff	Rep. Grijalva	email	Humanitarian Aid, Hurricane Katrina	Provided Embassy Press Release
9/14/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	CBC, CHC, CPC, Armed Svc, Gov. Relations,	fax	Venezuela Counternarcotics Efforts	Decertification of Venezuela would be a Political Decision
9/19/2005	Matt West	Researcher	Harper's Magazine	tel/email	Humanitarian Aid, Hurricane Katrina	Provided figures
9/21/2005	Matt West	Researcher	Harper's Magazine	tel/email	Chavez offer of cheap heating oil	Provided information
9/20/2005	Nadine Berg	Legislative Director	Rep. Serrano	email	Connie Mack's statements on Bronx residents being anti-American	perhaps someone may have crossed yet another line in referring to New Yorkers as Anti-American.
9/23/2005	Clara Long	(no title given)	Social Ventures Network	email	Socially-responsible Business Delegation to Venezuela	Discussed potential industry targets in Caracas, Pto. La Cruz; logistical details
9/27/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	US Congress (House and Senate)	fax	President Chavez visit to NYC	President Chavez' message in NYC
9/16-17/05	General Public	General Public	New York City	in person	President Chavez to speak at Church	Ticket distribution. Please respect diversity of opinions.
9/23/2005	CBC Staff	Legislative Staff	CBC	email	CBC legislative conference	inquiry into Venezuela/Western Hemisphere-pertinent content
10/3/2005	Legislative Staff	Legislative Staff	Various Congressional Offices	in person	Venezuela's Energy Climate	Venezuela an important energy source.

FARA Reporting Log-VIO		Contacts and outreach by Eric Wingerter September 2005 - March 2006				
Date	Person Contacted	Position/Title	Organization	Contacted	Subject Discussed	Position Advocated
9/1/05	Listserv			Email	Pat Robertson call for assassination	White House must condemn Robertson's remarks
9/13/05	William Camacaro		Bolivarian Circle New York	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Bill Fletcher	President	TransAfrica Forum	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Liz Mesteres	Executive Director	Brecht Forum	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Claudia Preparada		Transportation Workers Union NYC	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Carrie Biggs Adams		Communications Workers of America	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Dennis Serette		Communications Workers of America	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Dan Kovlak		United Steelworkers of America	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Camilo Romero		United Students against Sweatshops	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Jeff Ordower	Midwest Director	ACORN	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Donna Gaines		Rainbow PUSH	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Dennis Rivera	President	SEIU Local 1199	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Leslie Cagan		United For Peace and Justice	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Sandra Levinson	Executive Director	Center for Cuban Studies	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Leigh Novag		The Nation	Email	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/13/05	Deborah James		Global Exchange	Phone	Presidential Visit to NYC	Participate in public event
9/20/05	Margarita Lopez Maya		Universidad Central de Venezuela	Phone	Chicago Academic Event	Speak on Panel
9/20/05	Rosa Campos Brito	Professor	Loyola University	Phone	Chicago Academic Event	Speak on Panel
9/22/05	Listserv			Email	Chavez Visit to NYC	Participation
9/23/05	Olivia Goumbri	Director	EPICA	Phone	Venezuela Readers Book Signing	Scheduling
9/27/05	Bernadine Dohrn	Professor	Northwestern University	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Speak on Panel
9/27/05	Antonio Gonzalez	President	Southwest Voter Reg. & Ed. Proj.	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Outreach in Latino Community
9/27/05	Listserv			Email	Negative Column Washington Post	Request for letters
9/27/05	Robert Naiman	Ph. D. Candidate	University of Illinois Champaigne	Phone	Chicago Public Event	University Outreach
9/27/05	Janise Hurtig		University of Illinois Chicago	Email	Chicago Public Event	University Outreach
9/27/05	Efrian Evias		SEIU Local 1	Email	Chicago Public Event	Union Outreach
9/27/05	Don Irizeny		US Small Business Association	Email	Chicago Public Event	Business Outreach
9/27/05	Brian McCurly		Columbia College	Email	Chicago Public Event	University Outreach
9/27/05	Michael Person		National Lawyers Guild	Email	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
9/27/05	Richard Reilly		Independent Media Center Chicago	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
9/27/05	Jonathan Peck		Southwest Youth Collaborative	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
9/27/05	Marcia Pizarro		AFSCME	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Union Outreach
9/27/05	Jackelyn Reyes		Business Development Association	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
9/27/05	Victor Ortiz		Northeastern Illinois University	Email	Chicago Public Event	University Outreach
9/27/05	Charlie Serrano	Director	Taino	In Person	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
10/3/05	Dan Hellinger	Professor	Webster University	Phone	Chicago Academic Event	Speak on Panel
10/3/05	Jose Lopez	Director	Puerto Rican Cultural Center	In Person	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
10/4/05	Lydia Lazar		Kent School of Law	In Person	Chicago Academic Event	University Outreach
10/4/05	Felix Masud	Professor	DePaul University	In Person	Chicago Academic Event	Speak on Panel
10/4/05	James Early		Smithsonian Institution	Phone	Chicago Academic Event	Speak on Panel
10/4/05	Miguel Hernadez		Universidad Central de Venezuela	Phone	Chicago Academic Event	Speak on Panel
10/4/05	Danny Glover	Actor		Phone	Chicago Public Event	Speak on Panel
10/5/05	Jose Herrera	Student	Universtiy of Minnesota	Phone	Chicago Public Event	Outreach
10/5/05	Marcel Honore	Reporter	Associated Press	Phone	Media Law Reporting	Exploring stories of musicians in Vzla
10/3/05	Ricardo Moreno	Director	Simon Bolivar Foundation	Phone	California Reporting on Venezuela	Introductions to California reporters
10/6/05	Listserv			Email	Venezuela Matters Event in Chicago	Participation
10/13/05	Chicago Event			In Person	Venezuelan Social Missions	Non-Intervention
10/14/05	University of Illinois			In Person	Venezuela and US foreign policy	Non-Intervention
10/15/05	John Walsh	Director	Washington Office on Latin America	Phone	WOLA Venezuela Human Rights Panel	Balance makeup of panel
10/21/05	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Phone	Heating Oil Initiatives	Interview recipients
10/21/05	Listserv			Email	Parade Magazine	Request for letters to Magazine

10/27/05	Listserv			Email	Upcoming Venezuela events	Participation
11/1/05		Editor	Washington Post	Letter	Human Rights activists in Venezuela	Explain the background of activists
11/3/05	Listserv			Email	Washington Post story on Pentagon	Request for letters
11/4/05		Staff	Brookings Institution	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Institute for International Economics	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Center for Global Development	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Economic Policy Institute	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Heinrich Boell Foundation	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Center for American Progress	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	United Nations Development Program	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Bank Information Center	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Development Gap	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Friends of the Earth	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/4/05		Staff	Council on Hemispheric Affairs	Email	Venezuelan Business discussion	Attend
11/8/05	Listserv			Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Circulate results in media
11/8/05	Jesse Hardman	Reporter	National Public Radio	Phone	Heating Oil Initiatives	Interview on New England Initiatives
11/10/05	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Nestor Ikeda	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Marcel Honore	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Anthony Kennedy	Reporter	Bloomberg	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Monte Reel	Reporter	Washington Post	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Pascal Fletcher	Reporter	Reuters	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Chuck Lustig	Reporter	ABC News	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Edward Alden	Reporter	Financial Times	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Marcela Sanchez	Columnist	Washington Post	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Jose Decardoba	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Fabiola Sanchez	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/10/05	Mike Faenuf	Reporter	Los Angeles Times	Email	Latino Barometro Poll Results	Include poll results in coverage
11/16/05	Noam Chompsky	Professor	MIT	Email	Boston Heating Oil Initiative	Speak at Press Conference
11/18/05	SOA Watch Vigil			In Person	Venezuela and US foreign policy	Oppose US intervention in Venezuela
11/18/05	Rosa Campos Brito	Professor	Loyola University	In Person	Venezuela and US foreign policy	Oppose US intervention in Venezuela
11/30/05	Sarah Stevens		Center for International Policy	Phone	Venezuela Delegations	Help with contacts in Venezuela
12/1/05	Listserv				Opposition plan to boycott elections	Request to write letters to the editor
12/1/05	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Phone	Regional Elections in Venezuela	Cover the opposition pull-out
12/1/05	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Email	Regional Elections in Venezuela	Cover the opposition pull-out
12/1/05	Monte Reel	Reporter	Washington Post	Email	Regional Elections in Venezuela	Cover the opposition pull-out
12/1/05	Cris Kraul	Reporter	Los Angeles Times	Email	Regional Elections in Venezuela	Cover the opposition pull-out
12/1/05	Jose Decardoba	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Email	Regional Elections in Venezuela	Cover the opposition pull-out
12/5/05	Shawn Zeller	Reporter	Congressional Quarterly	Email	Bolivarian Circles in the United States	Helped facilitate contacts for story
12/6/05	Rodney Oneil		Urban League of New Jersey	Phone	CITGO Oil initiative	Participate in New Jersey program
12/9/05		Editors	Baltimore Sun	Letter	CITGO Oil initiative	Discuss Venezuelan social missions
12/10/05	Neil King	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Phone	CITGO Oil initiative	Discuss Venezuelan social missions
12/14/05	William Adams	Vice President	International Longshoreman's Union	Phone	Venezuela Labor delegation	Participate in World Social Forum
1/4/06	Marie Dennis		Maryknoll	Phone	President Chavez Christmas speech	Provide context in faith communities
1/4/06	Chuck Kaufman	Director	Nicaragua Network	Phone	President Chavez Christmas speech	Provide context
1/4/06	Arthur Waskow	Rabbi		Phone	President Chavez Christmas speech	Provide context
1/4/06	Ann Frisch	Professor	University of Wisconsin	Email	President Chavez Christmas speech	Provide context
1/4/06	Dale Sorenson	Director	Marin Interfaith Task Force	Email	Venezuela Conference in DC	Bring California group to participate
1/16/06	Listserv			Email	Charges of anti-Semitism	Circulate response of Jewish groups
1/25/06	Listserv			Email	H. Con. Res. 328 introduced	Circulate response of Jewish groups
2/6/06	Listserv			Email	Boycott of Citgo announced	Support Citgo Efforts
2/6/06	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI

2/6/06	Fabiola Sanchez	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Marcel Honore	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Ian James	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Nestor Ikeda	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Anthony Kennedy	Reporter	Bloomberg	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Gary Marx	Reporter	Tribune Company	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Peter Millard	Reporter	Tribune Company	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Chris Kraul	Reporter	Los Angeles Times	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Pat Markey	Reporter	Reuters	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Jose Decardoba	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Monte Reel	Reporter	Washington Post	Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Report on OTI
2/6/06	Richard Lapper	Reporter	Financial Times	Phone	Story on employment statistics in Vzla	Use most recent numbers
2/7/06	Listserv			Email	OTI funding opposition parties	Forward story to Congress
2/14/06	Antonio Gonzalez	President	Southwest Voter Reg. & Ed. Proj.	Phone	Venezuela Conference in DC	Speak on Panel
2/16/06	Deborah James		Global Exchange	Phone	Venezuela Conference in DC	Speak on Panel
2/16/06	Ken Crowley		Witness For Peace	Phone	Faith Delegations to Venezuela	Provide contacts in Vzla
2/18/06	Johns Hopkins Univ.			In Person	Health Missions in Venezuela	Participate in health delegation
2/21/06	Gunnar Gunderson		Oregon Bolivarian Circle	Phone	Venezuela Conference in DC	Speak on Alo Presidente
2/22/06	Listserv				Negative press stories	send letters to editor
3/6/06	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Fabiola Sanchez	Reporter	Associated Press	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Marcel Honore	Reporter	Associated Press	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Ian James	Reporter	Associated Press	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Nestor Ikeda	Reporter	Associated Press	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Anthony Kennedy	Reporter	Bloomberg	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Gary Marx	Reporter	Tribune Company	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Peter Millard	Reporter	Tribune Company	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Chris Kraul	Reporter	Los Angeles Times	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Pat Markey	Reporter	Reuters	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Jose Decardoba	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/6/06	Monte Reel	Reporter	Washington Post	Phone/Email	DOE Report on foreign investment	Write about report
3/8/06	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Phone	Delegations to Venezuela	Provided info/ on US-Ven efforts
3/8/06	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Email	Report on drug cooperatio	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Fabiola Sanchez	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Marcel Honore	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Ian James	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Nestor Ikeda	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Anthony Kennedy	Reporter	Bloomberg	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Gary Marx	Reporter	Tribune Company	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Peter Millard	Reporter	Tribune Company	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Chris Kraul	Reporter	Los Angeles Times	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Pat Markey	Reporter	Reuters	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Jose Decardoba	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/8/06	Monte Reel	Reporter	Washington Post	Email	Report on drug cooperation	Background for future drug coverage
3/9/06	Listserv			Email	H. Con. Res. 328 comes up for vote	Point out inaccuracies to Congress
3/13/06	Listserv				H. Con. Res. Vote date set	Point out inaccuracies to Congress
3/15/06	Pablo Bachalet	Reporter	Miami Herald	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Juan Forero	Reporter	New York Times	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Fabiola Sanchez	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Marcel Honore	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Ian James	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Nestor Ikeda	Reporter	Associated Press	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors

3/15/06	Anthony Kennedy	Reporter	Bloomberg	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Gary Marx	Reporter	Tribune Company	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Peter Millard	Reporter	Tribune Company	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Chris Kraul	Reporter	Los Angeles Times	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Pat Markey	Reporter	Reuters	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Jose Decardoba	Reporter	Wall Street Journal	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/15/06	Monte Reel	Reporter	Washington Post	Email	H. Con. Res. 328	Report the many factual errors
3/16/06	Listserv				H. Con. Res 328 pulled from vote	

FARA Reporting Log-VIO		Contacts by		Olivia Gombri		Nov. '05 - Mar. '06	
Date	Person Contacted	Position/Title	Organization	How Co	Subject Discussed	Position Advocated	
11/29/05	Chuck Kaufman	Coordinator	Nicaragua Network	Email	Film Showing Event	provide educational information	
11/29/05	Netfa Freeman	Director	SALSA	Email	Film Showing Event	distribute event information	
12/14/05	Chuck Kaufman	Coordinator	Nicaragua Network	Email	Solidarity Conference	Distribute educational information	
12/14/05	Blaise Pittman	Student	Rutgers University	Email	Film Showing Event	Show Film and hand out ed. material	
12/14/05	Ricardo Moreno	Organizer	Solidarity Conference	Email	Speaking at Conference	Have a speaker at the conference	
1/18/06	Sarah Stephens	Staff	CIP	Email	Hill Briefing	Moderate the hill briefing	
1/18/06	Angelo Rivero	Professor	Georgetown University	Email	Hill Briefing	Speak at hill briefing	
1/18/06	Mark Weisbrot	Economist	CEPR	Email	Hill Briefing	Speak at hill briefing	
1/20/06	Banbose Shango	Organizer	Solidarity Conference	Email	Film Showing Event	Hand out flyers	
1/20/06	Daniel Brito	Staff Member	Representative Grijalva's Office	Email	Hill Briefing	Secure room for briefing	
1/25/06	Damu Smith	Radio Talk Host	Spirit in Action-Pacifica	Email	Interview about film showing	Interview speakers on film	
1/27/06	Dan Hellinger	Professor	Webster University	Email	Meeting with Congress members	Meet with your member in DC	
1/27/06	Eva Golinger	Author		Email	Speaking at Conference	Speak at conference	
2/1/06	DC Film Showing	Olivia Gombri	Venezuela Information Office	Speech	Venezuela/US relations	Better US policy towards Venezuela	
2/1/06	Anthony Fenton	Journalist	Independent	Email	Hill Briefing	Speak at hill briefing	
2/2/06	Dan Hellinger	Professor	Webster University	Email	Conference	Preparation for lobby day	
2/6/06	Larry Birns	Director	COHA	Phone	Hill Briefing	Speak at hill briefing	
2/8/06	House Int. Rel. Com.	Foreign Relations Staff	US Congress	Phone	Hill Briefing	Invitation to attend hill briefing	
2/8/06	DC Film Showing	Olivia Gombri	Venezuela Information Office	Speech	Venezuela/US relations	Better US policy towards Venezuela	
2/15/06	DC Film Showing	Olivia Gombri	Venezuela Information Office	Speech	Venezuela/US relations	Better US policy towards Venezuela	
3/3/06	Peter and Gail Mott	Members	Interconnect	Email	White Dove Award Ceremony	Setting up radio interviews	
3/9/06	Steve Ellner	Professor	Eastern University of Venezuela	Email	Hill Briefing	Speak at hill briefing	
2/9/06	Leslie Salgado	President	HOCAFOLA	Email	Mack Resolution	Send out action alert to members	
3/9/06	Sarah Stephens	Staff	CIP	Email	Hill Briefing	Moderate the hill briefing	
3/10/06	White Dove Award	Olivia Gombri	Venezuela Information Office	Speech	Venezuela Humanitarian Aid	Better US policy towards Venezuela	
3/14/06	Dan Hellinger	Professor	Webster University	Email	Hill Briefing	Speak at hill briefing	

FARA Reporting Log-VIO		Contacts and Edward Mercado November 2005-March 2006				
Date	Person Contacted	Position/Title	Organization	How Contacted	Subject Discussed	Position Advocated
11/22/05	Jorge Marin	Engineer	Bolivarian Circle Boston	Email	Conference Call	facilitate Activist Call
12/12/05	Kelly Leiser	Student	Solidarity Conference	Email	Speaking at Conference	Speak at conference
12/14/05	Timi Gerson	Analyst	Fenton Communications	Email	Political Prisoners	Discuss Cases
12/14/05	Lisa Sullivan			Email	Delegation to Venezuela	Bring State Rep. to Vzla delegation
12/16/05	Patrick McCully	Organizer	Witness for peace	Email	Delegation to Venezuela	Send Flyer to post on Website
12/16/06	DC Film Showing			Public Speech	Questions/Answers	Venezuelan political history
1/27/06	World Social Forum			Public Speech	US Activist Workshop	How to use educational resources
1/25/06	Damu Smith	Radio Talk Host	Spirit in Action-Pacifica	Radio Show	Background on Venezuela	Invitation to Film series
2/1/06	DC Film Showing			Public Speech	Questions/Answers	US - Ven relations/Social Programs
2/8/06	DC Film Showing			Public Speech	Questions/Answers	US - Ven relations/Social Programs
2/15/06	DC Film Showing			Public Speech	Questions/Answers	US - Ven relations/Social Programs
2/10/06	Deborah James	Organizer	Global Exchange	Email	Delegation Workshop	Reschedule delegation workshop
2/8/06	Jesus Soto	Director	Radio Defensa Venezuela	Phone & Email	Radio Program	Setup VIO weekly radio program
3/4/06	Solidarity Conference			Workshop	Delegations to Venezuela	Visit the country
3/5/06	Solidarity Conference			Workshop	Alternative Media	Better use of alternative media
3/5/06	Sally O'brien	Producer	WBAI Pacifica Radio	Radio Show	National Solidarity Conference	No US Intervention in Venezuela
3/10/06	Jennifer Wagger	Producer	Venezuela Rising DVD	Email	Venezuela Rising Documentary	Will provide DVD to VIO at cost
3/20/06	Cameron McGlothlin	Manager	Amer. Council of Yng Political Leaders	Phone & Email	Vdelegation to Venezuela	Include grassroots visits to itinerary



**Venezuela Information Office
Materials Disseminated
September 2005-February 2006**

PART I: FACT SHEETS



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VENEZUELA TAKES STEPS TO PREVENT ILLEGAL MANUFACTURE, PRODUCTION AND PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS

Law Endorsing the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime

On May 3, 2005, the National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela approved a law endorsing the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime of May 31, 2001. This protocol constitutes one of the three that were passed to complement the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime:

- *Protocol to Prevent, Repress and Sanction the Trafficking of People, Especially Women and Children*
- *Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*
- *Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition*

Below is a brief description of some of the most important articles that define both the purpose of the Protocol as the role of states party in combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing and production of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

Purpose

Article 2: *The Protocol has as its main purpose the promotion, facilitation, and reinforcement of cooperation between states party with the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing and production of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.*

The Venezuela Information Office is dedicated to informing the American public about contemporary Venezuela, and receives its funding from the government of Venezuela. Further information is available from the FARA office of the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.

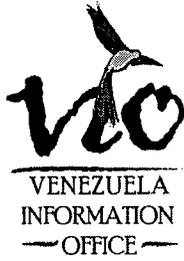
Information

Article 12: *This article establishes that states will exchange pertinent information on specific cases concerning manufacturers, commercial agents, importers and exporters of illicit weapons. Similarly, states will exchange information on the following:*

- *Organized criminal groups involved in the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.*
- *The means employed to conceal the illicit manufacture or trafficking of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.*
- *The methods, means, places of shipment, destinations, and shipping routes habitually used by organized criminal groups that participate in the illicit manufacture or trafficking of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.*
- *Legislative experiences and measures aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.*
- *States party will cooperate in the search for firearms, their parts and components and ammunition that could have been manufactured or trafficked illicitly.*

Cooperation

Article 13: *The states party will cooperate on bilateral, regional and international plans with the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.*



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2005 Latinobarómetro Poll Results: Venezuela a Democratic Bright Spot in Latin America

Much has been made of the 2005 survey results from Chilean polling firm Latinobarómetro. The annual poll, based on 20,000 face-to-face interviews in 18 Latin American countries, found this year that enthusiasm for Democratic governments has declined throughout the hemisphere, a result of regional dissatisfaction with liberalized economies that have failed to decrease poverty, and rising crime rates that have created fear in many urban areas.

The country that has resisted this regional trend the most is Venezuela. This year, Latinobarómetro found that Venezuelans tend to be far more optimistic about their economy than other nations, less turned off by the political process, and more likely than most other Latin Americans to be happy with the direction their country is headed. What's more, *more people in Venezuela consider their country "totally democratic" than any other nation in Latin America.*

Latinobarómetro, has conducted similar country-by-country surveys for the past decade, and is widely recognized as the leading multi-country public opinion polling firm in Latin America. The full report is available at www.Latinobarometro.org.

Below are the highlights for Venezuela. Charts with country-by-country breakdowns for each of the below statement are provided in the appendices to this document.

Democracy

- Venezuelans are more likely than citizens of other Latin American countries to describe their government as "totally democratic." On a scale of 1 to 10, the average Venezuelan gave her democracy a 7.6. The regional average was a ranking of 5.5 [Figure 1].

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- More than three in four Venezuelans prefer democracy over all other forms of government--the second highest ranking in the region [**Figure 2**]
- Perhaps more crucially, Venezuelans have the second highest satisfaction level with the way their own democracy functions [**Figure 3**].

Economy

- Venezuelans are far less worried about becoming unemployed than others in the region. While three in four Latin Americans in general worry about job losses in the upcoming year, less than half of all Venezuelans share this fear [**Figure 4**].
- Venezuela is the second most optimistic country in Latin America about the direction of their economy. Only powerhouse Chile ranks higher in this regard. More than half of Venezuelans say their economy is progressing, in a hemisphere where less than one in three have similar confidence [**Figure 5**].

Politics and Corruption

- While most Latin Americans think that politics is too complicated to understand, only 2 in 5 Venezuelans share their frustration. Of the 18 countries surveyed, Venezuelans are the least likely to say they are confused by politics [**Figure 6**].
- Venezuelans are optimistic that their government is effectively dealing with corruption. It ranks third among countries that believe that things have improved in the last two years [**Figure 7**].

What Does This Survey Mean?

Clearly, Venezuelans are generally more content with their government and economy than the vast majority of Latin Americans. Perhaps there is some cultural tendency that makes Venezuelans more optimistic by nature? A year-by-year analysis of Venezuelan opinions indicates that this is not the case.

Latinobarómetro polls from 1996-1998 indicate that in the three years before President Hugo Chavez was elected, Venezuelans had a much lower level of satisfaction with the way their democracy functioned.

Data is not available for 1999, President Chavez's first full year in office, but by the year 2000, satisfaction levels jumped a full 20 percentage points. Levels dipped a bit between 2001 and 2003, a time period which included the coup d'état against President Chavez

and a nationwide oil strike, yet even during these bleak times, satisfaction levels were *still higher* than the pre-Chavez years. Satisfaction really began to climb again in 2004, and by 2005 they've reached their highest levels since Latinobarómetro began issuing their annual report ten years ago **[Figure 8]**.

Another obvious conclusion is that more Venezuelans believe their country is "totally democratic" than do citizens of other Latin American nations. Perhaps Venezuelans define democracy differently than a North Americans would? You may remember that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has referred to "democratically elected leaders who govern in an illiberal way." But when asked to describe the most important characteristics of a democracy, Venezuelans were far more likely than citizens of any other country in the region to prioritize civil liberties over elections **[Figure 9]**.

In other words, Venezuelans largely have the same definition of a democracy as the United States.

Figure 1: Perceptions of Democracy In Latin America

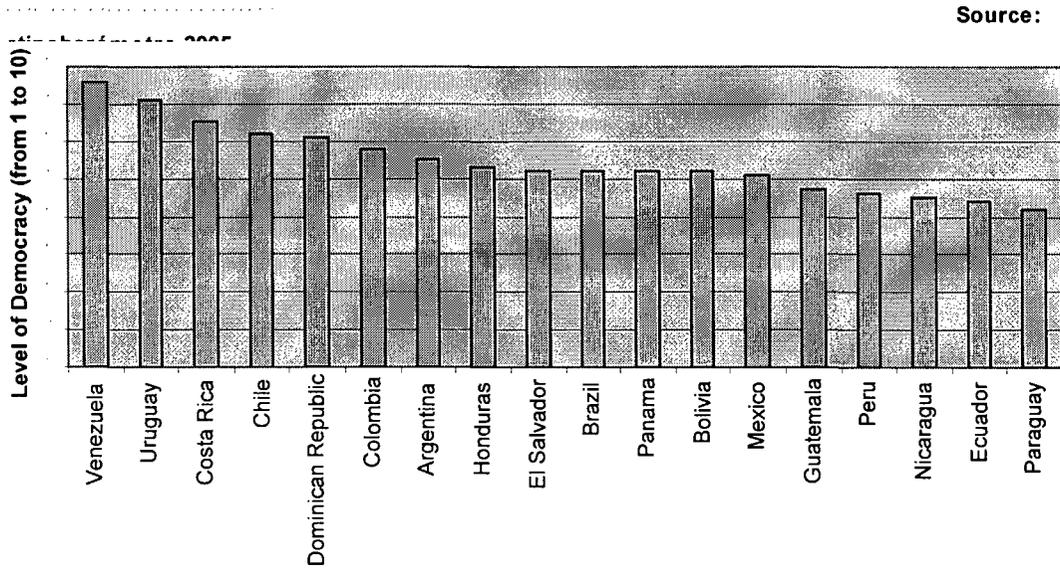
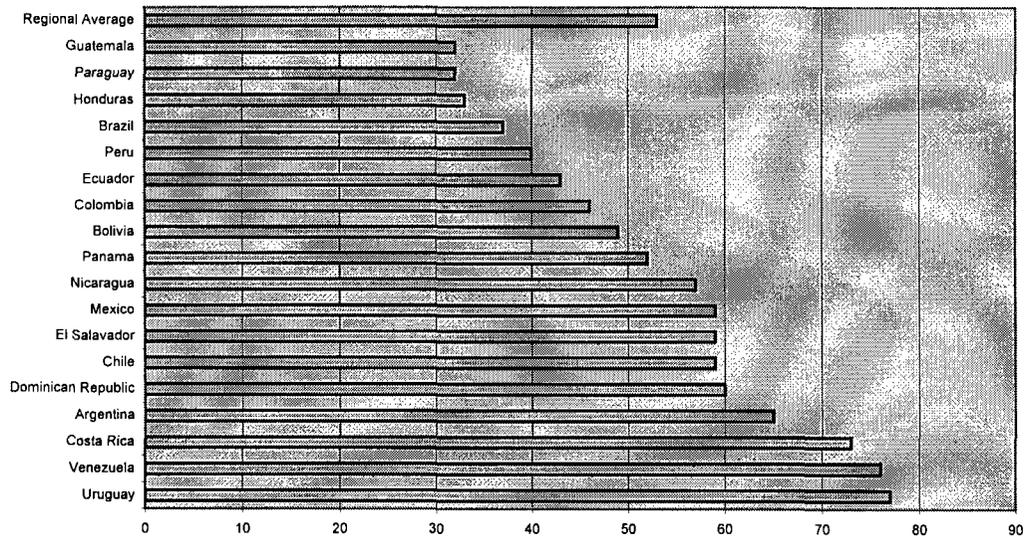


Figure 2: Preference for Democracy in Latin America



Percentage of respondents who agree with the statement "Democracy is preferable over all other forms of government."

Figure 3: Satisfaction With the Way Democracy Functions

Percentage of respondents who answered "satisfied" or "very satisfied" to the question, "In general, are you very satisfied, satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way your democracy functions?"

Source: Latinobarómetro 2005

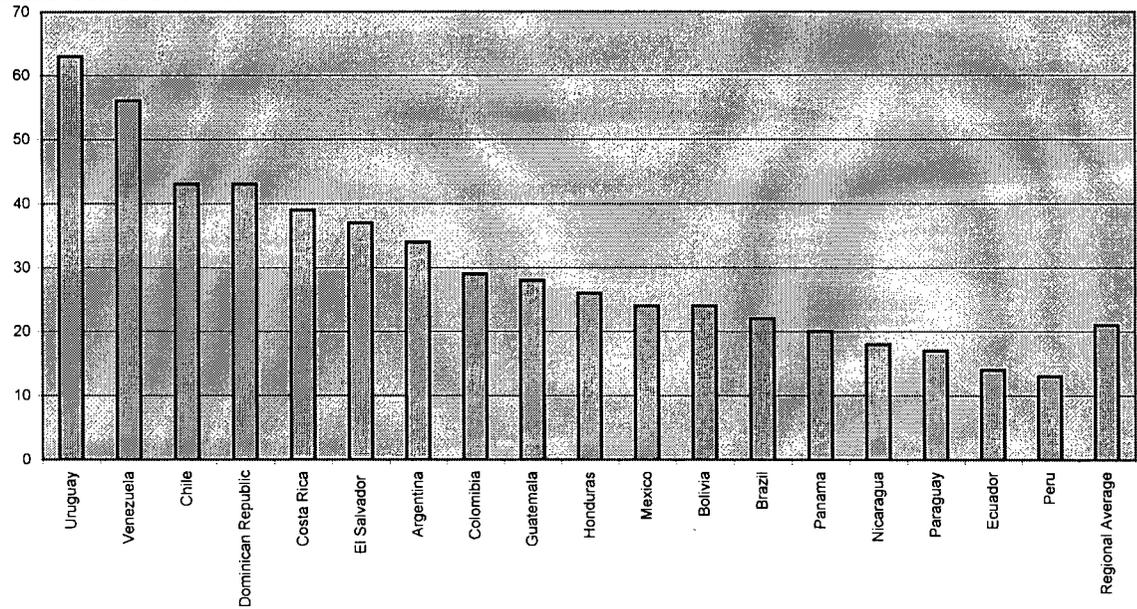
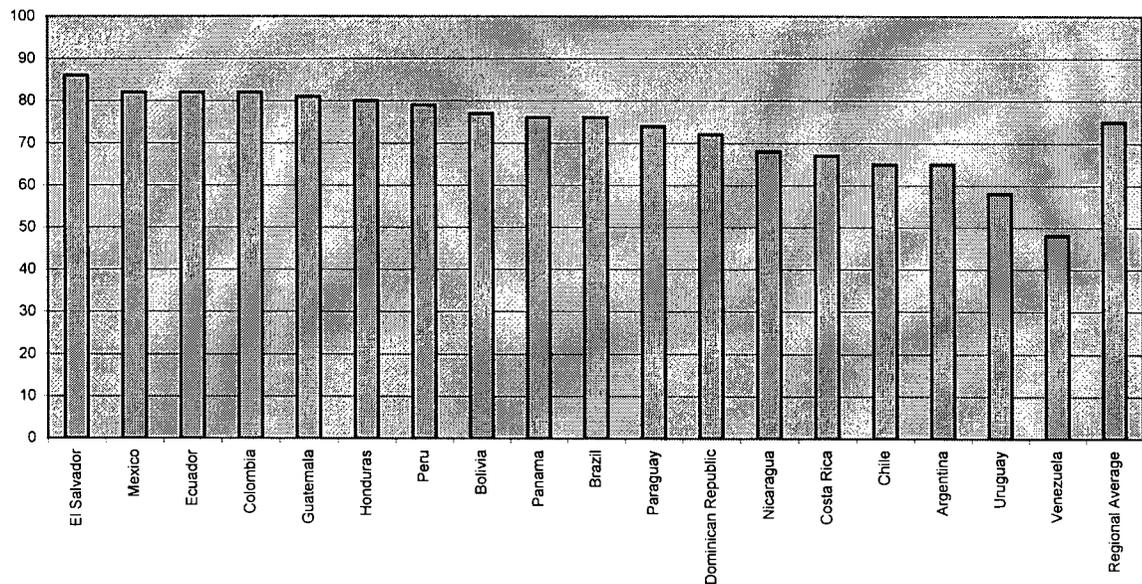


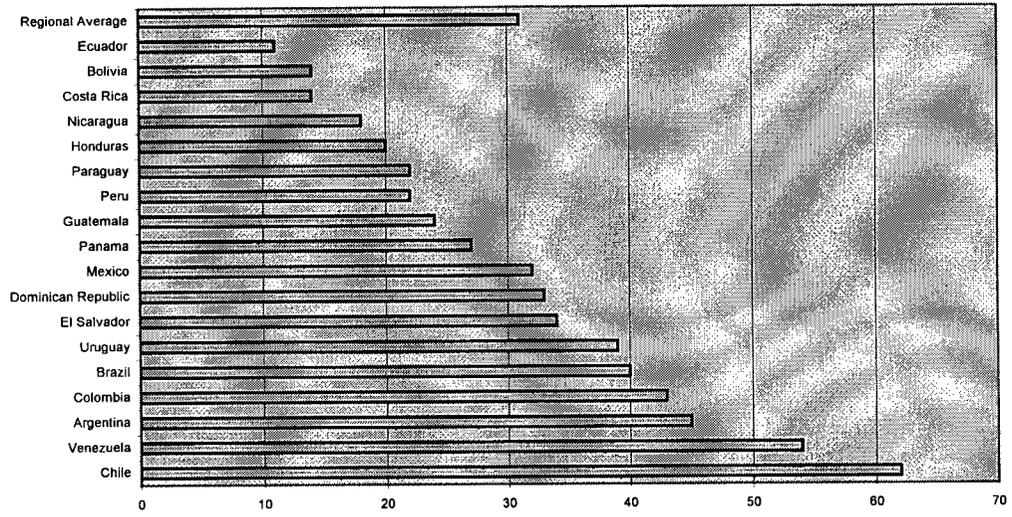
Figure 4: Concerns About Unemployment



Percentage of respondents answering "worried" or "very worried" to the question, "How worried are you that you will be without work or unemployed over the next twelve months?"

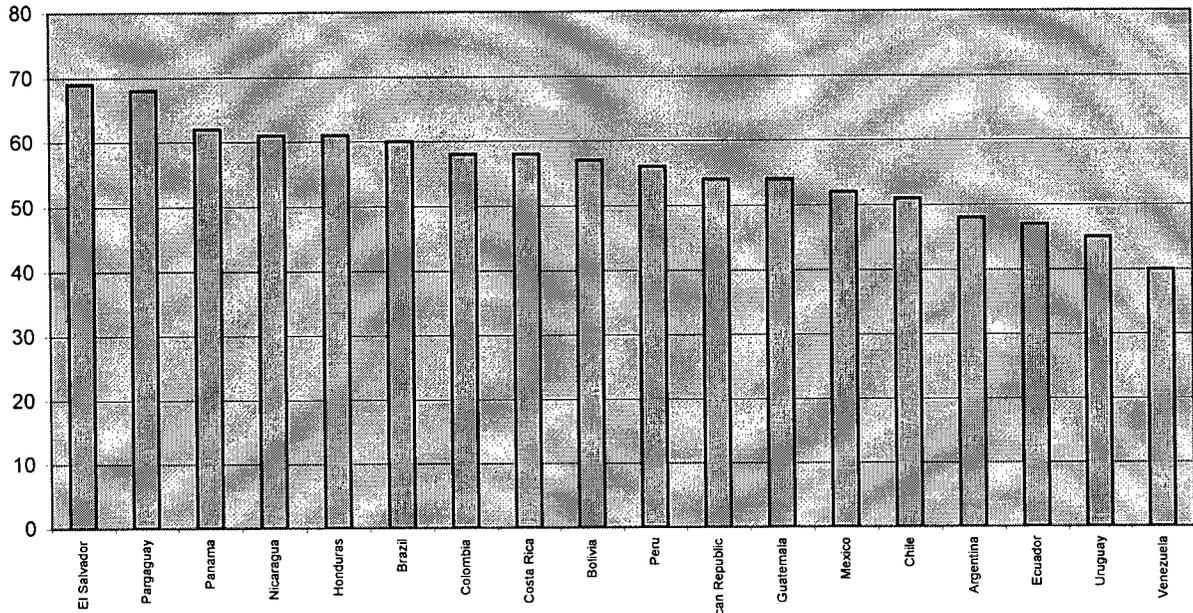
Source: Latinobarómetro 2005

Figure 5: Progress of Economy



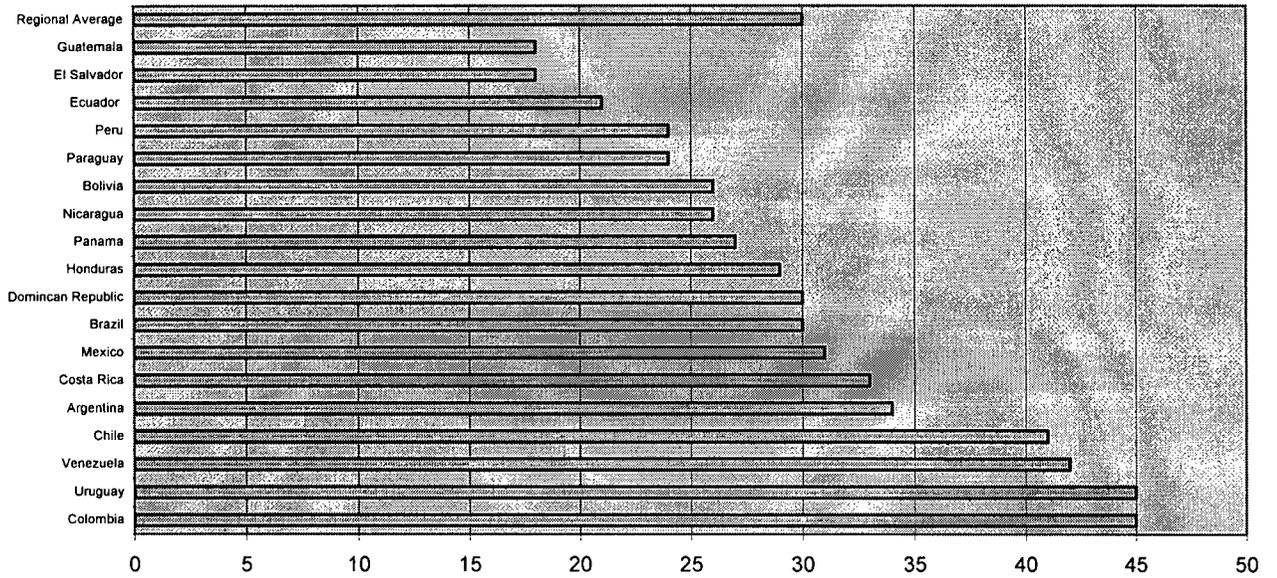
In the context of the nation's economy, the percentage of respondents who believe their country is "progressing."
Source: Latinobarómetro 2005

Figure 6: Understanding of Politics



Percentage of respondents who agree with the statement, "Politics is so complicated that it can't be understood"
Source: Latinobarómetro 2005

Figure 7: Reduction in Corruption in Latin America



Percentage of respondents who answered "some" or "very much" to the statement "There has been progress in reducing corruption in state institutions for the last two years." Source:

Figure 8: Venezuelan Sastisfaction With Government 1996-2005

Percentage of Venezuelans who said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way their democracy functioned, year by year.

[Note: data for 1999 is not available]

Source: Latinobarómetro

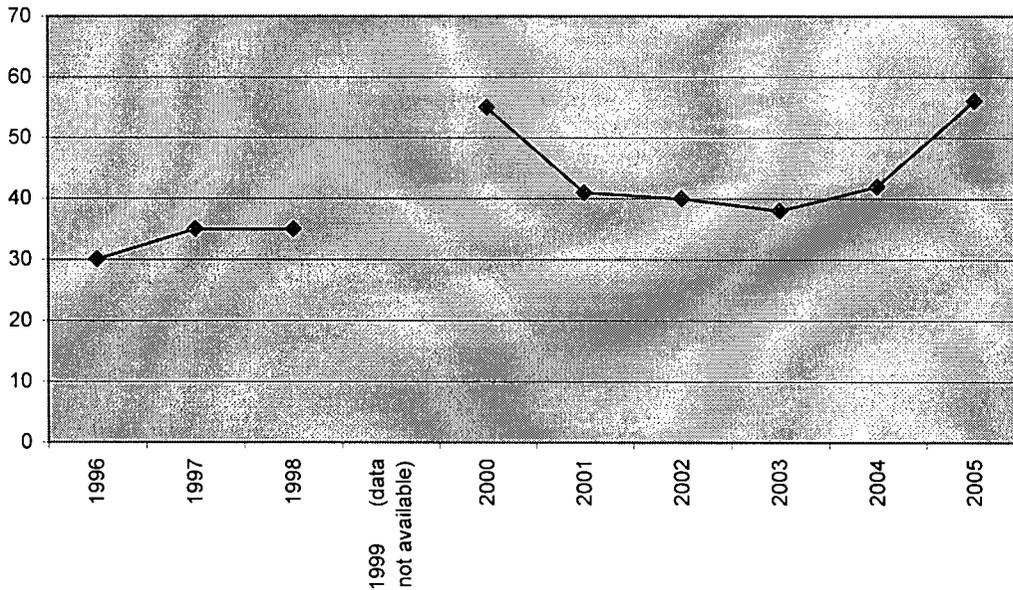
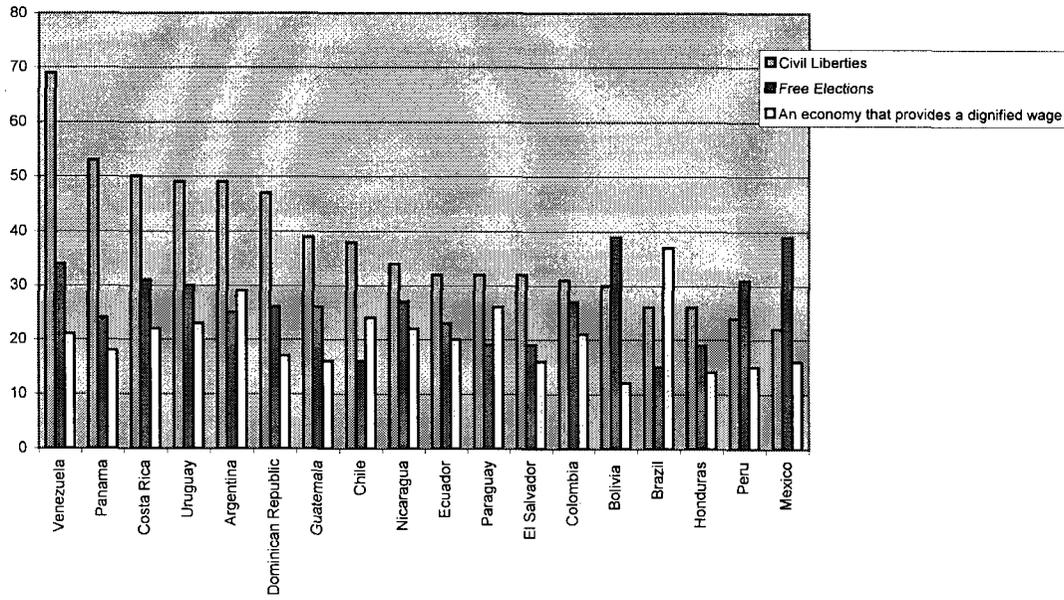


Figure 9: What Constitutes A Democracy?

Responses to the question, *What are the most important characteristics of a democracy?*
 Source: Latinobarómetro 2005



Education, Health Care & Opportunity

Venezuela's Revolution of Hope

Venezuela's social transformation is bringing health care & education to its most needy citizens and inspiring a wave of political engagement
Get involved to help support Venezuela's revolution of hope.

Despite the constant barrage of attacks from the United States government and media, Venezuelans are more hopeful than ever about their social transformation. New polling results find that more Venezuelans consider their country "totally democratic" than citizens of any other country in the region. Often lost in the dramatic battle of words between the two countries is a discussion of what exactly is happening in Venezuela that makes the Bolivarian process so popular.

The Bolivarian Revolution

Venezuela's transformation is often referred to as the "Bolivarian Revolution," after the Latin American liberator Simon Bolivar. Throughout Venezuela's history, poor and rural citizens have lacked access to even the most basic health care or educational opportunities. Venezuelans believe that this runs contrary to the Bolivar's initial dream for the continent. The Bolivarian values of equal opportunities for all, as well as unity within Latin America, are the foundation of the social transformation within Venezuela.

Education

Just ten years ago, Venezuela's illiteracy rate was nearly 9%, representing about 2 million people, primarily in rural indigenous communities and poor inner-city families. Under previous governments, students had been required to pay fees to attend public schools, which excluded the most needy from receiving basic education. The most remote parts of the country had no schools at all, and government spending on public schools declined steadily throughout the

1990s. Although the country enjoyed immense oil



Rural education is a focus of government policy

wealth, the government – largely controlled by the country's wealthy elite – made little effort to eradicate this plague of illiteracy and educational discrimination.

With the election of President Hugo Chavez in 1998, the Venezuelan electorate signaled their frustration with a government that excluded such a large percentage of the population. Fueled by popular support, the new administration initiated a remarkable series of educational reforms, establishing hundreds of volunteer-run night schools throughout the country.

Today more than one hundred thousand Venezuelans volunteer on evenings and

weekends to teach adults who had missed out on educational opportunities in their youth. The results have been remarkable: ***More than one and a half million adults have been taught to read in the past 3 years***, and the educational system has been lauded by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

A new sense of hope and dignity is palpable in the Venezuelan barrios. The poorest communities, which had been notoriously politically disengaged in past generations, are now a vigorous source of political life.

Health Care

Access to health services had been the most dramatic divide in Venezuela in recent generations. The vast majority of Venezuelans had not had easy access to medical treatment.

A new Constitution, passed by referendum in 2000, became the first in Latin America to guarantee all citizens the fundamental right to basic health care. In order to meet this goal, Venezuela entered into a unique partnership with the government of Cuba, which provides 20,000 medical professionals to treat Venezuela's most needy. In the past five years, thousands of community health clinics have been established throughout the country.

More than 60 percent of the Venezuelan population today receive some form of

government-sponsored health care, and the results have been inspiring. ***Between 1996 and 2002, infant mortality rates decreased by 38 percent.***

Today Venezuela has one of the lowest postnatal mortality rates in Latin America, and is on track to reach the United Nations Millennium Development health goals by 2015.

Opportunity

Education and health care provide the foundation for building a middle class, but perhaps the most striking result of the Bolivarian process is the renewed energy and hope coming from the Venezuelan barrios.

The Venezuelan poor, who had in the past been written off as apolitical *campesinos* and urban slum dwellers, are taking the lead in transforming their country's political and economic life. By organizing agricultural and industrial cooperatives, Venezuelans are increasing their quality of life and providing a model of socially-conscious economic development for the region.

As U.S. citizens, we have much to learn from Venezuela and the Bolivarian process. We also have a responsibility to ensure that the Bush administration respects the sovereignty of Venezuela, and allows the country to pursue its democratic vision.

How You Can Help the Process in Venezuela

- Educate yourself: visit www.veninfo.org or www.venezuelanalysis.org
- Participate in the National Venezuela Solidarity Day on December 2, 2005: <http://lasolidarity.org/Dec2.shtml>
- Organize a presentation or film screening—contact eric@veninfo.org
- Come to Washington DC next spring to participate in the first-ever Venezuelan Solidarity Conference—email chuck@afgj.org
- Join a delegation going to Venezuela—contact lisavenezuela@gmail.com
- *The Venezuela Information Office is dedicated to informing the American public about contemporary Venezuela, and receives its funding from the government of Venezuela. Further information is available from the FARA office of the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.*



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Human Rights in Venezuela: The State Department's 2005 Report

A recent report by the U.S. State Department provides information challenging the idea that human rights problems are widespread under the Chavez Administration in Venezuela. International media coverage of these issues often focuses on alleged human rights problems both regarding long-term structural issues (such as prison reform, an endemic problem present long before the present administration) and more recent accusations by government opponents regarding freedom of press and political persecution.

The following statements are taken directly from the U.S. State Department's 2005 Human Rights Report and address a number of areas relating to human rights in Venezuela:

Political Freedoms

- “The law provides for freedom of assembly, and the government generally respected this right in practice.”
- “There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances;”
- “The government or its agents were not accused of committing any politically motivated killings;”
- “...no deaths resulted from security force intervention in antigovernment demonstrations.”

Freedom of Press

- “...print and electronic media were independent...”
- Controversial charges against journalists, especially one high profile case defamation case against *El Universal*, were dismissed by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice.

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Education & Academic Freedom

- “There were no government restrictions on the Internet or academic freedom.”
- “...professional and academic associations indicated they generally operated without interference...”
- Government ministries “ran educational programs to reincorporate school dropouts and adults into the educational system.”
- “The government also provided free adult educational and technical training through the Barrio Adentro Mission Program.”

Elections

- “The law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right through periodic elections held on the basis of universal suffrage.”
- “The government cooperated with international governmental organizations and permitted visits by OAS representatives.”

Human Trafficking

- “The government assisted with international investigations of trafficking.”
- “In July authorities assisted in the repatriation of three Colombian victims of trafficking.”
- “In January the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the OAS and the International Organization for Migration for the antitrafficking workshops to raise public awareness of the problem.”
- “The government provided trafficking victims with psychological and physical examinations.”

Labor

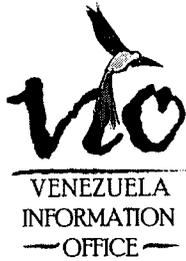
- “The law stipulates that the work week may not exceed 44 hours. Managers are prohibited from obligating employees to work additional time, and workers have the right to weekly time away from work. Overtime may not exceed 2 hours daily, 10 hours weekly, or 100 hours annually, and may not be paid at a rate less than time-and-one-half. The ministry effectively enforced these standards in the formal sector.”
- “The law protects children from exploitation in the workplace. The Ministry of Labor and the National Institute for Minors enforced child labor policies effectively in the formal sector of the economy.”

- “The law protects children from exploitation in the workplace. The Ministry of Labor and the National Institute for Minors effectively in the formal sector of the economy...”
- Replacement workers were not permitted during legal strikes.

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The Full State Department Report May be viewed at:

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61745.htm>



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Five Myths and Realities About Venezuela and Democracy

MYTH: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is a dictator.

REALITY: Hugo Chavez was democratically elected in 1998 and 2000.

- “With 78 percent of ballots counted, the National Elections Council said Chavez had tallied 56 percent of the votes (“Coup Leader Elected President,” by Tim Johnson, The Miami Herald, December 7, 1998)”
- “[Chavez] won reelection Sunday netting 56 percent of the vote, almost the same figure he won with December 6, 1998. (“Chavez Officially Proclaimed President-Elect of Venezuela,” Agence France-Presse, August 4, 2000)”

MYTH: The 2004 failed referendum to recall Chavez was fixed.

REALITY: Observers from the Organization of American States (OAS) and the U.S.-based Carter Center certified the referendum results, which gave Chavez a 59% to 41% victory.

- “As cries of election fraud continued in Venezuela, international observers poured cold water on opposition claims that President Hugo Chavez owed his lopsided victory in Sunday’s election recall referendum to massive tampering with electronic voting machines. (“Venezuelan Ballot Gets Confidence Vote,” by David Luhnnow and Jose de Cordoba, The Wall Street Journal, August 20, 2004)”

MYTH: Chavez re-wrote the constitution to consolidate his own power.

REALITY: Both the decision to rewrite the constitution and the approval of the constitution itself were publicly mandated through a national referendum.

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- “With 80 percent of the votes counted, 88 percent cast ballots in favor of forming an assembly to rewrite the constitution, and 82 percent approved the terms Chavez has laid out for electing the assembly’s members. (“Venezuelans Vote on Chavez’s Proposal for New Constitution, Associated Press, by Steven Gutkin, April 26, 1999)”
- “In a national referendum on Wednesday, 72 percent of voters approved a sweeping constitution for Venezuela that gives the state a bigger role in the economy, makes the judicial system more democratic and consolidates power in the executive branch. (“Chavez Faces ‘Tough Road’ in Venezuela,” in the Washington Post, by Serge F. Kovalski, December 17, 1999.)”

MYTH: Venezuelans are unhappy and believe that the nation is headed in the wrong direction.

REALITY: According to recent polling by independent Chilean public opinion firm Latinobarómetro of 19,000 residents in 18 countries in Latin America representing more than 400 million inhabitants, the majority of Venezuelans are satisfied with the state of affairs in the country under Chavez. According to the survey¹:

- 65% of Venezuelans approve of the direction in which President Chavez is taking the country.
- On a scale of one to ten, one being “not democratic” and 10 being “totally democratic,” the rating given by Venezuelan citizens for their country was 7.6, the highest in the region (the regional average by citizens of all countries surveyed is 5.5).
- 54 percent of Venezuelans believe that the country is progressing, the second highest percentage rate in Latin America, where the regional average percentage rating is 31.
- Venezuela has the third highest rating in the region by citizens regarding the progress of its governments fight against corruption, where 42% of those surveyed believe that there has been progress in the anti-corruption fight, up from 33% in 2004. Venezuelan citizens surveyed also gave high marks to the government in terms of their confidence that government spending of tax revenue is on worthy causes, scoring the second highest ranking in the region.

MYTH: Before Chavez, Venezuela’s political system was more democratic and less corrupt than the current system.

REALITY: Before Chavez, the poor were excluded from the political process. Venezuela’s two political parties traded power for years, engendering entrenched corruption.

¹ More information about Latinobarómetro Corporation and the original version of the 2005 survey available at: www.latinobarometro.org

- “The two parties, Acción Democrática, which has a center-left Social Democratic ideology, and Copei, a Social Christian group, had alternated in power since a military dictatorship was overthrown in 1958. They set up a spoils system that has led, as most Venezuelans see it, to the squandering of the country’s vast oil wealth and a gradual estrangement from the populace. (“Venezuelans Applaud Leader’s Assault on System, the New York Times, by Larry Rohter, September 5, 1999)”
- “This oil-rich wreck of a nation, battered by decades of mismanagement and rampant corruption, pervasive poverty, runaway violent crime and plunging oil prices, is expected to launch a revolution at the ballot box... The rich, almost everywhere [in Latin America] have gotten richer while the poor feel they have not won a fair share of new free-market economic growth. Nowhere has the problem been worse than corruption-plagued Venezuela, a country a leading political analyst terms ‘one big endless insider trading party.’ (“Venezuela’s Poor Believe They’ve Found a Messiah; Presidential Hopeful ‘Satanized’ by Foes,” by Laurie Goering, the Chicago Tribune, December 6, 1998)”
- “Supporters and detractors of Mr. Chavez agree on one point: the rise of the would-be strongman is a symptom of the Venezuelan Government’s sustained neglect of most of the population, something that has given democracy a bad name here. (“Renegade Officer Favored in Venezuela Election Today,” in the New York Times, by Diana Jean Schemo, December 5, 2005)”

PART II: PRESS RELEASES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 20, 2006

Contact: Edward Mercado
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RECENT CHARGES AGAINST TWO INDIVIDUAL VENEZUELAN JOURNALISTS REFLECT NORMAL LEGAL PROCEEDINGS, NOT POLITICAL BIAS

Charges Based on Libel Laws and Financial Fraud, Not Freedom of Expression

There has been a recent concern by the U.S. press and watchdog groups regarding charges against two individuals who are practicing journalists in Venezuela. However, it is important to note that these arrests have nothing to do with freedom of the press or journalism. These individuals have been arrested for breaking the law, and not for their opinions or the issues that they have recently covered.

A March 15, 2005 Reuters piece notes that: *"A Venezuelan judge on Wednesday [March 15, 2005] sentenced a journalist critical of President Hugo Chávez to house arrest for defaming an army officer in a case her supporters denounced as political persecution."*²

The Officer, Colonel Angel Bellorin, brought a suit against Ibeyise Pacheco, a columnist for *El Nacional* daily newspaper, for aggravated slander after she accused him in a column of falsifying exams required for promotion in 2002. Ms. Pacheco herself has admitted that she did defame Col. Bellorin by printing a retraction, and has admitted that her column did cause personal injury to the Colonel.³ This suit was not brought by the Venezuelan government or President Chavez, nor does the President have authority over the courts. The dispute is being handled as a criminal case through Venezuelan jurisprudence that dictates the appropriate court forum under the provisions and sovereignty of the Venezuelan Constitution.

In an unrelated case, The Committee to Protect Journalists News Alert for March 6, 2006 states:

"The Committee to Protect Journalists is concerned by the arrest today [March 6, 2006] on fraud charges of a Venezuelan journalist known for his criticism of state authorities."

While true that Gustavo Azócar Alcalá is an active critic of the government on his daily show at the San Cristobal-based Televisora del Táchira TV station, his arrest is based on financial fraud charges filed six years ago and wholly unrelated to his current work as a

² "Anti Chavez Reporter Sentenced to House Arrest", Reuters News Service, March 15, 2006.
http://today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2006-03-16T015735Z_01_N15249141_RTRUKOC_0_US-VENEZUELA-MEDIA.xml&archived=False

³ "Venezuelan opposition journalist Ibeyise Pacheco forced to eat humble pie", Patrick J. O'Donohue,
<http://www.vheadline.com/readnews.asp?id=48917>

journalist. Mr. Alcalá's arrest stems from a warrant that was issued for his failure to appear in court on charges of fraud that were filed in May 2000. Ana Casanova, Táchira state attorney general, filed a complaint against Mr. Azócar while he was working for the private radio station Radio Noticias 1060, accusing him of irregularities in the assignment of advertising in a contract signed with the state lottery.

Both these cases are clear. They involve criminal proceedings against citizens charged with breaking the law, who also happen to be journalists. This is a case of coverage failing to recognize the difference between legitimate legal proceedings and inexistent state sponsored political oppression. This does a disservice to the many journalists throughout the world, including those in the United States, who have been jailed for their beliefs and their work.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 6, 2006

CONTACT: Eric Wingerter
202-347-8081

DOE Cites Venezuela's Openness To Foreign Participation in Energy Projects

Foreign Investment Harder in Other Countries According To U.S National Security Review

A new report by the United States Department of Energy showcases Venezuela as a comparably stable platform for foreign participation in energy projects more so than the country's second and third leading suppliers, Saudi Arabia and Mexico (Canada is the first supplier of oil to the U.S.).

The report also says Venezuela is more open to foreign participation in energy exploration and development than China, which is the United State's third trading partner (and with whom the U.S. had a \$175 billion trade imbalance in 2004).

The report, titled "Section 1837: National Security Review of International Energy Requirements", is mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and compares examples of U.S. company participation in eight different oil-producing countries.

In the report, the DOE mentions that there is substantial U.S. and foreign investment in Venezuela's strategic energy associations, which produce, upgrade and export heavy oil reserves. The report mentions that there are 33 Operations Service Agreements to produce oil from existing fields, which include widespread U.S. and foreign participation. The report goes on to mention that the U.S. and other foreign firms have won the rights to the development of new exploration and production areas in Venezuela.

According to the Associated Press, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has been encouraging domestic entrepreneurs to create a private Venezuelan oil company. In a meeting with top business executives in Caracas on Feb. 17, President Chavez said that Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) would be interested in partnering with such a company to develop projects such as the exploration for heavy crude in the Orinoco belt or extracting natural gas from the Mariscal Sucre of Rafael Urdaneta gas fields.

th

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is the world's 5 largest producer of petroleum, and has the largest reserves in the western hemisphere, as well as the largest reserves outside of the Middle East. Venezuela is the fourth largest supplier of petroleum to the United States, providing close to 570 million barrels per year to American refineries, including eight U.S. refineries owned by CITGO Petroleum Company, wholly owned by Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA), Venezuela's state oil company.

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Read the report at: <http://www.pi.energy.gov/pdf/library/EPACT1837FINAL.pdf>

New U.S. State Department Report Highlights Venezuela's Successful Efforts Against Drug Smuggling

Record amounts of cocaine and heroin seized in 2005 despite decertification, according to International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

Venezuela is a committed partner in the fight against drug smuggling, according to a U.S. State Department report released March 2, 2006. The report notes that Venezuelan law enforcement agencies seized 54 metric tons of cocaine and 240 kilograms of heroin during the first eight months of 2005, a record amount of illicit narcotics cargos. It also states that two new laws, the "Law Against Organized Crime" and the "Law Against the Trafficking and Consumption of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances" passed in October 2005 have put Venezuelan in compliance with the 1988 United Nations Drug Convention. In addition, money laundering was made a predicate offense.

Titled "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2006" (INCSR), the report is the U.S. Government's country-by-country two-volume publication that describes efforts to attack all aspects of the international drug trade, chemical control, money laundering and financial crimes.

The INCSR goes on to mention that despite Washington decertification, Venezuelan authorities have continued to comply fully with the provisions of the maritime narcotics agreement, rapidly approving requests for the boarding of Venezuelan-flagged vessels suspected of engaging in drug smuggling, allowing the U.S. government to take law enforcement action when required. The report also states that the Venezuela government participated in the "Operacion Seis Fronteras VI" during 2005, auditing several companies for possible diversion of precursor chemicals with assistance from the DEA in 2005.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is not a significant drug producing or consuming country. According to a European Union (EU) study, an astounding 2.3 percent of the Venezuelan population has tried illegal drugs at some time of their life. The level is low, particularly compared to countries, such as Spain and the U.S. where consumption is 9.5 percent and 7.9 percent respectively.

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Read The Report at: <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2006/>

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

Contact: Eric Wingerter

(202) 347-8081, ext. 603

PRESS MEMORANDUM

REP. MACK (R-FL) VENEZUELA RESOLUTION RIFE WITH INACCURACIES, FALSE ACCUSATIONS

On Thursday, Mar 16, 2006, House of Representatives Congressional Resolution 328 (H Con Res 328) introduced by Congressman Connie Mack (R-FL) will be marked up in the House of Representatives Western Hemisphere Subcommittee. This is the first step in the process of bringing the non-binding resolution to the House floor for a vote. Unfortunately, H Con Res 328 presents a series of egregiously inaccurate charges and misleading statements as the basis for its argument. Also troubling is the Congressional action recommended by the resolution, which includes increased funding of organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which a New York Times exposé recently reported as a key actor in the destabilization of the democratic government in Haiti.

Some illustrative comparisons of H Con Res 328 with reality include the following:

"Whereas President Chavez made sweeping changes to the political landscape in Venezuela, including the approval of a new constitution, which established a unicameral national assembly..."

REALITY: Both the decision to rewrite the constitution and the approval of the constitution were publicly mandated through national referendum. The constitution was approved by an overwhelming majority of 72 percent of voters. As for a unicameral assembly structure, Venezuela shares this with a number of countries, including Sweden, Denmark and Israel.

"Whereas President Chavez purchased 100,000 Russian AK-103 assault rifles..., has signed an agreement with Spain to purchase Spanish-built warships, and has initiated discussions to buy Brazilian fighter aircraft;"

REALITY: Venezuela's rifle purchase represents 100,000 rifles that will replace 50-year-old Belgian rifles for a 124,000-person army (i.e. less than one rifle per soldier). Regarding the purchase from Spain, both Spain and Venezuela have repeatedly stated that the ships are explicitly for counter-narcotics activity and other non-military purposes. The Brazilian planes are similarly for use against drug and arms-trafficking.

"Whereas President Chavez is supporting radical forces in Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador...an effort to destabilize the already fragile democratic governments;"

REALITY: Colombian president Alvaro Uribe has repeatedly lauded his strong and friendly relationship with President Chavez, even thanking him for being "a champion" in anti-terrorist and drug trafficking border cooperation. In addition, the countries have cemented ties by signing several recent economic agreements. Regarding Bolivia, presumably the reference is to democratically-elected Bolivian President Evo Morales, who recently hosted U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. In Ecuador, Venezuela has responded several times to the Ecuadorian

requests to buy Ecuador's bonds and support its fulfillment of international oil contracts by lending the country crude oil actions aimed a financial stabilization, not political destabilization.

"Whereas president Chavez has also associated himself with other dictators..."; "Whereas President Chavez visited Saddam Hussein..."

REALITY: Bush Administration lifting of sanctions that had barred scheduled and charter air service, banned imports of Libyan refined petroleum products and impounded billions of dollars in Libyan assets is far more valuable to Libya's dictator Muamar Qaddafi than any alleged association with Venezuela. Regarding President Chavez' visit to Iraq, the context missing is that Chavez visited all the oil-producing Middle Eastern countries after Venezuela assumed the presidency of OPEC in 1999 as part of what CNN described as "a 10-day tour of fellow members of OPEC." In any case, the U.S. government support for Hussein throughout the 1980s (including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's infamous 1984 visit) and its continuing support for allied dictatorships such as the Saudi Arabian regime make this charge disingenuous.

"Whereas President Chavez undermines traditional labor unions in Venezuela by creating parallel, competing, government-affiliated unions within the same company, which violates current International Labor Organization (ILO) standards;"

REALITY: The new Unión Nacional de Trabajadores (UNT) union is not a government creation, but rather was established by workers concerned about the cozy relationship between the old union federation (CTV) and the Venezuelan Chamber of Commerce (FEDECAMARAS) as well as mistrust of CTV leadership ties to violent factions of the Venezuelan opposition. Venezuelan labor movement expert Dr. Steve Ellner (author of "Venezuelan Politics in the Chavez Era and former visiting professor at Duke University) noted in a paper presented at the Social Science Research Council in March 2005 that of UNT's 21-member coordinating committee is split 50-50 between chavistas and non-chavistas.

"Whereas President Chavez has instituted a media responsibility law which places arbitrary restrictions on broadcast media coverage..."

REALITY: Even opposition leader Teodoro Petkoff has noted that unlike in countries such as Cuba, Venezuelans had access to a "wide variety of news choices." This opinion is seconded by Columbia University Journalism School professor John Dinges who noted in another article that "Venezuela has an energetic, free and combative radio, television and newspaper establishment..."

The above items represent only a fraction of the errors contained in the proposed legislation. A comprehensive briefing paper is online at:
www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/hcr328.htm

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Footnotes

1. "Democracy Undone: Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos," by Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, *The New York Times*, January 29, 2006. The Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. State Department also noted NED'S funding of groups involved in the 2002 attempted coup d'etat (see "A review of U.S. Policy Toward Venezuela: November 2001 April 2002," Report 02-OIG-003, July 2002, www.oig.state.gov/documents/organization/13682.pdf).
2. "Chavez Faces 'Tough Road' in Venezuela" by Serge F. Kovaleski, *Washington Post*, December 17, 1999.
3. "Spanish FM, in US, Explains Military Equipment Sale to Venezuela" *Agence France Presse*, April 15, 2004.
4. "Embraer comments on impasse blocking sale of airplanes to Venezuela" *Agencia Brasil*, January 23 2006.

6. "Admiten Complot de Oficiales Colombianos y Exiliados del 11A" *El Universal*, December 18, 2005. This particular article refers to cooperation between the countries on the transport of a rebel leader and Uribe's verification of an anti-Chavez plot hatched by Colombian military officials.
7. "Bush Lifts Trade, Transportation Sanctions on Libya", U.S. Department of State press release, September 20, 2004. Online at <http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2004/Sep/21-203099.html>
8. "Chavez's tour of OPEC nations arrives in Baghdad" CNN.com, August 8, 2000.
9. For example, CTV Secretary General Carlos Ortega emerged as the head of the fateful opposition demonstration in April 2002 that launched the failed coup against Chavez.
10. "U.S. shouldn't try to counter Chavez TV network," *Miami Herald*, August 4, 2005.
11. Venezuelan media outlets are not restricted in their political coverage. To illustrate, we have included below a particularly bizarre article that ran last week in one of Venezuela's primary opposition newspapers, *El Universal*, accusing Venezuelan state television of committing the "crime" of "indoctrination" of children.

ARTICLE FROM EL UNIVERSAL

Caracas, Monday March 06, 2006

"Opposition Party Complains About Forced Indoctrination of Children"

A complaint will be filed with domestic and foreign organizations for "the crime committed by the current government, under the aegis of President Hugo Chávez, where there is forced political participation and indoctrination, abusing of the rights of free thinking and protection of identity of Venezuelan children," Antonio Ledezma, the head of opposition Alianza Bravo Pueblo, said.

The complaint will be made with the Attorney General Office to attest to "all such irregularities," and to the Venezuelan Chapter of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef.)

He regretted that the Attorney General Office fails to protect Venezuelan children. Last Sunday, during the TV and radio show "Aló Presidente," a girl "appeared to praise, extol the personality of the current President of the Republic," the official claimed.

According to Ledezma, this is evidence of indoctrination advanced by the Government, "and it is also a sample of what they want to do in the schools with those projects that the Government intends to approve in the so-called National Assembly."

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PART III: ARTICLES



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Human Rights In Venezuela: Who Is Getting the Story Wrong?

By: Eric Wingerter - Venezuela Information Office

Every year when the State Department releases its annual human rights report, the two thirds of Venezuelan citizens who support president Chavez take a deep breath. What State Department-sanctioned storylines will dominate U.S. media coverage and political discourse regarding Venezuela in the year ahead? They have reason to fear: in recent years, mainstream media outlets have seized on the report to paint a picture of a country under Orwellian levels of government control, where freedom of the press and the right of association are rarely respected.

After all, why should the media pay attention to facts when they can get their information straight from the Bush Administration foreign policy spin machine? Because, as anyone who has ever looked at a Venezuelan newspaper or witnessed an opposition rally knows, the only thing Orwellian about Venezuela is the consistent double speak utilized to describe the reality in that country. A man democratically-elected three times in elections deemed free and fair by international observers becomes a “quasi-dictator,” and a country with the highest GDP growth in Latin America is “economically unstable.” In reality, the majority of privately owned media—which still commands the lion’s share of the broadcast audience and print outlets—is virulently anti-Chavez, and never afraid to run news and editorials that criticize the government. Often it seems their only difficulty is finding a side of the story that reflects the views of the majority of Venezuelans. Opposition leaders continue to gather their troops in the streets of Caracas for flag-draped displays of their politics. True, the numbers of attendees at opposition rallies has plummeted in recent years, but that is largely a result of the disarray in the opposition in general, and certainly not because of any curtailment in their right to free assembly.

So how is it that these negative images have permeated the coverage of Venezuela? In the past two weeks, gearing up for the release of the 2005 State Department Report, I picked the brains of four journalists who cover Venezuela for mainstream print outlets. Three of the reporters work for U.S. publications, and the fourth covers Venezuela from the United Kingdom. They each brought their own impressions to the discussion, but the following themes were reoccurring.

Venezuela is a Hot Topic

Journalists don't have any trouble getting the green light to do a Venezuela story these days. As one reporter put it, President Chavez "gives good quote," and national newspapers are happy to publish two or three Venezuela-themed stories each week. That's far more print space than any other Latin American nation receives. For this reason, readers may get the full run-down on State Department criticism of Venezuela, but they have to do their own research if they want to learn about the state of the media in, say, Peru (where a U.S. journalist was found guilty of "defaming" a narcotics trafficker last year^[1]) or Costa Rica (where "insulting the honor" of a politician is punishable up to three years imprisonment, and media laws require that public officials be granted space in private media to defend themselves from negative stories.^[2])

Reporter Shuffling

Of course, while Venezuela is a hot topic today, this was not always the case. In the pre-Chavez days, when the military was called out to violently repress citizen marches, and government agents actually redacted unfavorable editorials before they hit the streets (Google the word "Caracazo" for the most blatant examples), the events rarely made a blip in the U.S. media. What's more, as the British journalist explained to me, the structure of U.S. media outlets often does not permit reporters to become steeped in the history and culture of the country they report on. "International" reporters are just that—they can be based in Caracas for a couple years, but then may be shipped off to Afghanistan or Sierra Leone or Bora Bora. In other words, are not necessarily very familiar with what happened in Venezuela before the current administration, and this lack of cultural and historic context is reflected in the stories they publish.

The Nature of the State Department Report

Clearly, there's going to be bias in the Bush Administration State Department and the way they choose to rate Venezuela. But their human rights reports are pretty hard on U.S. allies as well. Of course, in the wake of Abu Ghraib and government wiretapping of U.S. citizens, it's hard to ignore the fact that the State Department doesn't release a report on human rights abuses here at home—but that's another topic.

No, the biggest methodological glitch in the State Department reports is they generally don't do their own investigative research. Instead, they rely on a compilation of reports and allegations from local sources. For this reason, you will find all sorts of vague charges from unidentified sources. In the case of this year's Venezuela report, you will find an unsourced reference to an assault from "four men believed to be DIM [Military Intelligence] agents." Even in the State Department's wording, it remains unclear if they were indeed government officials or angry citizens. More importantly, there is no mechanism to fact-check the allegation because there is no source provided. In other words, anyone could have filed a report, and once published in the State Department paper, it becomes an accepted fact. Which brings us to the next topic...

The Nature of the Sources

Ostensibly, the State Department relies on reputable human rights groups to document their annual reports, although as discussed above, the sourcing of individual allegations is not clear in the final product. But in Venezuela, the line between civil society and the non-democratic—often violent—factions of the opposition has long been blurred.

One of the principal get-out-the-vote leaders for the opposition, a Bush Administration ally named Maria Corina Machado, was present in Miraflores (the Venezuelan version of the White House) in the middle of the unsuccessful 2002 coup d'etat against President Chavez.[3] Her reasoning? She was invited to have tea with the wife of dictator-for-a-day Pedro Carmona, apparently without a thought given to the violence going on around her nor how her friend came to reside in the President's home. And yet federal charges against Machado and her organization, *Sumate*, are singled out in the 2005 report as an example of political intimidation

Similarly, a leading critic of the state of Venezuelan prisons, Carlos Ayala, was also present during the coup. Ayala's law firm actually drafted what became known as the "Carmona Decree," a document that infamously dissolved Venezuela's Supreme Court and National Assembly after president Chavez was detained, paving the way for the coup-installed "President" Carmona to have supreme authority over the country.[4] The reliance of the State Department on sources like Machado and Ayala, who are clearly committed neither to human rights nor democracy, undermines the credibility of the report and does a disservice to the very real endemic problems facing the country, such as conditions within the Venezuelan prison system.

The problem of sources is not just an issue with the State Department report, but also with sources used by the press. As mentioned above, U.S. reporters based in Venezuela are often relatively new to the country. In addition, they are unlikely to live in the poor sections of town that constitute the bedrock of Chavez' support. Instead, being paid in dollars (and Euros) means they reside in upper middle class communities and spend their social time in bars, gyms and clubs frequented by wealthy clientele. This means that they will rely on the most available sources—those who speak fluent English, are part of the middle and upper class communities they live in and/or have been trained in media relations. All too often media quotes come from the most elite families in Venezuela, shutting out the viewpoints of the vast majority of the country.

The Chavez Factor

In press lingo, President Chavez is "media-genic." A charismatic and quotable figure, the press likes to focus stories around him. Unfortunately, some journalists have a hard time separating the president and his administration from stories that don't actually involve the executive branch. So when the State Department reports on abuses of power from municipal police authorities, the press tends to report on the problems of Venezuelan police in general, and round out the story with colorful quotes from the president. The implication is that local problems are attributable to the president. Domestic journalists

would be hard pressed to link a story about police brutality in Los Angeles to the Bush administration, yet in the simplification of Venezuela reporting in the U.S. media, the line becomes muddled.

This problem becomes exacerbated when journalists fail to distinguish between human rights abuses that are a result of the lack of the rule of law, which occur throughout the hemisphere, and abuses that represent political repression, which is much less frequent. Both are important, but to confuse the two adds to the false impression that Venezuela has a politically repressive environment.

The 2005 Report

The truth is, this year's State Department Human Rights Report is actually quite favorable to Venezuela in most categories.

Here's what the Bush Administration had to say about peaceful association: "The law provides for freedom of assembly, and the government generally respected this right in practice."

Press Freedoms? "Print and electronic media were independent."

Academia? "There were no government restrictions on the Internet or academic freedom."

The much-maligned elections processes? "The law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right through periodic elections held on the basis of universal suffrage.[5]"

These points were mentioned, but not emphasized, in this year's report. This is significant because a general clean bill of health becomes overshadowed by a laundry list of regional, situational or otherwise anecdotal and unsourced grievances.

The two major areas where the U.S. really digs in to human rights violations in Venezuela were (irony alert!) *detainee abuses* and *wiretapping without a warrant*. As Lily Tomlin once said, "No matter how cynical I get, it's impossible to keep up." Yes, the Venezuelan prisons are a brutal mess, and police corruption remains a huge problem throughout the country. But these systemic problems go back generations. It's responsible and fair for the State Department to point them out, but in a context-challenged media environment, the implication that this is somehow unique to the Chavez administration is one even the most fervent opposition member would not make with a straight face.

It's also important to note that the very week that the State Department praised academic freedom in Venezuela, a team of FBI and Los Angeles marshals paid an intimidating visit to a Venezuelan-American professor in California, interrogating him and his students about his political beliefs and association with the Venezuelan government.[6]

Implications of the Report

Clearly, the State Department Report on Human Rights Practices in Venezuela is wildly influential. As we've discussed, it forms the basis for press coverage—and therefore American public and policymakers' impressions—of the country. It is also used as a tool for U.S. politicians to advance their own agenda in the region. In recent weeks, the reports have been an excuse Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to advocate a policy of isolation for Venezuela in the Americas.[7] Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld even went so far as to make a ludicrous comparison between President Chavez and *Adolf Hitler*.^[8]

Just this week, the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere will vote on a resolution by Congressman Connie Mack (R-FL), who has taken statements from past reports to condemn “Hugo Chavez’s ever growing anti-democratic actions” and has sought to finance opposition movements in Venezuela.^[9] The resolution is riddled with inaccurate information, much of it gleaned from de-contextualized allegations made in past reports, but also from sloppy press coverage of the documents.

Venezuela, like many Latin American nations and most of the world, has some serious regional governance problems. The prison system remains brutal, and corruption is still an enormous challenge, particularly at the state and municipal levels. The key is context, both comparing Venezuela with the rest of Latin America, but especially comparing the country today to the Venezuela of 10 years ago. The human rights situation has vastly improved since the systematic abuses of the 80s and 90s. But nowhere will you find this missing piece of information in the State Department Report. This is not surprising, given that it is the voice of a political entity under an Administration with specific regional policy goals and opinions. It's the job of reporters to put the report in context, not simply pass on the Administration's party line. To do anything less represents an abdication of the media's responsibility to the public.

[1] *2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Peru*.
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61738.htm>

[2] *2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Costa Rica*.
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61722.htm>

[3] Tucker, Todd, “Bush’s Venezuelagate.” Published by the Center for Economic and Policy Research. http://www.americas.org/item_16026

[4] “Dissident Ex-General Faces New Trial,” The Daily Herald, Venezuela.
<http://www.thedailyjournalonline.com/article.asp?CategoryId=10717&ArticleId=176727>

[5] *2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Venezuela*.
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61745.htm>

[6] "Deputies' Questions Unsettle University," Los Angeles Times, March 11, 2006.
<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/california/la-me-prof11mar11,1,7679531.story?coll=la-headlines-pe-california>

[7] Richter, Paul, "US Policy Now Aims to Isolate Venezuela's Chavez," Los Angeles Times, March 10, 2006. <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06071/668483.stm>

[8] Bachalet, Pablo, "Chavez seen as US Threat," The Miami Herald, February 11, 2006.
<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/13845328.htm>

[9] "Mack Introduces Resolution Condemning Hugo Chavez's Ever-Growing Anti-Democratic Actions," Press Release from Congressman Mack, December 20, 2005.
http://mack.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.View&ContentRecord_id=162

The Venezuela Information Office is dedicated to informing the American public about contemporary Venezuela, and receives its funding from the government of Venezuela. More information is available from the FARA office of the Department of Justice in Washington DC.



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Los Angeles Times Editorial Coverage of Venezuela 1998-2006

By Eric Wingerter
Public Education Director
February, 2006

Overview

The *Los Angeles Times* editorial page has taken a surprisingly large amount of interest in Venezuela during the Hugo Chavez presidency. A full twenty-eight editorials dedicated to President Chavez have been published since 1998.

With only one exception, every piece has been overwhelmingly negative. The *Times* has exhausted just about every unfavorable term to describe a political leader when referring to President Chavez. Although “caudillo” and “strongman” are the most common, the adjectival forms of the word “dictator” in reference to Chavez appeared as early as his first candidacy in 1998.

It is interesting to note that the tone of the anti-Chavez coverage changed immediately after the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Whereas in the Summer of 2000, Chavez was presented through a Cold War lens (“If there is anything positive in this turn of events it is that no powerful nations are seeking to bankroll the Venezuelan strongman as the Soviet Union did Cuba’s Castro for so many dangerous years”) to a War on Terror lens in November 2001 (“Everyone is free to express his opinions and choose his friends. But at a moment when President Bush has said that nations are either with the anti-Al Qaeda coalition or with the terrorists, the Venezuelan president’s choices are particularly unfortunate”).

Times editors seemed to be taking a more balanced approach after the recall referendum when they urged opposition leaders to stop acting “irresponsibly” and accept their loss. But that was the last time anything positive was published about Chavez. In the six Chavez-themed editorials since August, 2004, the *Times* has challenged virtually every

major policy from Caracas, alternating between mocking and warning tones.

Coverage of the Early Chavez presidency: 1998-2000

On December 4, 1998, just days before the Venezuelan elections that first swept President Chavez into office, a Los Angeles *Times* Editorial referred to him as “a populist and dangerous demagogue who holds a substantial lead in the polls,” and advocated that Venezuelans vote for Carabobo governor Henrique Salas.

By April 1999, just 3 months after Chavez’s inauguration, the *Times* editorial page was already referring to the new President as “a classic Latin caudillo,” fretting over his supposed “dictatorial methods” in calling for a Constitutional assembly.

But as the popularity of the Constitutional process throughout Venezuela became apparent, the *Times* editorial page rewrote their opinion of the assembly. By in a September, 1999 piece titled “Venezuelan Democracy Quivers,” the *Times* writes that Chavez “got off to a promising start as president by having an elected assembly rewrite the country’s 1961 constitution,” but by now the editorial page had a new list of complaints. The fact that the president proposed a “\$950-million program to open new schools, rebuild old ones and repair decrepit hospitals,” is portrayed as a cynical attempt to “augment[...] his populist message.” The editorial concludes that “[t]he jury is still out on whether Chavez is a skillful political manipulator...” or “a misunderstood leader,” yet anyone reading the editorial headline or first three paragraphs understands that the *Times* has already made the case for the former.

After the new Constitution was approved by popular referendum, Chavez, as well as all members of the Legislative branch went back before the electorate in a special election. The day of the July 30, 2000 vote, a *Times* editorial [“Venezuela’s Errant Ride”] blames Chavez for Venezuela’s economic recession, which had begun a decade earlier. Recognizing Chavez’s widespread popularity and his imminent electoral victory, the *Times* attributes his success to simply “charisma and bluster” and expresses relief that “no powerful nations are seeking to bankroll the Venezuelan strongman as the Soviet Union did Cuba’s Castro for so many dangerous years.”

In November 2001, just two months after the terrorist attacks on the United States, the *Los Angeles Times* was already pioneering the use of the terrorist label against those who don’t toe the U.S. line. In an Editorial titled “Venezuela’s Bad Choices,” the *Times* laments Venezuela’s opposition to the Free Trade Area of the Americas and President Chavez’

criticism of the U.S. bombing campaign in Afghanistan. The *Times* ominously concludes, "Everyone is free to express his opinions and choose his friends. But at a moment when President Bush has said that nations are either with the anti-Al Qaeda coalition or with the terrorists, the Venezuelan president's choices are particularly unfortunate."

The April 2002 Coup

In the aftermath of the unsuccessful two-day coup against president Chavez, the *Times* ran two editorials—the first an un-bylined piece published April 17th, titled "Venezuela's Strange Days," and a second piece, signed by *Times* Associate Editor Frank del Olmo titled "Standing Up to a Coup--and to Tio Sam." Both pieces were rightfully critical of the U.S. response to the coup, yet both also took the opportunity to bring Chavez down a peg. "Strange Days" opens with the sentence "It goes against the grain to put the name Hugo Chavez and the word "democracy" in the same sentence," and spends a good portion of the space listing past sins of the Chavez administration to explain why the *Times* stance in favor of the restoration of the President is reluctant. Worse, the editorial publishes the charge that the coup was launched when "Chavez supporters opened fire on anti-Chavez demonstrators," an opposition-supported storyline that has since been discredited.

Similarly, the del Olmo piece commends the reaction of other Latin American governments to the coup, and criticizes the U.S. approach, but took pains to downplay still-uninvestigated charges of U.S. involvement in the military takeover as "conspiracy theories." Del Olmo makes the point that State Department officials were merely distracted by events in the Middle East and therefore did not react strongly. Today we know that the U.S. was actively lobbying other Latin American governments to support the Carmona regime, and that thousands of U.S. dollars had been funneled to groups that supported the coup in the months before the action.

The 2002-2003 Oil Strike

By late 2002, opposition leaders had embarked on a new campaign to force President Chavez' ouster. A worker lockout from the oil industry was underway, and Venezuela's economy was seriously damaged. Leaders of the "strike"--primarily oil company executives--were threatening to continue the economic shutdown until the President resigned.

In November, 2002, as the lockout got underway, the *Times* published an editorial, "Hope for Venezuela Rescue," lamenting the state of the Venezuelan economy, and blaming "fear of government incompetence and mistrust of its intentions," rather than opposition sabotage. The *Times* states that the only way out of the situation is a recall referendum

against President Chavez. While the Venezuelan Constitution allows for such a recall once the president reaches the mid-point of his term, the *Times* argument paralleled the opposition position at the time that the country violate the Constitution and hold a referendum early in order to quell the unrest fomented by the strike.

Criticism of Media

The vast majority of independent newspapers and television outlets in Venezuela remain very vocal in their opposition to the President, and international human rights groups have criticized the irresponsible role of the media in the coup, the *Times* does not mention this in a series of editorials that inaccurately accuse the government of restricting a free press.

The first *Times* editorial on the subject, "Attack on Venezuela Media," was published on July 19, 2003. Ostensibly, the piece was intended to criticize a government study of media outlets to determine if some of the most extreme language violated existing Venezuelan law prohibiting "false, deceitful or tendentious news." But the piece went even further, making unsubstantiated allegations of "Chavez and his cronies" promoting "the bad old practices of getting government-sponsored mobs to beat journalists in the streets or throw rocks through their office windows." The editorial makes no mention of pre-Chavez Venezuela, where government censors took over newspaper offices and redacted anti-Government messages. Two additional editorials on the Chavez and the media have taken a similar tone.

Recall Referendum

As noted above, the *Times* first began pushing for a recall referendum in November 2002. It renewed its call in September of 2003, arguing that there "doesn't seem to be much choice" in the matter. For the first time, however, the *Times* recognizes that "the leader must serve more than half his six-year term before opponents can try to oust him."

By March 2003, the *Times* was taking the opposition line that federal elections authorities—a separate branch of government from the President's office—should accept a number of questionable signatures pushing for a recall referendum, even though elections officials wanted time to investigate possible widespread forgery. In this piece, titled "The Unpopular Populist," the *Times* makes an aside that again changes its opinion about the earlier referendum process that updated the Venezuelan Constitution, claiming that the President merely "manipulated the constitution to amass enormous personal power."

The *Times* published two more additional editorials in the runup to the referendum, each eager to criticize the President and support the opposition movements.

To its credit, the *Times* wrote perhaps its most balanced piece just days after the referendum, which President Chavez won with 59% of the vote. The *Times* called the opposition efforts to reject the outcome “irresponsible,” and encouraged them to rejoin the democratic process.

Post-Referendum Editorials

Since reasonable referendum article was published, the *Times* has written negatively on just about every topic promoted by President Chavez. Here are a few examples.

* Just four months after the recall referendum, the *Times* published its most extreme anti-Chavez editorial to date. “A Little Fidel in Caracas,” from December 18, 2004, accuses Chavez “and his cronies” of “converting Venezuela's nascent democracy into a dictatorship.” It argues that the newly passed Law of Responsibility on Radio and Television is a plot to interfere with independent newscasts. “Ostensibly, the law is intended to protect children; in reality, it will allow the government to fine and close down any station it finds objectionable.” Actually the law itself specifically exempts newscasts from its restrictions.

* One month later, another piece was published, titled “Nonsense from Hugo Chavez,” which supported Colombian security forces coming onto Venezuelan soil to kidnap a fugitive without warning or collaborating Venezuelan forces. The *Times* called Chavez’ call for an apology from Colombia “amusing.”

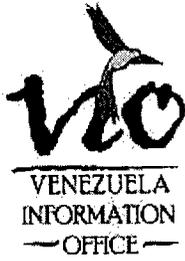
* When Venezuela took part in a multi-country effort to launch a TV network—the first Latin American news network to be based in Latin America, the *Times* editorial page took the opportunity to ridicule the project in an editorial titled “All Chavez All the Time.”

* While the rest of the world criticized Pat Robertson’s call for Chavez’ assassination, the *Times* editorial page used the opportunity to jibe Chavez once more. An August 24, 2005 editorial begins “A paranoid is never happier than when he discovers that he really does have enemies. So Pat Robertson's call for the assassination of Hugo Chavez may be just the moment of vindication the Venezuelan president has been waiting for.”

* In September, 2005, the *Times* took on land-reform efforts in Venezuela, labeling the democratically-debated process contrary to the rule of law and

speculating, without any motivation that the nations banks may soon be expropriated.

PART IV: EVENT FLYERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Venezuela Matters 2005

With nearly \$30 million dollars in trade annually, Venezuela *does* matter in the United States. You may know that Venezuela has the hemisphere's largest proven reserves of petroleum, and you may have heard that we are currently the fourth largest supplier of crude oil to the United States, but were you aware that the US-Venezuelan trade relationship is even larger than those of Saudi Arabia, Belgium, Hong Kong, or even Australia?

We believe that the relationship between Venezuela and the United States is very important, and we are very proud to highlight this relationship and share our cultural traditions through a unique exposition, known as *Venezuela Matters*.

Venezuela Matters is an exciting cultural experience, highlighting Venezuelan music, food, art, and politics to the United States in an innovative multimedia exposition. The idea is to share our homeland's rich cultural history, to highlight our long and important friendship with the United States, and to encourage continued tourism, trade and investment between our two countries.

Touring six cities over the course of four months, *Venezuela Matters* will include a multimedia exhibit highlighting everything from Venezuela's natural landscape to our diverse musical traditions; from our oil economy to our proud baseball legacy; from our tourist hotspots to our innovative social programs to help the poor.

In each city along our tour, *Venezuela Matters* will culminate with a large cultural festival, where we invite the public to celebrate with us in a night of traditional music, dance, food and speakers.

In addition, we are arranging a variety of smaller events in each city, including academic panels on Venezuelan politics, round tables with local business communities, and diplomatic meetings with the local political leadership.

We are proud of Venezuela's rich culture, and we look forward to sharing our diverse heritage with our North American friends in the months ahead.

Venezuela Matters Kicks Off in Chicago

September 15-16, 2005

We are very pleased to announce that Chicago will be the inaugural city for *Venezuela Matters*. Since the purchase of the [FILL IN THE NAME OF THE CITGO ASSET HERE] in [YEAR], Venezuela has had strong ties to the Windy City.

We have a number of exciting event lined up for September 15 and 16, 2005. We hope you can join us for one or more of the following:

Venezuela Matters Exposition

River East Art Center
401 East Illinois Street
September 15-16
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Citizen Participation and Venezuelan Politics

Academic Panel Discussion
University of Illinois at Chicago
September 15
3:00 p.m.

Civil Rights and the Afro-Venezuelan Movement

Lecture
Rainbow PUSH Coalition National Headquarters
930 East 50th Street
September 15
6:00 p.m.

Chicago-Venezuela Business and Investment Round Table

Location TBA
September 16
12:00 noon

Venezuelan Cultural Festival

River East Art Center
400 East Illinois Street
September 16
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**The Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
and
The Venezuela Information Office
present:**

**A February 2006 Film Series: The Venezuelan Process Through the Eyes of Foreign
Film Makers**

Feb. 1 "Fourth World War" By Marcelo Andrade Arreaza.

This documentary examines the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela as connected to the worldwide movement against capitalist globalization. The film shows the evolution of the popular movement in Venezuela from the Caracazo riots in 1989 to the massive actions that brought revolutionary president Hugo Chavez back to power, 48 hours after a U.S.-led military coup in 2002.

Feb. 8 "The Revolution will not be Televised" by Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Briain (Ireland).

Two Irish documentarians were in Caracas to make a movie about President Hugo Chavez when the shoot was interrupted by a coup d'etat. Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Briain's film capture on film the remarkable 2-day period when the people of Venezuela rose up to reinstate their president to office.

Feb. 15 "Conversations with Hugo Chavez" by Aleida Guevara (Cuba/ Australia)

An exploration of modern Venezuelan politics through interviews with President Chavez and the people of Venezuela. The interviews were conducted by Aleida Guevara, daughter of Ernesto "Che" Guevara

Feb. 22 "Turmoil" by Rhett Muse (US)

This documentary delves into Venezuela's chaotic world of coup d'etat, strikes, oil production shutdown, poverty, political reform, foreign intervention and violent street clashes.

Bolivarian Hall, 2443 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington DC 20008

PLEASE RSVP: (202) 342-6828

All films will begin at 7pm at the Bolivarian Hall

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF BRIEFING

VENEZUELA: Oil, Bilateral, and Regional Relations

Friday, February 10, 2006 at 10am
HC-8 US CAPITOL

Sarah Stephens-Senior Associate, Center for International Policy

Angelo Rivero-Santos-Director, Academic Affairs and Coordinator, Venezuela Program, Georgetown, Center for Latin American Studies

Mark Weisbrot-Economist, Center for Economic Policy Research

Larry Birns- Director, Council on Hemispheric Affairs

Today, Venezuela is the United States' 2nd largest Latin American trading partner. Yet, despite this vibrant commercial relationship, political differences between the two countries generate almost daily headlines.

This briefing for congressional staff is intended to address key matters regarding human rights, democracy, oil and Venezuela's regional relationships, as well as those with the United States. All this has been much discussed from one perspective, but rarely analyzed in depth.

**BRING YOUR QUESTIONS: NOW IS THE TIME TO
SEPARATE MYTH, FROM FACT, REGARDING VENEZUELA**

PART V: INTERNET INFORMATION

Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 1 Sep 2005 12:58:24 -0700 (PDT)
From: Venezuela News and Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News and Action <reply.49595.41299896.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTERS CALL FOR LEGAL ACTION AGAINST ROBERTSON

FOREIGN MINISTERS CALL FOR LEGAL ACTION AGAINST ROBERTSON

Top diplomats from nineteen Latin American countries demanded that "legal action" be taken against Rev. Pat Robertson for his statements last week calling for the assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

In a joint declaration, the ministers, who were meeting in Argentina, called Robertson's comments "a clear incitement to crime," and supported Venezuela's demand for a US investigation.

The statement was signed by ministers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Guyana.

For more on the declaration: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/08-30-05mp.html>

Read more about Robertson's comments and the reaction from Americans:
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/robmain.html>

YOUR HELP NEEDED--WHITE HOUSE STILL SILENT

Despite the demands from all levels of American society, the White House has refused to comment Bush ally Pat Robertson or to condemn his calls for assassination. Your voice needs to be heard! Contact the White House and tell them to investigate whether Rev. Robertson committed a crime. White House Phone line: 202-456-1111

For more information on what you can do: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/take/robertson.html>

JESSE JACKSON IN VENEZUELA

Reverend Jesse Jackson traveled to Venezuela last weekend to help smooth over frayed ties with the United States. After meeting President Chavez in Caracas, Rev. Jackson implored the U.S. government to come to a more civil relationship with Venezuela.

"I would hope the talk of isolation, name-calling, hostile rhetoric, threats of assassination and kidnapping give way to aggressive diplomacy," Jackson said. "I hope that we've done something to facilitate a detente on threatening rhetoric. We're not going to have an oil war."

For complete coverage of the Jackson visit, see
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/jacksonmain.html>

AID FOR KATRINA VICTIMS, NEEDY AMERICANS

At a press conference with Rev. Jackson, President Chavez announced two major aid initiatives. The first would provide oil, food and water to communities devastated by Hurricane Katrina in the United States. The second offers heating oil at reduced rates for needy Americans this winter.

Since the announcement of the oil aid was made public this week, the Venezuela Information Office has received numerous calls from individuals and organizations interested in helping the effort. As soon as the plans are solidified, we will post details on our website and on this listserv. Thanks to all who have offered assistance.

'VENEZUELA 2005' COMES TO ST. LOUIS

The Venezuela Association of Missouri and the Venezuela Information Office, in conjunction with Arts and Treasures of Latin America will present "Venezuela 2005," a celebration of Venezuelan art, history, politics and culture in St. Louis, Missouri from September 8 through 11th.

This special series of events will include music, food, and craftwork, as well as political roundtables and academic lectures. We hope that everyone in the region will join us.

For more information: <http://portal.avmo.org/avmo/Members/alarcon/Venezuela%202005>

...and for a schedule of St. Louis events (in PDF)

<http://portal.avmo.org/avmo/downloads/vnzl2005program>

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Venezuela Information Office

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United States

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 22 Sep 2005 11:25:52 -0700 (PDT)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.52837.43907513.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: President Chavez Takes New York By Storm

Dear Friends,

President Chavez made his first visit to the United States in years last week. Arriving to address the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, the Venezuelan leader created a sensation in New York with a speech that took to task the undemocratic nature of UN decision making processes, the morality of the Iraq War, and the very placement of the United Nations in the United States. "The headquarters of the United Nations," said Chavez, "must be in the [global] South."

Read the entire UN address (translated into English):
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/unspeech.html>

Wrapping up after 20 minutes, President Chavez received a standing ovation from the world body--the most vigorous applause for the entire U.N. session.

The Associated Press summarized the immediate reaction to the Chavez visit, in an article titled "Chavez Raises His Profile at World Summit"
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/09-20-05ap.html>

THE PRESIDENT VISITS THE BRONX, SPEAKS TO FAITH LEADERS

On Saturday, President Chavez visited "the poorest neighborhood within the world's richest city." U.S. Congressman Jose Serrano led the President on a tour of the Bronx, where Chavez greeted throngs of people on the streets, met with community leaders, and even played the drums in a street festival held in his honor.

That night, the President joined the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Father Roy Bourgeois and others at a diverse faith-based gathering at the Church of Saint Paul and Saint Matthew in Manhattan, where Chavez discussed how his religious convictions help shape his policies in support of the poor and marginalized. He also took the opportunity to explain that while he often butts heads with the Bush administration, he has strong affection for the American people. As quoted in the Toronto Globe and Mail: "'Starting today, you know that I fell in love. I fell in love with the Bronx, and with New York,' he told his rapturous audience. 'For the first time, I have met the soul of the American people.'"

Read the full story: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/09-19-05gam.html>

REP. SERRANO ASKS REP. MACK TO APOLOGIZE OVER CHAVEZ COMMENTS

At least one member of Congress took the opportunity to smear Chavez supporters in the United States. Representative Connie Mack, a conservative Florida Republican, told the Associated Press that Chavez's American allies "oppose freedom and dislike the United States."

The attack prompted an immediate rebuke from Rep. Serrano, who wrote in a letter yesterday, "Who are the people that you are referring to? Are they my constituents? My constituents care deeply about their country. They are serving in Iraq, and they died during the tragedy of 9/11. They are also open to sharing their thoughts, ideas and

dreams with a foreign leader. I am deeply saddened and disturbed by your remarks."

Read Serrano's letter to Mack:

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ny16_serrano/050920Mack.html

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Tue, 27 Sep 2005 10:02:29 -0700 (PDT)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.53599.44441723.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Washington Post on Venezuela - Your Responses Needed

For those who have regularly read the Washington Post editorial page over the last few years, it is clear that columnist Jackson Diehl has a hard time saying anything nice about the Venezuelan people or their leader.

But yesterday, Mr. Diehl cast his net more widely, managing to insult virtually every leader in the hemisphere. In a column called "Buying Support in Latin America." Diehl accuses Venezuela's neighbors of accepting bribes from the Chavez administration in exchange for their public "silence" on the issue of Venezuela's democracy.

Read his column: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/25/AR2005092501268.html>

His evidence? It turns out that on recent visits to the United States, the presidents of Peru and Colombia refused to criticize Chavez, and even cautioned Bush administration officials that U.S. antagonism of Venezuela is not helpful. To Diehl, Latin American leaders are incapable of disagreeing with U.S. policy on their own. Ergo, they must have been seduced into silence by Venezuelan-sponsored trade deals.

As cynical as that sounds, Diehl goes even further with his analysis of contemporary Venezuela:

* He relies on two-year old statistics, from a period when the Venezuelan economy was still reeling from an opposition-led oil strike, to argue that President Chavez "has managed to increase the poor population by a quarter." The statement also ignores the remarkable accomplishments of Venezuela's signature social missions, which provide education, health care, and low-cost food to the poor for the first time in the country's history.

* Diehl claims that the Chavez administration supports guerilla leaders in Colombia, yet this claim was debunked by the U.S. State Department itself in a letter to Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen this summer.

* He decries what he terms the "destruction of Venezuela's political freedom," even though Venezuelan citizens and press are not restricted in any way by their government, so this charge is out of left...make that right...field.

Mr. Diehl is free to not like President Chavez or the Venezuelan electorate, but he should make sure the information he publishes in the Washington Post is at least accurate.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Please take a moment to write a personalized letter to the Washington Post today. Letters can be sent to letters@washpost.com, and must include your name, home address and a daytime contact phone number.

For tips on writing a winning letter to the editor, please visit:
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/take/ok-media.html>

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 6 Oct 2005 13:01:12 -0700 (PDT)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.55272.45755603.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Venezuela Event Kicks off in Chicago

CHICAGO KICKS OFF 'VENEZUELA MATTERS' EVENTS

Next week the city of Chicago will host a number of events to highlight the region's longstanding ties to Venezuela. From academic panels to a cultural and musical festival, U.S. - Venezuelan relationships will be the unifying theme.

The series of events, known as "Venezuela Matters," will be anchored by a multimedia exhibit, open to the public on Thursday, October 13th and Friday October 14th at Chicago's River East Art Center.

For more information on the various activities, please visit
<http://www.veninfo.org/news/venmatchicago.html>

Hundreds of Chicago-area residents will attend the closing night ceremony, a cultural exhibit featuring live Afro-Venezuelan music and Andean food. The event is free, but space is limited. You can reserve your ticket by Emailing: venezuelainchicago@gmail.com

Mayor Richard Daley, Reverend Jesse Jackson, and many other local politicians, academic and social movement leaders are scheduled to participate in Venezuela Matters, which is jointly produced by CITGO and the Embassy of Venezuela in the United States.

Chicago is the first of six cities in which Venezuela Matters events will be held this year. For more information on the Chicago event, contact the Venezuelan Consulate in Chicago, (312) 236-9655 / 9659.

YOUR HELP NEEDED! POSADA MUST BE DEPORTED TO VENEZUELA

Last week a U.S. judge ruled that Luis Posada Carriles, the Osama Bin Laden of Latin America, may not be extradited to Venezuela to face trial for his alleged role in the bombing of a passenger airplane that killed 73 people. This outrageous decision will be appealed, but your help is needed. Send the White House the message that the Venezuela must be allowed to try Posada!

For more on how you can help: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/take/posada.html>

For what U.S. newspapers have said about Posada:
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/posadaed.html>

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Fri, 21 Oct 2005 07:03:07 -0700 (PDT)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.57656.47746454.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Hundreds Turn Out for Chicago-VZA Events, FAIR Media Alert

CHIGAGO EVENTS BRING HUNDREDS OUT FOR VENEZUELA

Last week, more than a thousand Chicago area residents participated in a series of Venezuela-themed events. The city was host to "Venezuela Matters," a tribute to Venezuelan culture, business and politics.

The events, which included a multi-media exhibit, academic panels, business round-tables and an evening of Venezuelan music, brought together an astonishingly diverse group of Chicagoans. Rev. Jesse Jackson hosted a panel on Afro-Venezuelan issues, while leaders of area business chambers discussed increasing their investments in Venezuela.

At the event kick-off, Venezuelan Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez and CITGO CEO Felix Rodriguez announced a plan to provide cheaper fuel for needy Chicagoans. When the details are finalized, Venezuela News & Action will provide more information.

For more on the Venezuela Matters events in Chicago:
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/10-13-05ct.html>

FAIR ISSUES ALERT ON PARADE MAGAZINE

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting is calling on media watchers to respond to "an inaccurate smear against Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez." The smear was published in, of all places, Parade Magazine. The issue, distributed in newspapers around the country on Sunday, October 9th, featured a celebrity column where President Chavez was said to be "funding revolutionaries and terrorists throughout Latin America," a claim not supported by any facts.

For more background, check out FAIR's website: <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2697>

It turns out that the column, "Walter Scott's Personality Parade," is a bit of a sham. In fact, there is no Walter Scott. The name is a pseudonym of right-wing Author Edward Klein. Klein is best known for a trashy biography of Hillary Clinton, called The Truth About Hillary, which notoriously alleges sexual misdeeds tattled from anonymous sources.

ACTION:

FAIR is encouraging readers to contact Parade and say that the magazine must either provide evidence for its allegations or issue a retraction.

CONTACT:

Personality Parade
personality@parade.com

Parade Magazine
Lee Kravitz, editor
editor@parade.com

If your local newspaper includes Parade in its Sunday edition, you may want to send your letter to them as well.

For tips on writing an effective letter to the editor, please see
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/take/ok-media.html>

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Date: Thu, 27 Oct 2005 13:22:49 -0700 (PDT)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.58822.48623197.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Venezuela Solidarity Events in NYC and Around the Country

VENEZUELA EVENT IN NEW YORK CITY: NOVEMBER 8

Hundreds are expected to rally at New York's Town Hall on November 8th in support of the people of Venezuela. Speakers, including social movement leaders from Venezuela and the United States, will discuss the Bolivarian process and call on the United States government to respect the sovereignty of Venezuela's democracy.

The event, organized by the Alberto Lovero Bolivarian Circle of New York, will include music, poetry and inspirational messages from a wide range of speakers.

For more information or to pledge your support, please visit: <http://www.venezuelanov8.org/>

NATIONWIDE DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA: DECEMBER 2

A diverse coalition of U.S.-based NGOs has announced a National Venezuelan Solidarity Day on December 2nd. Representatives from faith-based organizations, Peace groups, and Latin American solidarity organizations will put together a series of events in support of the Bolivarian process and a more balanced U.S. policy toward Venezuela.

The timing is significant: December 2nd is the 82nd anniversary of the Monroe Doctrine, which established the dominance of the United States throughout the Western Hemisphere. The process in Venezuela today is often perceived as a disruption to the status quo set by the Monroe Doctrine specifically because it idealizes a strengthened, united Latin America. But millions of Americans believe that a united Latin America will only help create a stronger, more peaceful hemisphere.

According to the Latin America Solidarity Coalition, which is coordinating the events, each region of the country will organize separate actions, including marches, educational panels, letter-writing campaigns and vigils in support of the Venezuelan people.

To find out what is going on in your community or to otherwise get involved, please visit: <http://lasolidarity.org/Dec2.shtml>

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 3 Nov 2005 12:44:18 -0800 (PST)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.60102.49537820.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Washington Post Uncovers Pentagon Plan for Venezuela

WASHINGTON POST UNCOVERS PENTAGON "CONTINGENCY PLAN" AGAINST VENEZUELA

A column in Wednesday's Washington Post Online discloses a previously unknown Pentagon briefing paper that outlines a plan for potential military conflict with Venezuela. The document, dated October 2005 and titled "The FY08-13 POM," lists Venezuela among five potential "threats" to the United States, alongside North Korea, Iran, China and Syria. Venezuela is also described as a "rogue state" in the document.

[Read the column: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/11-02-05wpo.html>]

The Miami Herald followed up today by interviewing Pentagon officials, and the response has been telling: While military spokesman do not deny the existence of the contingency plan outright, they "reacted with deep skepticism" that it exists. Another Defense Department admitted that "it was possible [a Pentagon document] could mention a possible conflict with Venezuela," but said it's no big deal because " 'thousands' of documents go into the Quadrennial review process."

[Read the Miami Herald story: <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/13066998.htm>]

Later this morning, the Post columnist was compelled to follow up with a second column to shed more light on yesterday's disclosure. Arkin, who is a former intelligence officer with the U.S. Army, explains that such documents are not plans to invade, per se, but rather part of a series of "what if" scenarios in case Venezuela initiates aggressive action against the United States.

[Read the column: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/11-03-05wpo.html>]

No matter the designation, the existence of the documents will not assuage the fears of Venezuelans who have long held that U.S. military strategists are poised to assassinate their president and take over Venezuela's vast oil reserves.

REMINDER: VENEZUELA EVENT IN NEW YORK CITY NEXT WEEK

New Yorkers will gather at the city's Town Hall on November 8th to show solidarity with the people of Venezuela. The evening will include music, poetry, speakers and more. For more information, visit: <http://www.venezuelanov8.org/>

NATIONWIDE DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA: DECEMBER 2

A coalition of U.S.-based organizations has announced a National Venezuelan Solidarity Day on December 2nd. Representatives from faith-based organizations, Peace groups, and Latin American solidarity organizations will put together a series of events in support of the Bolivarian process and a more balanced U.S. policy toward Venezuela. To find out what is going on in your community or to otherwise get involved, please visit: <http://lasolidarity.org/Dec2.shtml>

VISIT THE SOCIAL FORUM OF THE AMERICAS: JANUARY 19 -FEBRUARY 1.

For those who are interested in participating in the World Social Forum in Caracas and spending some extra days in Venezuela to learn about the exciting and hopeful changes taking place, the Marin Interfaith Task Force is coordinating this exciting delegation. Highlights will include:

- * Activities in both the capital city of Caracas and in the countryside
- * Visits to the barrios where innovative social programs are underway

- * Discussions with government leaders about the goals of the Chavez administration.
- * Meetings with human rights groups to hear their concerns.
- * Attending the Social Forum of the Americas

The cost of the delegation is \$1,000 (plus airfare). For more information and to request an application please email Dale at geodale1@earthlink.net or mitf@igc.org or call 415-924-3226.

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Tue, 8 Nov 2005 06:19:01 -0800 (PST)
From: Venezuela News and Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News and Action <reply.60548.50047824.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Poll: Venezuelans Say Their Govt is "Totally Democratic"

More people in Venezuela consider their country "totally democratic" than any other nation in Latin America, according to regionwide survey results released last week.

The annual poll, conducted by Chilean firm Latinobarómetro, is based on 20,000 face-to-face interviews in 18 Latin American countries. Pollsters found this year that while enthusiasm for democratic governments has generally declined throughout the hemisphere, Venezuela is bucking the trend, fueled by new optimism in the economy and overall satisfaction with government.

Latinobarómetro has conducted similar country-by-country surveys for the past decade, and is widely recognized as a leading multi-country public opinion polling firm in Latin America. Below are some of the highlights of the poll results. For an analysis of the results for Venezuela, including charts showing the country-by-country breakdown, please visit <http://www.veninfo.org/news/latbar2005.html>

DEMOCRACY

* Venezuelans are more likely than citizens of other Latin American countries to describe their government as "totally democratic."

* More than three in four Venezuelans prefer democracy over all other forms of government--the second highest ranking in the region.

* Venezuelans have the second highest satisfaction level in the region with the way their democracy functions.

ECONOMY

* Venezuelans are far less worried about becoming unemployed than others in the region.

* Venezuela is the second most optimistic country in Latin America about the direction of their economy.

POLITICS AND CORRUPTION

* While most Latin Americans think that politics is too complicated to understand, only 2 in 5 Venezuelans share their frustration.

* Venezuelans are optimistic that their government is effectively dealing with corruption.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Looking at the country by country breakdown, [<http://www.veninfo.org/news/latbar2005.html>] Venezuelans are more content with their government and economy than the vast majority of Latin Americans. Perhaps there is some cultural tendency that makes Venezuelans more optimistic by nature? A year-by-year analysis of Venezuelan opinions indicates that this is not the case. Latinobarómetro polls from 1996-1998 indicate that in the three years before President Hugo Chavez was elected, Venezuelans had a much lower level of satisfaction with the way their democracy functioned.

Another obvious conclusion is that more Venezuelans believe their country is "totally democratic" than do citizens of other Latin American nations. Perhaps Venezuelans define democracy differently than a North Americans would? You may remember that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has referred to "democratically elected leaders who govern in an illiberal way." But when asked to describe the most important characteristics of a democracy, Venezuelans were far more likely than citizens of any other country in the region to prioritize civil liberties over elections.

In other words, Venezuelans largely have the same definition of a democracy as the United States.

For more data, visit <http://www.veninfo.org/news/latbar2005.html>

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Date: Thu, 1 Dec 2005 13:25:28 -0800 (PST)
From: Edward Mercado <edward@veninfo.org>
To: omarsierra_ven@yahoo.com
Subject: Time Line- Trip to Venezuela

Dear friends and comrades, attached you will find the time line for the first trip to Venezuela. As you may know, this trip will be from January 12th to January 21st with the open possibility to attend the World Social Forum.

During my recent trip to the Lara State I had the opportunity to meet with high ranking governmental officials, such as the Governor of the Lara State, the Vice-President of the Local Assembly, the State Coordinator of the National Institute of Parks and Mayors of the municipalities involved in the program.

I also met with community and cultural activists, members of the agrarian cooperatives, alternative media representatives, and members of the Urban Land Committees. I got the support of all of them for the success of our program and with their help we designed this time line which I hope will cover all our expectations. Here some general info about the Trip:

Organizers / Ground Team:

Omar Sierra (First Consul - Chicago, IL)

Edward Mercado (Communications Coordinator - Venezuela Information Office, Washington, DC)

Endorsers / Hosting Committee

Venezuelan Consulate in Chicago

Venezuela Information Office

Colectivo Nuestra América

Governor of Lara State, Luis Reyes Reyes

Victor Martinez (Lara State Deputy, Vice-president of the Legislative Council)

Legislative Council (Joint declaration of endorsement)

Centro Cultural Guachirongo

Imparques (National Institute of Parks/Lara State)

Lara U.B.E. s (Units of Endogenous Battles)

This pilot program will be limited to 40 delegates. Please request the application form as soon as possible.

We reserve the right to decline any applicants under 18 years old. Please understand we have some restrictions on the number of delegates and age, this is a developing program and will be more flexible in the future.

We ask for a Donation of at least \$50 per person. This donation will be to pay the local ground team. We are also accepting voluntary donations that will go to the local housing committee.

You will be responsible for your International Travel Expenses.

Housing and Transportation will be subsidized by the Local Government.

Please let us know if you are planning to also participate in the World Social Forum, we are working on Logistics and Accommodations for the WSF in Caracas, if you want to stay as a group.

Please provide your travel details as soon as possible.

Questions? - Write to: veninfo@eml.cc

Edward Mercado: 202-3478081 ext-601

Want to share info with whole delegation? Write to: usven@lists.riseup.net

Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 1 Dec 2005 15:46:41 -0800 (PST)
From: Venezuela News and Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News and Action <reply.64557.53116016.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Venezuelan Opposition Refuses to Participate in Elections

In the face of electoral defeat, Venezuela's largest opposition parties have called for a boycott of legislative elections scheduled for this weekend. While President Chavez and his political supporters have enjoyed the highest approval ratings of his term-topping 70% in many recent polls-opposition candidates have struggled to come up with a platform that resonates with the Venezuelan people. In announcing the boycott, opposition parties dashed hopes that they would participate in the democratic process, and ensured that pro-Chavez candidates will sweep the National Assembly.

The pullout angered election observers from the Organization of American States, who had spent weeks overseeing negotiations between government and opposition leaders. Last Monday, the OAS released a statement that government concessions had "secured the participation" of the major political parties. Two days later, those parties turned their back on their agreement and called for a boycott.

Read more from the Chicago Tribune: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/12-01-05ct.html>

CONTRADICTIONS AND CHAOS

The pullout has created controversy among opposition candidates, particularly among those who had been favored to win in their region. Of the 4,000 opposition candidates nationwide, only 78 had formally withdrawn as of noon today. Many candidates for the parties that have pulled out on a national level are ignoring party leadership and remaining in races on the state and local level. Indeed, many local opposition candidates have suggested that electoral safeguards have improved since the 2004 referendum. Primero Justicia candidate Carlos Ocariz told a Reuters reporter, "We don't win anything by abstention. There are more guarantees for the vote now and that's why we are fighting."

Read more: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/12-01-05reu.html>

REHASHING OLD, UNDEMOCRATIC STRATEGIES

Opposition parties used a similar strategy during the 2004 presidential recall referendum in an attempt to discredit the election results. President Chavez won the referendum easily with 59% of the vote, which was certified by the OAS and the Carter Center. Nevertheless, opposition groups cried foul based on fraudulent exit polls -- a scheme that was quickly denounced by President Carter. 'There's no doubt some of their leaders deliberately distributed this erroneous exit poll data in order to build up, not only the expectation of victory, but also to influence the people still standing in line,' Carter said at the time.

Read more on past tactics: <http://www.veninfo.org/news/08-18-04nyt.html>

The days ahead may be difficult in Venezuela. Readers are strongly encouraged to monitor news reports of the election through the weekend and respond to biased or otherwise inaccurate reporting.

NATIONWIDE DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA: DECEMBER 2

Twenty-seven cities in North America and Australia will celebrate National Venezuelan Solidarity Day on December 2nd. Representatives from faith-based organizations, Peace groups, and Latin

American solidarity organizations will put together a series of events in support of the Bolivarian process and a more balanced U.S. policy toward Venezuela.

Events will take place in Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, Boston, Miami, Seattle, Minneapolis, Tucson, Milwaukee, Sydney, Melbourne, London, Vancouver, Toronto-even Fargo, ND, among other places. To find out what is going on in your community, please visit:
<http://lasolidarity.org/Dec2.shtml>

NEW VENEZUELA BLOG: CARACAS CONNECT

The Center for International Policy, a well-known foreign policy think tank in Washington, DC, has launched a new weblog exclusively devoted to dialogue about Venezuela and U.S. foreign policy toward Venezuela and the southern hemisphere. Check out Caracas Connect at
<http://caracasconnect.blogspot.com>

You are subscribed to this list as eric@veninfo.org. To unsubscribe, send email to unsubscribe.64557.53116016.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org.

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Suite 932
Washington, District of Columbia 20005
United States

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 12 Jan 2006 13:18:42 -0800 (PST)
From: Venezuela Weekly News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela Weekly News & Action <reply.70428.58254368.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Venezuelan, U.S. Jewish Groups Defend President Chavez
X-Status:
X-Keywords:

Dear Friends

Once again, Venezuela's leading Jewish organization has strongly condemned remarks from groups outside Venezuela accusing the government of anti-Semitism. In a letter sent by the Confederation of Jewish Associations of Venezuela (CAIV) today, Venezuelan Jewish leaders state that the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center had misinterpreted remarks made by President Chavez, and demanded that the Center consult with them before commenting on Venezuelan issues. The condemnation of the Wiesenthal Center was also backed by two leading U.S. Jewish organizations, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress.

WHAT THE WIESENTHAL CENTER SAID

Last week, the Wiesenthal Center published an action alert criticizing comments made by President Chavez in a Christmas Eve speech, where the president discussed what he called the "revolutionary nature" of Jesus Christ. Chavez said that Jesus spoke out on behalf of the poor and downtrodden, and was assassinated for his work. Today, said Chavez, those who speak for the poor continue to be targeted by "some minorities, the descendants of the same ones who crucified Christ, the descendants of the same ones who threw out Bolivar from here and also crucified him in a way in Santa Marta."

But in their action alert, The Wiesenthal Center omitted the reference to Simon Bolivar, making it appear as if Chavez was making an ugly reference to Jews as "Christ-killers." The Center called on the governments of Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil to block Venezuela's admission into the regional trade bloc Mercosur until an apology was issued.

Read the Simon Wiesenthal Center alert:

http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nl/content.asp?c=fwLYKnN8LzH&b=312458&content_id={17D5A467-8F24-4ADA-BCD3-DE4476D7F462}¬oc=1

"ISSUES YOU DON'T KNOW OR UNDERSTAND"

By rushing to label the Venezuelan government as anti-Semitic, CAIV wrote, the Wiesenthal Center has "interfered in the political status, in the security, and in the well-being of our community. You have acted on your own, without consulting us, on issues that you don't know or understand."

An article published today in the Jewish weekly newspaper, Forward, quotes other U.S.-based Jewish organizations defending President Chavez's remarks. "It appears to us that Chavez did not intentionally speak about Jews," said David Twersky, director of the AJ Congress's Council on World Jewry. "I don't think we should raise the flag of antisemitism when it doesn't belong."

The Forward article states that the Wiesenthal Center may be voicing "the Bush administration's displeasure with Chavez's anti-American pronouncements," rather than the views of Venezuelan Jews.

Read the article in Forward: <http://www.forward.com/articles/7189>

PAST ALLEGATIONS

This is not the first time Venezuelan Jewish leaders have had to defend their government from accusations from outside the country. Just two month ago, CAIV was forced to comment on a statement by a Brazilian Rabbi that Venezuelan Jews were victims of an anti-Semitic government. The Venezuelan group responded with a statement that "there is no anti-Semitism, nor have there been any attacks on the Jewish community by the State" in Venezuela, and noted their "surprise" that the Brazilian "had never asked the Venezuelan Jewish community whether or not it had been victimized or persecuted."

A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS:

We would like to thank the many readers who have written the VIO concerned that they had not received Venezuela News & Action for the past two weeks. We had taken a holiday break the week before New Years, and last week an office move had shut down our internet connection.

But we are back, and have a number of exciting upgrades for 2006. Soon, our website, www.veninfo.org, will include downloadable video, searchable article archives, and many more features to help you stay connected to Venezuela and the Bolivarian process. Please continue to check the site frequently for the new resources.

Please make a note-our address has changed. You may now send correspondence to:

Venezuela Information Office
2000 P Street NW, Ste. 240
Washington, DC 20036

Our phone numbers and Email addresses will remain the same.

Happy New Year to all our friends and allies!

Eric Wingerter

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Wed, 25 Jan 2006 10:04:30 -0800 (PST)
From: Venezuela Weekly News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela Weekly News & Action <reply.72303.59885763.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: CONTACT CONGRESS TODAY

TAKE 2 MINUTES THIS WEEK TO SUPPORT VENEZUELA!

If you did not contact your representative in Congress last week please do so this week. And if you did, send this action alert to a friend! It is important that you contact your member of Congress prior to the resumption of the 109th Congress on January 31st.

BACKGROUND

Just before Christmas, Florida Republican Connie Mack introduced a resolution to condemn the Venezuelan government and encourage financing of opposition political parties in Venezuela.

H. Con. Res. 328 is filled with distortions and misleading statements that add up to paint an inaccurate picture of Venezuela's government. SEE BELOW ON HOW YOU CAN VOICE YOUR OPPOSITION TO THIS RESOLUTION!

WHAT THE RESOLUTION SAYS

The resolution iterates a number of talking points from Venezuelan opposition parties, many of which are simply not supported by the public record. The "whereas" clauses of the resolution claim:

- * President Chavez single-handedly rewrote the Venezuelan Constitution,
- * Chavez is attempting to "rid the political landscape of any official opposition," by winning at the ballot box,
- * Chavez has taken steps to eliminate traditional labor unions,
- * The Venezuelan government supports "radical forces in Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador" in an effort to "destabilize the already fragile democratic governments," and
- * President Chavez stifles media outlets through punitive legislation.

For a complete listing of Representative Mack's myths, as well as documentation to counter them, please visit: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/hcr328.htm>

WHAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD DO:

Resolution 328 encourages the U.S. government to fund political parties in opposition to the Chavez administration, a policy which would violate Venezuelan law, not to mention subvert the very principles of democracy in Venezuela.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please contact your member of Congress today! Visit http://www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizations/VIO//campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=2167 to view a sample letter to Congress. By inputting your name and address, you can personalize your letter and it will be immediately faxed to your Congressional representative. If you have the time PLEASE WRITE YOUR OWN LETTER. It's always better for your representative to know why you care and how this affects you rather than receiving the same letter from many of their constituents.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/hcr328.htm>

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unsubscribe.72303.59885763.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org.

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Mon, 6 Feb 2006 13:38:03 -0800 (PST)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: Venezuela News & Action <reply.74286.61636371.7421673269609172509-eric_veninfo.org@en.groundspring.org>
To: <eric@veninfo.org>
Subject: Conservative Group Announces Citgo Boycott

RIGHT WING URGES CITGO BOYCOTT

The ultra-conservative American Family Association is calling for a boycott on Venezuelan oil company Citgo. An action alert on the AFA web page refers to Chavez as a "dictator" who "has vowed to bring down the U.S. government."

The group, which purports to represent family values, makes no mention of the thousands of families in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Delaware and Pennsylvania who received discounted heating oil from CITGO this winter to help them survive the cold.

Taking on a foreign policy issue is a departure for the group, which normally rallies against explicit television programming, the separation of church and state, and gay and lesbian Americans.

Their action alert, available at <http://www.afa.net/Petitions/IssueDetail.asp?id=182>, includes a web form to send letters to President Chavez, Citgo, and U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela William Brownfield. The sample letters from AFA may be edited, and pro-Venezuela activists are encouraging supporters to use the form to send positive messages about Citgo.

To find out what heating oil recipients are saying about Citgo, please visit:
<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/citgoquotes.htm>

HOUSE RESOLUTION AGAINST VENEZUELA: YOUR PHONE CALLS ARE NEEDED

Tell your rep. to NOT support H. Con. Res. 328 against Venezuela!

Call Congress at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your representative.

BACKGROUND

Late last year, Florida Republican Connie Mack introduced a resolution to condemn the Venezuelan government and encourage financing of opposition political parties in Venezuela

H. Con. Res. 328 is filled with distortions and misleading statements that add up to paint an inaccurate picture of Venezuela's government. For more details, see our fact sheet at <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/hcr328.htm>

WHAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD DO:

HCR 328 encourages the U.S. government to fund political parties in opposition to the Chavez administration, a policy which would violate Venezuelan law, not to mention subvert the very principles of democracy in Venezuela.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please make a personal phone call to your representative. Call Congress at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected with your representative. Tell them that you don't support Connie Mack's resolution against Venezuela!

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 16:11:22 -0500 (EST)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
To: eric@veninfo.org
Subject: Millions of U.S. Dollars Sent to Venezuelan Opposition--Your Help
is Needed

OTI Funneling Money To Venezuelan Opposition Parties

On February 6 2006, an investigative report in the Christian Science Monitor revealed previously undisclosed details about a U.S. program to fund opposition organizations in Venezuela in the leadup to this year's presidential elections. The Office for Transition Initiatives, a little-known division of USAID, is chaneling millions of U.S. tax dollars to fund anti-Chavez organizations.

Read the story

Many Americans have raised concerns about similar efforts by the National Endowment for Democracy to fund non-democratic movements in Venezuela, but the scope of the OTI projects is exponentially larger. What's more, the OTI acknowledges that it is an "overtly political" organization, and will play a large role in Venezuela's presidential elections.

Since first elected in 1998, President Chavez has faced a failed coup attempt, a crippling nationwide oil lockout, and a referendum that attempted to cut short his term. Each time, massive popular support kept the president in office. It is time that the U.S. government accept the will of the Venezuelan people, and allow them to live by the principals of democracy without outside interference.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please make your voice heard on this issue today! By clicking here, you will be transferred to our Action Center, where you will be able to forward this article to your member of Congress with a personalized message.

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Wed, 22 Feb 2006 13:29:01 -0500 (EST)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
To: eric@veninfo.org
Subject: Two Negative Media Stories on Venezuela--Your Help is Needed
Envelope-From: <bounces@bounces.democracyinaction.org>
email_KEY: 85379014

Two Stories Require Your Response

Earlier this week, two major newspapers ran separate stories extraordinarily critical of the current political scene in Venezuela. While bad coverage of Venezuela in the mainstream media is nothing new, both of these articles are significant for their level of imbalance and the extreme nature of their views. Your help is needed to correct the record. Please take the time to write a quick letter to the editor.

Story 1: "Venezuela's Unrealized Revolution," from the Christian Science Monitor Monday, February 20, 2006

Christian Science Monitor correspondent Vinod Sreeharsha interviews three disaffected Venezuelans who originally voted for President Hugo Chavez and now are dissatisfied with the administration. The interviewees present a laundry-list of "infrastructure" problems and imply that life for Venezuela's poor has declined, rather than improved over the last six years.

The article notes that Chavez's support has been "slipping", but does not mention that approval ratings merely dipped from 70% to 65%. By leaving the numbers out, the article implies that the President does not maintain majority support, and that the four Venezuelans interviewed make up majority opinion.

Neither does the story note the role of the undemocratic forces within the Venezuelan opposition in any "infrastructure" problems the country may have. Remember in the past 4 years alone, the Chavez administration has faced an attempted coup d'etat, a nationwide "strike" of oil executives that crippled the economy, and a recall referendum. The opposition likes to argue that the Chavez administration has not stayed on top of things like bridge maintenance or pothole fixing, yet they haven't given the administration an opportunity to govern without interference.

Letters may be sent to the Christian Science Monitor using this form.

(For tips on writing an effective letter to the editor, please visit our website).

Story 2: "War of Words between Chavez, US Heats Up," from The Financial Times, Monday, February 20, 2006.

This story attempts to link Chavez's opposition to U.S. foreign policy with "cold war antics" of the Soviet Union. It singles out President Chavez for hurting relations between the two country, but glosses over the highly aggressive posture the U.S. State Department has had against Venezuela since Chavez was first elected. Remember that the United States continues to fund opposition leaders in Venezuela, some of whom led the 2002 coup d'etat against President Chavez. While the Venezuelan government may use strong rhetoric against Bush administration policies, it has never directly interfered with internal politics in the United States. What's more, characterizing opposition to President Bush's foreign policy is not akin to being "anti-American."

This story in The Financial Times does not quote a single pro-Chavez source.

Letters may be sent to letters.editor@ft.com

(For tips on writing an effective letter to the editor, please visit our website).

National Venezuela Solidarity Conference: March 4-6 in Washington

Join Hundreds of North American activists, faith leaders, union organizers and others in solidarity with Venezuela in Washington D.C. the first weekend in March. The first-of-its-kind conference will discuss strategies toward coordinating a nationwide network in support of Venezuela. Click [here](#) for more information.

Venezuela Events in North America

The VIO website has a new page dedicated to Venezuela solidarity events in the United States and Canada. If you would like your event posted, please send an announcement to [edward \(at\) veninfo.org](mailto:edward@veninfo.org)

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 9 Mar 2006 15:26:55 -0500 (EST)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: newsandaction@veninfo.org
To: eric@veninfo.org
Subject: State Department Report on Vzla, Mack Resolution Gains Traction
Envelope-From: <bounces@bounces.democracyinaction.org>
email_KEY: 92421847

State Department Releases Vzla Human Rights Report

th

On Wednesday, March 8, the U.S. State Department released its annual country-by-country report on human rights problems in various countries, including Venezuela.

The Venezuela section includes some criticisms, particularly in the area of Venezuelan prisons, which have been chronically troubled for generations. Ironically, the two areas in which Venezuela was singled out for criticism were in the treatment of prisoners and in the use of wiretaps without a warrant—the same problems that have brought domestic and international criticism to the United States in recent months.

On the positive side, the State Department report acknowledges Venezuela's commitment to freedom in a number of areas, recognizing:

- * The Venezuelan press and electronic media are independent and free,
- * Freedom of assembly and speech are respected, and
- * Elections are free, fair, and "held on the basis of universal suffrage."

[Click here](#) to read more positive statements from the State Department report on Venezuela.

Despite the State Department Report, Mack Resolution Moving Forward

Unfortunately, the positive messages from the State Department have not yet permeated Capitol Hill. Representative Connie Mack's H. Con. Res. 328 is still being circulated in the House of Representatives. Just this week, Rep. Mack (R-FL) has circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter asking his allies on the Hill to co-sponsor this error-packed resolution.

As we reported last month, H. Con. Res. 328 requests an increase in U.S. funding for Venezuela's opposition parties, and includes a series of erroneous "whereas" clauses that show a profound lack of understanding about Venezuela's democracy. That's shouldn't be a surprise. Just last July, Congressman Mack made the following off-the-wall claim:

"In Hugo Chavez's Venezuela there is no free press, just state controlled anti-American propaganda. There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of dissent, and no freedom to stand in opposition to the Chavez regime."

Clearly Mack has not read the Venezuelan press, which has vigorously opposed President Chavez. What's more, Mack is directly contradicting the findings of the U.S. State Department. This distortion of truth in H. Con. Res. 328 makes it one of the most intellectually dishonest pieces of legislation currently up for review in Congress.

How You Can Help: Ask Your Rep. to Stand Up For "One Minute of Truth."

Members of the House are granted one minute each morning to speak out on any subject. In the weeks ahead, members should be asked to exercise their "one minute" to speak out against at least one of the erroneous statements in Representative Mack's H. Con. Res. 328.

[Click Here to send a fax to your representative](#) right away, and encourage them to stand up against this dishonest campaign. Or to call, dial the Congressional switchboard and ask to be transferred to your member at 202-224-3121.

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Envelope-to: eric@veninfo.org
Date: Mon, 13 Mar 2006 11:12:21 -0500 (EST)
From: Venezuela News & Action <newsandaction@veninfo.org>
Reply-To: newsandaction@veninfo.org
To: eric@veninfo.org
Subject: H. Con. Res. 328 Comes Up for a Vote This Thursday!
Envelope-From: <bounces@bounces.democracyinaction.org>
email_KEY: 93376044

H. Con. Res. 328 will be voted on this week! Your calls are needed in Congress today

Congressional Switchboard: 202-224-3121

Friends,

We just received word that H. Con. Resolution 328 will be up for a subcommittee vote this Thursday, March 16. Your help is needed to stop this intellectually dishonest, anti-Venezuela resolution. **Please call Congress today!**

What is H.Con. Res. 328?

Sponsored by Rep. Connie Mack (R-FL), H. Con. Res. 328 is a misguided and factually inaccurate resolution that condemns Venezuela and recommends funding of Venezuelan opposition parties, in direct violation of Venezuelan law.

The resolution contains so many factual inaccuracies that it should be an embarrassment for most members of Congress to support. For a full description of the errors, half-truths and misstatements please see our fact sheet.

What you can do:

Please call Representative Eliot Engel today. This New York Democrat is the ranking member of the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, which will be taking up the vote. The Congressional Switchboard can patch you through to his office. Call **202-224-3121** today and do the following:

- 1) Ask to speak to Congressman Eliot Engel's Office
- 2) When the receptionist answers, ask to speak to the Legislative Aide who works on Venezuela issues.
- 3) If you speak to the aide directly, ask him/her to recommend that Rep. Engel speak out against H. Con. Res. 328 in the subcommittee. If you are put into voicemail, please leave a message. Here are some points to consider for your discussion:

* **The resolution is inaccurate.** Among other things:

-The resolution states that President Chavez rewrote the Venezuelan Constitution, when in fact it was drafted and approved through a democratic process;

-It argues that President Chavez has taken control of the National Assembly, when in fact opposition parties made a decision not to participate in the most recent elections;

-It contradicts the 2005 U.S. State Department report that Venezuela has a open and vigorous media; and

-It claims that President Chavez "is supporting radical forces" in Bolivia and Colombia. The inclusion of Bolivia seems to be referring to the democratically-elected president of that country, Evo Morales, who, while a socialist, is supported and recognized by every country in Latin America. And the Colombia example refers to never-proven allegations of links to FARC rebels--a charge which is not even supported by the conservative President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe.

*** The U.S. must have a sane policy toward Venezuela.** Last month, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld compared President Chavez to Hitler. Just last week, a California academic was harassed by FBI agents for his support of Venezuela's democratically-elected government. Clearly, the House needs bring a level of sanity back to our discussion of Venezuela.

*** If we truly believe in the principles of democracy, the U.S. should not be advocating funding for opposition parties in other countries.**

NOTE: Rep. Engel is new to the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee. He will likely vote the right way on this bill, but he needs to be educated in order to be able to speak out against H. Con. Res. 328.

4) **Forward this message on to five friends** and ask them to make a similar call.

5) **Post this message on listservs** that you belong to and get the word out!

Venezuela Information Office

2000 P Street NW, Ste. 240

Washington, DC, 20036

(202) 347-8081

Eric Wingerter, Public Education Director

NOTE: The Venezuela Information Office is dedicated to informing the American public about contemporary Venezuela, and receives its funding from the government of Venezuela. More information is available from the FARA office of the Department of Justice in Washington DC.

Envelope-to: edward@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 23 Mar 2006 10:41:52 -0500 (EST)
From: Venezuela Information Office <VIO@democracyinaction.org>
Reply-To: VIO@democracyinaction.org
To: edward@veninfo.org
Subject: Mack is Back!
Envelope-From: <bounces@bounces.democracyinaction.org>
email_KEY: 97473034

MAKE A CALL FOR TRUTH!

H. Con. Res. 328 may come up for a vote as early as next week! While you successfully stopped Rep. Connie Mack's (R-FL) initial call for support of his resolution in the Western Hemisphere's Subcommittee two weeks ago we believe that it will be introduced for a mark up again this coming week. If passed it will then go to the full House Committee on International Relations for a vote and then to the entire House of Representatives. While this legislation is not binding it signifies the "opinion" of the Congress and can be used in the future to justify interventionist action against Venezuela.

H. Con. Res. 328 is filled with distortions and misleading statements that add up to paint an inaccurate picture of Venezuela's government. Help us stop this resolution dead in its tracks!

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

Ask your Representative to vote NO on the Mack Resolution-H. Con. Res. 328! Today, Friday and early next week members should hear from you and know that you do not support H. Con. Res. 328 and the funding for opposition groups in Venezuela that it sanctions.

Contact your representative by calling the Congressional switchboard at: 202-224-3121.

Ask to be connected to your representative and tell that they should not be associated with a bill that is so factually inaccurate and void of any credible research.

*Below you will find helpful information that will help you as you talk with your representative as well as Mack's actual dear colleague letter.

The Mack resolution is laced with so many inaccuracies and misleading statements, it is simply breathtaking. A myth/ fact sheet on the resolution along with the actual resolution is available for your study at: <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/hcr328.htm>

In consideration of Rep. Mack's request to co-sponsor his resolution, it is helpful perhaps to recall that Rep. Mack said on July 14th of 2005 that there was no freedom of expression in Venezuela. None! In a speech given on the floor of the House of Representatives on July 14, 2005 by Rep.

Connie Mack he said: "In Hugo Chavez's Venezuela there is no free press just state controlled Anti-American, anti-American propaganda. There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of dissent, and no freedom to stand in opposition to the Chavez regime. "

Rep. Mack's statement is stunning in its falsity. This is easily shown by simply reading any recent articles from El Universal, a Venezuelan daily newspaper, which condemns the Venezuelan Government daily on any array of topics.

This distortion of truth in H. Con. Res. 328 makes it one of the most intellectually dishonest pieces of legislation currently up for review in Congress.

Below you will find Mack's request for co-sponsorship:

March 8, 2006

Support Freedom in Venezuela

Co-Sponsor H. Con. Res. 328

"Fidel, I think you were always right: It's socialism or death!" –Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez

Dear Colleague:

While freedom is on the march in many places around the world, a resurgence of socialist, communist, and anti-freedom governments and movements in Latin America represent an emerging threat to freedom throughout the region.

In Venezuela, socialist President Hugo Chavez is using state-owned oil money to underwrite his increasing control of the Venezuelan people and to back his growing alliances with leftist leaders and causes throughout Latin America.

In September, Chavez—with Fidel Castro by his side—was clear in his motives: “Fidel, I think you were always right: It’s socialism or death.” And in separate announcements late last year, the Chavez government said it would begin taking political control over private banks, confiscating large parcels of private property, and seizing private oil fields if companies didn’t convert operating contracts to “joint ventures” in which the government would assume a majority shareholder stake.

Finally, members of the media, human rights defenders, and leaders of opposition groups like Sumate are facing prosecution under a judicial system where the nation’s courts have been packed with Chavez cronies. And there is increasing evidence that the government of Venezuela is seeking to destabilize the region and dismantle the institutions of democracy within its borders and beyond them. In fact, in recent weeks, Chavez and Castro have begun reaching out to known Islamic terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, and cozying-up to renowned terrorist-sponsoring nations like Iran and North Korea.

The United States must make clear that improved relations between the United States and Venezuela depend upon the government of Venezuela demonstrating a commitment to the ideals of freedom and democracy for all of its citizens.

Please co-sponsor H. Con. Res. 328 and join us in sending a strong message to the government of Venezuela that the people of the United States are firmly committed to freedom and democracy for all citizens of Venezuela.

To cosponsor H. Con. Res. 328, please contact Francis Gibbs in Congressman Mack’s office at francis.gibbs@mail.house.gov or 5-2536.

Sincerely,

CONNIE MACK

DAN BURTON

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Envelope-to: edward@veninfo.org
Date: Thu, 23 Mar 2006 14:16:11 -0500 (EST)
From: Venezuela Information Office <VIO@democracyinaction.org>
Reply-To: VIO@democracyinaction.org
To: edward@veninfo.org
Subject: Venezuela: Neither Heaven nor Hell
Envelope-From: <bounces@bounces.democracyinaction.org>
email_KEY: 98019169

Dear friends,

It's time to increase our pressure! As you know H. Con. Res. 328, an anti-Venezuelan resolution will probably be marked up in the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs next week. It will then go to the entire International Relations Committee in the house and then to a full house vote.

Write a letter to your local newspaper! Let's get people talking about Venezuela!

To write your letter and find a sample letter go to

http://www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizationsORG/VIO/pickMedia.jsp?letter_KEY=404
that you can use as a guide. After you review the letter you will be guided to pick your state and then click on the newspaper that you'd like to send your letter to (a list of newspapers will appear at the bottom of the page under the sample letter). Your letter will go to the editor to be published in the op-ed section of the paper. You will also find talking points once you select your state that you can use to compose your own personalized letter. Remember your personal story is the most compelling!

Please let us know if your letter gets published by emailing our communications coordinator Edward Mercado at edward@veninfo.org
