

For Six Month Period Ending 4/30/10
(Insert date)

I - REGISTRANT

1. (a) Name of Registrant

Olivia Goumbri

(b) Registration No. 5957

(c) Business Address(es) of Registrant

6618 13th Place, NW
Washington DC 20012

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

- (a) If an individual:
- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| (1) Residence address(es) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) Citizenship | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (3) Occupation | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

- (b) If an organization:
- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Name | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) Ownership or control | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (3) Branch offices | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

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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.

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

(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

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 employees or individuals, who have filed a short form registration statement, terminated their employment or connection with the registrant during this 6 month reporting period? Yes No

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name Position or connection Date terminated

(c) During this 6 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

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 NA 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 the 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

NA

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 the 6 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 NSD-3 (Formerly CRM-157), sets forth the information required to be disclosed concerning each foreign principal.

⁴ The Exhibit B, which is filed on Form NSD-4 (Formerly CRM-155), 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 & 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, indicating, 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 and places of delivery, names of speakers and subject matter.

- See logs attached.

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 the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of 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, or 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
11/30/09	Embassy of Venezuela	fee	\$ 5,000
12/30/09			
1/30/10			
2/28/10			
3/30/10			
4/30/10			
			<u>\$ 30,000</u>
			Total

(b) RECEIPTS - FUND RAISING 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, or 9 of this statement? Yes No

If yes, have you filed an Exhibit D⁸ 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, or 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, or 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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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, or 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.

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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.

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 the 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)

5/18/10

Olivia Gombri

Olivia Gombri

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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.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FARA REGISTRATION UNIT
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

NOTICE

Please answer the following questions and return this sheet in triplicate with your Supplemental Statement:

1. Is your answer to Item 16 of Section V (Informational Materials – page 8 of Form NSD-2, formerly Form CRM-154 Supplemental Statement):

YES or NO

(If your answer to question 1 is “yes” do not answer question 2 of this form.)

2. Do you disseminate any material in connection with your registration:

YES or NO

(If your answer to question 2 is “yes” please forward for our review copies of all material including: films, film catalogs, posters, brochures, press releases, etc. which you have disseminated during the past six months.)

Olivia Goumbri 5/18/10
Signature Date

Olivia Goumbri
Please type or print name of
Signatory on the line above

social outreach consultant
Title

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U.S. Department of Justice
National Security 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:

Last Name	First Name and Other Names	Registration Date	Termination Date	Role
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NA

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U.S. Department of Justice

National Security Division

Washington, DC 20530

SECTION B

In addition to those persons listed in Section A, list below all current employees rendering services directly on behalf of the foreign principals(s) who have not filed short-form registration statements. (Do not list clerks, secretaries, typists or employees in a similar or related capacity). If there is some question as to whether an employee has an obligation to file a short-form, please address a letter to the Registration Unit describing the activities and connection with the foreign principal.

Name	Function	Date Hired

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

NA

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FARA Reporting Log			Olivia Goumbri Nov 2009-April 2010			
Date	Person Contacted	Position/Title	Organization	Contacted	Subject Discussed	Position Advocated
1-Nov-09	Roberto Vargas	activist		email	visit of Ambassador to San Antonio	help set meeting with key members of community and Ambassador
2-Nov-09	Rudy Rasmus	pastor	St Johns United Methodist Church	email	visit of Ambassador to Houston	help set meeting with key members of community and Ambassador
2-Nov-09	Palom Diaz	coordinator	UT Austin-Lat Am	email	visit of Ambassador to Austin	have Ambassador speak at UT-Austin
2-Nov-09	Gary Bledsoe	director	NAACP Texas	email	visit of Ambassador to Austin	have a meeting with him
3-Nov-09	leadership of NDLO		NDLO	in person	Venezuela and social issues	visit Venezuela
13-Nov-09	Antonio Gonzalez	president	WVI	email	visit of Ambassador to Austin	attend meetings
17-Nov-09	Andrew King	student	NYU	email/phone	militarization	read fact sheets and attend events
17-Nov-09	email listserve			email	militarization	read Ambassador's opinion piece in The Hill
17-Nov-09	Louis Head	co-chair	US Social Forum	email	social forum plenaries	have Venezuelan social leaders speak
17-Nov-09	Bill Fletcher	writer	blackcommentator.com	email	event with Cornel West	suggest people to invite
18-Nov-09	Nicole Lee	president	TransAfrica Forum	email	event with Cornel West	suggest people to invite
18-Nov-09	email listserve			email	event with Cornel West	attend event and publicize
17-Dec-09	Jason Leon	executive director	Labor Council for LatAM Advancement	in person/em	labor in Venezuela	meet with Ambassador
18-Dec-09	Paul-Martin	legislative director	Peace-Action	email/in pers	peace in region	send out updates on peace in LatAm
18-Dec-09	Lauryn Nkwankpa	outreach	Hip Hop Caucus	email/in pers	Venezuela and social missions	meet with Ambassador
28-Dec-09	Greg Grandin	professor	NYU	email	Left Forum	have topic of Venezuela and regional stability be presented on panel
7-Jan-10	email listserve			email	event on heating oil	attend event and publicize
25-Jan-10	Gene Bruskin	co-coordinator	Labor Against the War	in person	unions in Venezuela	organize delegation to Venezuela
27-Jan-10	Julian Bond	former chair	NAACP	email	Venezuela	organize meeting with president of org
27-Jan-10	email listserve			email	Venezuela aid to Haiti	join with Venezuela to send aid
29-Jan-10	Jane Slaughter	organizer	Labor Notes	email	conference	have Venezuelan labor leader on panel
1-Feb-10	Rev. Lennox Yearwood	President	Hip Hop Caucus	in person	Venezuela social missions	publicize Venezuela's efforts in Haiti and climate change conference
18-Feb-10	email listserve			email	Climate Change conference	attend and support it
18-Feb-10	Emira Woods	Co-Director	IPS FPIF	email	Haiti	sponsor event on Haiti and Venezuela
18-Feb-10	email listserve			email	Venezuela and Iran	watch Amanpour show and make comment
24-Feb-10	email listserve			email	Venezuela and human rights	read OAS report and comment

1-Mar-10	Rev Keller	former pastor		in person	Venezuela and regional stability	circulate facts on bases and militarizations in LatAm
1-Mar-10	Mavis Anderson	program coordin	LAWG	in person	Venezuela and regional stability	send out information on militarization
1-Mar-10	Paulo Gusmao	coordinator	LAWG	in person	Venezuela and regional stability	send out information on militarization
1-Mar-10	Kevin Danaher	coordinator	Global Exchange	email/phone	Climate Change conference	have a speaker discuss climate change
3-Mar-10	Hendrik Voss	coordinator	SOA Watch	email/in pers	regional stability	organize conference on topic
10-Mar-10	Hendrik Voss	coordinator	SOA Watch	in person/em	regional stability and peace	highlight advances of Venezuela in regional stability
10-Mar-10	Father Roy Bougois	president	SOA Watch	in person	regional stability and peace	highlight advances of Venezuela in regional stability
10-Mar-10	John Lindsay-Poland	coordinator	FOR	in person/em	regional stability and peace	highlight advances of Venezuela in regional stability
17-Mar-10	Gary Bledsoe	director	NAACP Texas	email	Ambassador trip to Texas	do event on Haiti with Ambassador
17-Mar-10	D'Ann Johnson	lawyer	NLG	email	Ambassador trip to Texas	do event on Haiti with Ambassador
23-Mar-10	Liz Havstad	program coordin	Hip Hop Caucus	in person	social missions, Haiti	highlight Venezuela's initiatives in Haiti and environment
23-Mar-10	Rev Yearwood	president	Hip Hop Caucus	in person	social missions, Haiti	highlight Venezuela's initiatives in Haiti and environment
24-Mar-10	Carlos Martinez	coordinator	CPE	email	Climate Change conference	organize event to highlight conference
25-Mar-10	Michele Roberts	legislative direct	AEHR	email/in pers	Climate Change conference/social forum	organize events on conference and have Venezuelan social leaders on workshops at social forum
7-Apr-10	Janvieve Williams	staff	US Human Rights	email/phone	social forum	have Venezuelan social leader speak on workshop
8-Apr-10	Nora Rasman	coordinator	TransAfrica Forum	email	social forum	have Venezuelan social leaders speak
14-Apr-10	Terry Karl	professor	Stanford	email	visit of Ambassador	have Ambassador speak at university

2010/04/14 11:17 AM
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Olivia Burlingame Gombri

From: Olivia Burlingame Gombri [ogombri@embavenez-us.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2009 10:06 AM
To: 'Olivia Burlingame Gombri'

Dear friends and colleagues,

As many of you know, I recently left the Venezuela Information Office to take a position with the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as their Social Outreach Adviser. In this position, I hope to continue providing information to you about developments in Venezuela as well as Venezuela-US Relations. One such development concerns the increase of US military bases in Colombia and is brought to light by a recently revealed airforce document that shows that the Palanquero base in Colombia will enable full spectrum US operations in South America. This stands in stark contrast to the official reasons given by both the US and Colombian governments: that an increased US presence would help fight narco-trafficking and instability in Colombia.

I encourage you to read Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez's opinión piece in The Hill entitled "A Step Backward for the Hemisphere" [here](#) which sheds light on the topic as well as the Embassy's updated fact sheet on the new agreement between Colombia and the US.

If you need any other information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warm regards, Olivia Gombri

Olivia Burlingame Gombri
Social Outreach Adviser
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A step backward for the hemisphere

By Bernardo Alvarez - 11/11/09 07:22 PM ET

A recently signed agreement allowing the use of seven military bases in Colombia by U.S. soldiers and intelligence officers will have negative consequences in the hemisphere that the U.S. will not be able to avoid. The agreement expands upon a military strategy that by all accounts, even according to U.S. agencies, has failed in its stated objectives and has instead provoked regional instability.

In recent years, the military strategy for dealing with Colombia's internal conflict and illegal-drug problem has produced increasing flows of refugees to neighboring countries, violations of territorial sovereignty, additional legions of armed combatants and an increase in the production and trafficking of illegal drugs. The agreement signed

between the U.S. and Colombia will only worsen these problems.

Contrary to what the Colombian government has claimed, concern over the agreement is not limited to a few countries, but rather extends throughout the majority of the region. During a summit of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR, in Spanish) in late August 2009, 11 of the organization's 12 member-states expressed their reservations with the agreement. (The only dissent came from Colombia.) Foreign ministers and defense ministers of the organization's members similarly highlighted their opposition to the deal in a mid-September 2009 meeting.

In none of these summits did the Colombian government agree to offer any guarantees to the region that operations carried out from the bases would not violate the sovereignty of any other country. The conditions of the agreement, made public only after it was signed, explain why neither the Colombian government nor the U.S. government could offer such guarantees.

The agreement vaguely conforms to the principle of non-intervention in the internal matters of other countries, but it does not explicitly prohibit regional intelligence operations or acting preemptively, as President George W. Bush became famous for, in order to safeguard "Colombia's national security." On the latter point, concern has been aggravated by the March 2008 raid by Colombian forces on Ecuadorian territory that set off a regional crisis.

Worse yet, a number of public documents shed light on the agreement's real objectives. In a document presented to the U.S. Congress in May 2009, the Air Force offers an alarming justification for expanding the use of the Palanquero Air Base in Colombia. "Palanquero provides an opportunity for conducting full spectrum operations throughout South America," it says, which are "essential for supporting the U.S. mission in Colombia and throughout the United States Southern Command."

The main revelation of this document is the clear allusion to the political objectives served by the Palanquero base. "Development of this CSL [Cooperative Security Location] provides a unique opportunity for full spectrum operations in a critical sub-region of our hemisphere where security and stability is under constant threat from narcotics funded terrorist insurgencies, anti-U.S. governments ..."

The agreement is vague enough that it does not impose limitations on the possibility of implementing this vision. It also leaves at its discretion the justifications that could be used to violate the sovereignty of other countries.

Rafael Pardo, Colombia's former minister of Defense, outlined in very simple terms why the region has expressed concern with the agreement. It is, he said, "like lending a stranger your balcony so he can spy on the neighbors."

If the U.S. and Colombia are really interested in tackling the complex issue of the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, they should instead support

comprehensive and multilateral strategies that consider existing social problems in the region and the characteristics of the drug market, and put additional responsibility on countries that consume the drugs. Simply combining the usual military-based anti-drug strategies with "anti-terror" operations will only worsen the Colombian conflict, extending it further beyond the country's borders. The experience of other countries in the region that have overcome internal conflicts proves that the only solution to the hemisphere's only remaining civil war is political, not military. What the region needs is peace, not more war.

It's a shame that the Obama administration has not more closely considered the region's reaction to this agreement, but even more a shame that it has not heeded the warnings of Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.). In a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, the senators warned of "the grave implications this

agreement will have for the United States, as well as for Colombia's population."

The agreement, which was inherited from the Bush administration, will make it difficult for the Obama administration to foster a new relationship with the region. Of course, it is not too late. President Barack Obama could still break with the militaristic policies of his predecessor that used the pretext of the "war on terror" and "war on drugs" to impose its views on the region.

Instead, President Obama could embrace a serious political agenda that multilaterally addresses the real problems in the region. President Obama would offer an important gesture to the region if he heeded the invitation to meet with UNASUR's member-states and discuss the bases in Colombia.

This agreement may allow the U.S. military to complete some of its regional objectives and it may strengthen the Pentagon's allies in Colombia, at least in the short-term, but it will not contribute to stability or peace in Colombia, much less the region.

Alvarez is Venezuela's ambassador to the U.S.



Context Paper

The Regional Implications of the New U.S.- Colombian Military Agreement *New Developments after UNASUR's Meeting on November 27th*

On October 30, 2009, the U.S. and Colombia signed an agreement allowing U.S. military forces to use up to seven Colombian military bases allegedly for the fight against narcotics and terrorism. The agreement, which was publicly announced in July, 2009, provoked great concern in the region due to the lack of transparency with which it was negotiated and the impact it could have on expanding Colombia's internal conflict. Concerns were also expressed regarding the risks of U.S.-Colombian operations taking place beyond Colombia's borders.

The region's worries over the use of seven Colombian military bases by U.S. forces should be understood by taking into consideration the following:

- The use of these bases marks a new phase in the expansion of U.S. military strategies in Colombia and the region. These strategies have increasingly externalized Colombia's internal armed conflict as military operations, refugee populations, armed combatants, drug production and trafficking, and even toxic herbicides used to eradicate coca crops have spilled across the borders of Colombia.
- The terms of the agreement, made public only after it was signed, confirmed that neither the Colombian nor the U.S. government could offer guarantees to the region that operations carried out from the bases would not violate the sovereignty of any other country. The agreement vaguely conforms to the principle of non-intervention in the internal matters of other countries, but it does not explicitly prohibit regional intelligence operations or the use of preemptive actions – which President George W. Bush was infamous for – in order to safeguard Colombia's "national security."
- A number of U.S. government documents made public confirm these concerns. In one document, the U.S. Air Force offers an alarming political justification to obtain funds for "military construction improvements" at Palanquero Air Base in Colombia – one of the bases in the agreement. Says the document, "Development of this CSL [Cooperative Security Location] provides a unique opportunity for full spectrum operations in a critical subregion of our hemisphere where security and stability is under constant threat from narcotics funded terrorist insurgencies, anti-U.S. governments...."¹
- The characteristics of the illicit drug market require a comprehensive approach to this problem. The current military-centered strategy cannot generate sustainable results and it is a source of instability in the region.
- What the region needs is peace in Colombia, not a spill-over of its civil war into the entire region. Mixing an anti-narcotics strategy with the strategies against insurgency and terrorist acts has only exacerbated the Colombian conflict. As previous internal conflicts in the regions have demonstrated, the solution for the last civil war remaining in the region is political not military.
- Venezuela has been the victim, not the aggressor. Except for Ecuador, Venezuela has been the country most affected by Plan Colombia. Venezuela has been the recipient of millions of displaced Colombians and has suffered consistent violence along the border. Furthermore, Venezuela has been continuously attacked by the U.S. government and the Uribe administration over the last decade with false accusations of support for terrorist groups and participation in drug trafficking.

Regional Concern

The region has consistently expressed its dissatisfaction and concern with the Colombian decision. Ecuador called it "worrying," while Chilean President Michelle Bachelet called the talks between Colombia and the U.S. "disquieting."²

On November 7, 2009, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said of the bases, "Dear friend Obama: we don't need U.S. bases in Colombia to combat [the] narcotics trade in South America. We can look after combating [the] narcotics trade inside our borders and you must look after your drug consumers. That way we'll have a better



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States

world.”³ Additionally, on November 18 President Lula and Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner issued a joint statement expressing their concern over foreign troops in the region, pointing specifically to the U.S. bases in Colombia.⁴

The announcement of the agreement raised great concern amongst a number of South American nations, leading to an extraordinary presidential summit of UNASUR – the Union of South American Nations, a regional group – on August 28, 2009. During the UNASUR summit, the group unanimously stated, “The presence of foreign military forces – with their means and resources linked to their own objectives – cannot threaten the sovereignty and integrity of any other South American nation, and in consequence threaten the peace and security of the region.”⁵

Furthermore, as reported by the ANSA news agency, “The South American presidents decided that the agreement that allows for U.S. military to be stationed and operational in seven Colombian military bases be examined by the Council for the Defense of UNASUR.”⁶ Commenting on the summit, President Lula da Silva pointed out, “This debate will still continue, but the important thing was that we managed to sign a unitary document.”⁷

The UNASUR members have found common ground on rejecting foreign threats against the sovereignty of the region’s countries and recognized the need for finding mechanisms to offer transparency and security regarding the scope of military agreements with countries outside the region.⁸ To set the example, President Hugo Chávez offered to share with the UNASUR military council the information about all military agreements that Venezuela has with other countries, such as Russia and Iran.⁹

On November 27, another extraordinary UNASUR summit was held with the purpose of discussing security policies in the region and remaining concerns over the deployment of U.S. soldiers in seven bases in Colombia. Also to be discussed was a proposal to designate South America as a zone of peace. At the very last-minute Colombia’s defense and foreign ministers decided not to attend, preventing a comprehensive discussion of the bases. However, the members of UNASUR agreed on an important resolution that sets the foundations for a South American defense

and security strategy, as well as mechanisms to guarantee transparency and cooperation amongst its members. This resolution also states that the defense agreements of its members will include a clause to guarantee the respect of the principles of sovereignty, territorial inviolability and non-intervention in the internal matters of other states. **Member-states also agreed to prohibit “the use or the threat of force, as well as any other type of military aggression or threats to the stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the other member states” and to request a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to discuss the bases.**¹⁰

The level of concern by the region is evident – this is the first time in South American history that a military cooperation agreement between two countries is being discussed multilaterally.

There are also concerns in the US

Beyond regional leaders, a number of academics and think tanks have noted that the agreement could provoke concern and threaten U.S. standing in the region.

The concern over the bases has been echoed by academics, former Colombian government officials and human rights groups. **According to University of Miami drug expert Bruce Bagley, “The bases, even if nominally under Colombian control, will deepen Colombian dependence on the U.S.”**¹¹ Former Colombian Defense Minister Rafael Pardo said of the arrangement, “[It is] like lending your apartment’s balcony to someone from outside the block so that he can spy on your neighbors.”¹²

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) criticized the base negotiations, comparing them to “the disastrous rollout of the U.S. 4th Fleet, in which the United States, with little diplomatic preparation and without clear motives, announced that it was greatly enhancing its naval capabilities. Many, if not most, countries in Latin America took this as nothing less than a return to ‘gunboat diplomacy.’”¹³

On November 25, WOLA released a statement in which it outlined its concerns with the agreement. “This appears to be an agreement without borders, potentially allowing the U.S. military to conduct virtually any mission against virtually any perceived



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threat. The U.S. has said that it is not their 'intention' to go beyond Colombia's borders, but 'intentions' can change over a 10 year agreement, and other countries in Latin America know that, especially when considering the history of U.S. military intervention in the region. The agreement represents a bilateral military approach, which has the potential to increase tensions in a region that is sorely in need of multilateral U.S. diplomatic initiatives aimed at decreasing tensions."¹⁴

An independent Caracas-based security consultant interviewed by the *Los Angeles Times* on the bases noted that they were likely to be used against Venezuela. "I imagine the bases will offer advanced monitoring technology and that they will use it to keep closer vigilance of Chavez," she said.¹⁵

Full-Spectrum Operations

One of the main problems expressed by the region is that Colombia cannot give guarantees that this new agreement with the U.S. military will be limited to its territory. In fact, in the past, U.S.-Colombian strategy has been to direct aggression against Colombia's neighbors. Venezuela's sovereignty has been violated both by right-wing paramilitaries and when Colombian forces have crossed into Venezuela to apprehend members of the FARC, who illegally entered the country themselves. In another case, Colombian forces secretly removed Rodrigo Granda, the FARC's internationally recognized global negotiator, from Venezuela. Additionally, in 2008 President Uribe adopted the Bush policy of pre-emptive war in its strike against Ecuador. An increased U.S. military presence in Colombia heightens the probability that the U.S. could get involved in acts of aggression against Colombia's neighbors.

The conditions of the agreement, made public only after it was signed, confirmed that neither the Colombian government nor the U.S. government could offer guarantees to the region that operations carried out from the bases would not violate the sovereignty of any other country. The agreement vaguely conforms to the principle of non-intervention in the internal matters of other countries, but it does not explicitly prohibit regional intelligence operations or preemptive actions in order to safeguard Colombia's "national security."

Worse yet, a number of public documents shed light on the agreement's real objectives. **In a document presented to the U.S. Congress in May 2009, the U.S. Air Force offers an alarming justification for expanding the use of the Palanquero Air Base in Colombia.** "Palanquero provides an opportunity for conducting full spectrum operations throughout South America," it says, which are "essential for supporting the U.S. mission in Colombia and throughout the United States Southern Command." The main revelation of this document is the clear allusion to the political objectives served by the Palanquero base. "Development of this CSL [Cooperative Security Location] provides a unique opportunity for full spectrum operations in a critical sub region of our hemisphere where security and stability is under constant threat from narcotics funded terrorist insurgencies, anti-U.S. governments..."¹⁶

On November 6, 2009, only days after this document was publicly criticized, the U.S. Air Force presented an "addendum" to Congress modifying the language used to justify the funds to expand the Palanquero base. Confirming the implications of the original justification, the new version of the U.S. Air Force's document mentions the respect for state sovereignty and deleted the references to "anti-U.S. governments" as principal motivations for the U.S. presence on the base.

But regardless of the changes made in the addendum, the document continues insisting that the base "enhances the U.S. Global Defense Posture (GDP) Strategy which includes development of a comprehensive and integrated presence strategy." This change in language, which was made after the signing of the agreement and after funds were approved for the expansion of one of its most strategic bases, only confirms the intent to avoid debate over an issue as important as is the deepening and expansion of militaristic U.S. policies towards the region. The newly enhanced policy not only relies on the re-activation and deployment of the U.S. Navy's Fourth Fleet to the region, but also on the virtual ceding of seven Colombian bases to U.S. military and intelligence personnel.

A U.S. Senate report on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, apart from approving the requested funds, clearly connects this request for "military construction improvements" at Palanquero Air Base in Colombia with the new agreement. "The committee



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believes these funds should not be expended until the Commander of SOUTHCOM has secured terms that will permit the Command to perform its mission over a period of time that justifies the investment in military construction.”¹⁷

Insisting on a Failed Strategy

Concern has also been raised about the U.S. bases because they would mark the increased reliance on the use of military tools to “fight illegal drugs”, a policy that has long failed to curb drug production and trafficking and has had negative impacts on the region.

Colombia is the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the Western Hemisphere. Plan Colombia, a U.S.-funded counter-narcotics and later counter-insurgency program, has been the main receptor and protagonist of U.S. initiatives in Colombia, pumping a staggering \$6 billion dollars into the hands of the Colombian government between 2000, when the program began, and 2008. Of that amount, only \$1.3 billion has gone to non-military aid, leaving close to \$5 billion for purely military activities.¹⁸

Plan Colombia’s efficacy in combating drugs remains in question, though. **The U.S. Government Accountability Office has noted that “Plan Colombia’s goal of reducing the cultivation, processing, and distribution of illegal narcotics by targeting coca cultivation was not achieved.”**¹⁹ It has not produced a significant decline in the growing of coca or the production of cocaine, and there have been proportional increases in the production of coca in surrounding countries such as Peru and Bolivia, revealing the failure of a narrow approach in fighting drug production and trafficking. Moreover, according to the UN World Drug Report 2009, “Colombia remains the world largest cultivator of coca bush.”²⁰

In relation to efforts to reign in irregular groups who have been engaged in a civil war against the Colombian state for more than 60 years, the Colombian government has only managed to make the guerrilla forces retreat. According to GAO, “Defense and Colombian officials caution that FARC remains a national security threat, exercising control over important parts of the country.”²¹

Additionally, as *Time* magazine points out, “If the war is being won, why then are so many terrified Colombians

abandoning their farms in the hinterlands and crowding into the cities?”²² According to the Colombian-based NGO Human Rights and Displaced Office, in 2008 alone the number of displaced persons increased by 24%.²³ A number of studies have found that up to 301 Colombians are now entering Venezuela on a daily basis, and unlike in the past, they are coming with their families.²⁴

According to *Time*, analysts say, “Rather than winding down, the country’s 45-year conflict is evolving.”²⁵ Some kinds of violence might be declining but new ones are appearing, the guerrillas have been retreating and some paramilitary forces dismantled, but tens of thousands of armed groups are occupying the vacuum left by them. “Human Rights groups also accuse these new militias of working hand-in-glove with legitimate businesses to take control of large swaths of land to mine gold, drill for petroleum and produce palm oil for Colombia’s booming biofuels industry.”²⁶

Even worse, according to the Washington Office on Latin America, “numerous Colombian lawmakers, including many from President Uribe’s own party, are under investigation for their alleged ties to paramilitary groups, which also happen to be deeply involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities.”²⁷

Hence, the real issues are the effectiveness and sustainability of Plan Colombia, the local and regional consequences of militarization from the “war on drugs,” and its “fusion” with the internal fight against the insurgents rather than some short term gains.

The deal allowing the U.S. military to use seven bases in Colombia not only ignores these crucial issues while deepening the same failed strategies, but even contradicts the recommendations of the U.S. Congress regarding the need to nationalize Plan Colombia.²⁸

Venezuela: A Scapegoat

With critical help from the Colombian government, the Bush administration and sectors of the right-wing U.S. political establishment continuously lodged a series of defamatory attacks against the Venezuelan government accusing it of harboring terrorists and providing safe haven to narco-traffickers.



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One of the most outrageous examples of this was seen in the Boyer case of 2003 in which a man named Moises Boyer allegedly gave himself up to Colombian intelligence agencies posing as a former member of Venezuela's armed forces and a former pilot of President Chavez. He alleged that a leader of the FARC had been transported to Venezuela for medical treatment on the instruction of Venezuela's Vice President.

Upon further investigation of his story, and after both Venezuelan and Colombian media outlets had reported the incident over and over, it was revealed that Boyer was neither a member of Venezuela's military, nor was he a pilot and that the information had been provided to the weekly journal (*El Espectador*), who initially released it to Colombian military intelligence.

The case of Grannobles is another emblematic example. In March of 2001 the Colombian and Venezuelan media provided sensationalist coverage to the unverified reports that the government of Venezuela had transported to Cuba a guerilla member of the FARC named German Briceno Suarez, a.k.a. Grannobles, brother of one of the principle leaders of the organization.

Actually, what had occurred was that at the request of the International Red Cross, a severely injured member of the ELN (National Liberation Army) named Carlos Buenahora (not Grannobles) was airlifted from Colombia via Venezuela to Cuba. His transport was carried out with the full concurrence and collaboration of the three governments involved and in accordance with International Human Rights Laws.

In a more recent example, on July 26, 2009, the Colombian government lodged attacks against Venezuela, claiming that three anti-tank rocket launchers bought from Sweden 20 years ago were found in a FARC guerilla camp, and suggested that the current Venezuelan government had provided them.²⁹

According to the *New York Times*, the military equipment in question was found in October of last year, begging the question as to why the Colombian government withheld this information for nine months.³⁰ Moreover, on August 5, 2009, President Chavez reminded the public about a public document issued by the Venezuelan National Guard and shared with the Colombian government in 1995, clearly reporting the theft of five anti-tank rocket launchers from a

Venezuelan military installation during a FARC raid on Venezuelan territory, long before President Chavez was ever governing the country.³¹ The three mentioned anti-tanks rockets launchers were part of this group of stolen weapons.

There is also concern based on recent events that Colombian paramilitary forces are being used to act against the Venezuelan government. In October, two members of Colombia's security apparatus were detained for allegedly spying in Venezuela.³² And in November 2009, the Venezuelan National Guard detained a busload of 100 presumed Colombian paramilitary operatives in the state of Barinas, further provoking fears of possible plots that could be used as a pretext for an eventual U.S.-Colombia attack on Venezuelan soil.³³

Much of Colombia's 60-year-old conflict has had a detrimental effect on Venezuela, given that it shares a border with Colombia and is home to thousands of Colombian refugees who have fled the violence in their own country. Even the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has recognized the effort Venezuela has made with its migratory policy to incorporate the Colombian refugees.³⁴ It should be remembered that it was President Chavez who, at the request of President Uribe in September 2007, initiated a successful process of humanitarian exchange that reinvigorated the peace process in Colombia and resulted in the release of prisoners being held by the FARC, including three American military officers.

Additionally, in contrast to the countless politicized reports from the U.S. and Colombia, international organizations such as the United Nations paint a more balanced picture of Venezuela's counter-narcotics efforts. This year alone, Venezuela has honored 20 extradition requests with Colombia, the United States and other countries.³⁵ In the two-year period following the exit of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) from Venezuelan territory due to spying, the United Nations found that Venezuela increased its cocaine seizures by a whopping 35%.³⁶

While testifying before the U.S. Congress in early April 2008, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza said, "Does Venezuela support terrorist groups? I don't think so. There is no evidence, and no member country,



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including this one [the U.S.] has offered the OAS such proof.”³⁷

The truth is that Venezuela has worked tirelessly to support peace and reconciliation in Colombia.

Conclusion

The U.S.-Colombia agreement virtually ceding to the U.S. military seven military bases in Colombia constitutes a new phase of the U.S. military doctrine in the region.

As senators Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) suggested in a July 28, 2009 letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the issue, this new agreement has serious implications for the United States as well as Colombian civilians. They write, “What are the implications of further deepening our relationship with the Colombian military at a time of growing revelations about the widespread *falsos positivos* (“false positives”) scandal, in which the Colombian military recruited many hundreds (some estimates are as high as 1600) of boys and young men for jobs in the countryside that did not exist and then summarily executed them to earn bonuses and vacation days?... What signal does a deepening of our partnership with the Colombian military send before investigations gain momentum and accountability for these atrocities is established? How, given these circumstances, would deeper institutionalized cooperation with the Colombian military fit in with our strategic interest in and commitment to human rights and the rule of law?”

Other congressmen have also expressed their concerns about the deal being worked out between Bogota and Washington. **Representatives Tammy Baldwin, James P. McGovern and Jan Schakowsky stated in a “Dear Colleague” letter sent on September 4, 2009 to other members of Congress that “we are very concerned that increased U.S. military involvement in Colombia will exacerbate the failures of Plan Colombia and continue to overemphasize funding to Colombia’s armed forces rather than needed development and rule of law efforts.”**

Latin America and Venezuela need peace in Colombia. President Chavez even risked losing domestic support while trying to help forge a

humanitarian agreement that ultimately led to the liberation of hostages in early 2008. Yet, lasting peace will be impossible until the Colombian and U.S. governments understand the incoherence of the so called “war on terrorism,” the need to change the strategy on the “war on drugs” and also acknowledge that the Colombian internal conflict has no military solution. The experience of civil wars in Central America demonstrates that the only path for a positive peace in Colombia is through negotiations. Insisting on a military strategy will only extend the agony of war and generate further instability in the region.

For more information visit our website:

<http://www.venezuela-us.org/>

prensa@venezuela-us.org

December 3, 2009.

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2010 MAY 23 AM 8:43
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Olivia Burlingame Gombri

From: Olivia Burlingame Gombri [ogombri@embavenez-us.org]
Sent: Thursday, January 07, 2010 4:10 PM
To: 'Olivia Burlingame Gombri'
Subject: Invitation to CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Launch & Anniversary

Dear ,

This year is a special year for the people of Venezuela and the U.S.! The Citgo-Venezuela Heating Oil Program is celebrating its 5th year anniversary and we hope you can join us to commemorate it and launch this year's program!

The CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Program originated in response to the clamor of thousands of low income citizens of the United States affected by the high price of heating oil in 2005. Their outcry triggered an open letter on the 27th of October 2005 from twelve US Senators including John Kerry, Hillary Clinton and Henry Reid, requesting that oil companies step forward to help low income families affected by the high prices of heating oil. As the Senators stated in their 2005 letter "American families need economic relief from high energy prices." The only oil company that embraced and responded to the Senators request was CITGO Petroleum Corporation. Five years later, the program is the most important energy assistance program carried out by any US-based oil company in the US. Today, over one million people in twenty four different states benefit from the program. Two hundred and fifty homeless shelters and 55,000 families in tribal communities across the United States have also benefitted.

On behalf of the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I would like to invite you to attend the 5th year anniversary celebration of the CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Program. Please find the information below and please rsvp to me at your earliest convenience. As this event is not open to the public I appreciate you not forwarding this invitation as it is non-transferrable.

2010 CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Program Launch and 5th Year Anniversary

Riverside Church
490 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10027

January 15, 2010
11:30am-12:30pm

Olivia Burlingame Gombri
Social Outreach Adviser
Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
1099 30th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
Tel: 202-342-6803
www.embavenez-us.org

Olivia Burlingame Gombri

From: Olivia Burlingame Gombri [ogombri@embavenez-us.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2010 9:54 AM
To: 'Dr. E. Faye Williams, Esq.'
Subject: Letter from Ambassador Alvarez re: Haiti
Attachments: E Faye Williams.pdf

Dear Faye,

I hope you are well. Please find attached a letter to you from Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez about Venezuela and CITGO's efforts to assist the Haitian people during this tragedy. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warm regards, Olivia

Olivia Burlingame Gombri
Social Outreach Adviser
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EMBAJADA DE LA REPÚBLICA
BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Nº 122

January 21, 2010

Dr. E. Faye Williams
President
National Congress of Black Women, Inc.
1251 Fourth Street, SW
Washington DC 20024

Dear President Williams,

I am writing to request your support for an initiative that is being organized through CITGO Petroleum Corporation with the support of the Embassy of Haiti and the Embassy of Venezuela in the U.S. to provide shelter and other needed equipment to the Haitian people in their time of need.

In coordination with Venezuela's embassy in Washington and Ambassador Raymond A. Joseph, Haiti's ambassador to the U.S, CITGO is organizing a program which will provide large tents with mattresses and blankets to house, in its first phase, up to 10,000 people on a temporary basis. This is vital because it is estimated that up to 1.5 million Haitians are homeless in the wake of the earthquake.

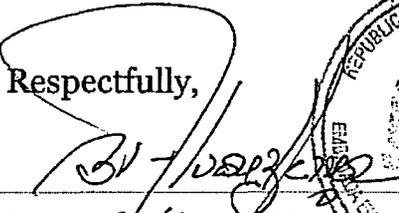
A second phase will be financed by CITGO and employee donations, and we hope to multiply the effort through contributions by affiliates, partners, marketers and related industries. This would be aided significantly with your support. CITGO is coordinating with Haitian authorities to ensure that this help is put to best use given the circumstances on the ground.

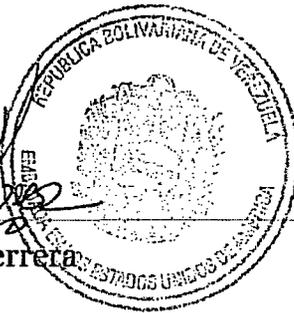
Much as the rest of the international community, Venezuela was shocked by the scale of death and destruction caused by the massive earthquake. As an oil producing country and a partner to Haiti through the PetroCaribe initiative, Venezuela is providing 225,000 barrels of gasoline and diesel this week to be used for the generation of electricity and other purposes. The shipment will be received by a refinery in the Dominican Republic. Before the earthquake struck, Haiti consumed approximately 11,000 barrels of oil products day. It is estimated that Venezuela's shipment of gasoline and diesel could help provide electricity for close to one month.

Venezuela has also provided Haiti with various shipments of humanitarian assistance, including food, medicine, tools, equipment and trained soldiers and professionals for search-and-rescue missions and reconstruction.

In the wake of the disaster in Haiti, Venezuela and CITGO will continue doing all they can to help the Haitian people and government recover from the tragedy they have suffered. If you have any questions about the CITGO effort or would like to offer your support, please contact Daniel Cortez at (832) 486-5557 or Gustavo Cardenas at (832) 486-1740.

Respectfully,


Bernardo Álvarez Herrera
Ambassador



Olivia Burlingame Gombri

From: Olivia Burlingame Gombri [ogombri@embavenez-us.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2010 3:43 PM
To: 'Olivia Burlingame Gombri'
Subject: Comment on Amanpour's facebook page about Venezuela

Hi Friends,

I wanted to let you know that you can comment and be a part of the chat now happening on Christiane Amanpour's facebook page about the interview she just did with Ambassador Alvarez and members of Venezuela's opposition. You can Watch the interview below and please do make a comment, many of her questions were based on misperceptions instead of actual fact and the show ended with opposition voices, allowing no room for alternative perspectives to counter them.

Comment on facebook here: <http://www.facebook.com/amanpourcnn?v=wall>

Watch program here: <http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/amanpour/>

Please pass the above info on to others as well.

Thanks! Olivia

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EMBAJADA DE LA REPÚBLICA
BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Washington DC, 18 February 2010

Dear Friend,

I am writing you today to invite you to participate in the People's World Conference on Climate Change that will be held from April 19-22, 2010 in the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia.

As you know, the UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen was not as productive as many of us would have liked. Developed countries received an immense amount of criticism for what some have called a "hijacking" of the debate that resulted in an accord written with little input from the developing world. This is unacceptable, for we have passed into a time of environmental urgency.

During the conference, President Chavez expressed Venezuela's long-standing view that it is not enough that those responsible for the existing climate and economic crises merely reduce emissions; rather, the overall model of development that enabled these crises must be changed. We also believe that any global resolution should draw upon the work and goals of the Kyoto Protocol, based on the spirit of "common, yet differentiated responsibilities."

The People's World Conference on Climate Change, called for by Bolivian President Evo Morales, will provide a space where social groups, NGOs and government and UN representatives alike can discuss proposals and help move forward the upcoming United Nations Conference of Parties (UNFCCC COP) in Mexico.

We have a strong desire to see a fair and ambitious agreement signed in Mexico that reflects the perspectives of all parties of the UNFCCC, and we believe that the conference in Cochabamba will contribute to the negotiation process. For that reason I strongly urge you to support this call by our brother, President Evo Morales, and attend this important global conference.

Sincerely,

Bernardo Alvarez
Ambassador



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