

109TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 400

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27 (legislative day, JULY 26), 2006

Received and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the Government of Venezuela should actively support strategies for ensuring secure airport facilities that meet international certifications to prevent trafficking of controlled substances, narcotics, and laundered money.

Whereas the United States is strongly committed to working with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that have a shared interest in promoting regional stability;

Whereas the United States is strongly committed to working with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that are combating the scourge of drugs and the violence and social degradation caused by narcotics trafficking;

Whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a party to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988 UN Drug Convention);

Whereas Venezuela is a key transit point for drugs leaving Colombia—the world’s primary source of cocaine and South America’s top producer of heroin;

Whereas drug trafficking through Venezuela significantly increased in 2005;

Whereas weak law enforcement, corruption, and a weak judicial system in Venezuela allow criminal organizations to act with impunity;

Whereas the Department of State’s International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of 2006 reports that Colombian cartels, guerrilla groups, and paramilitary organizations and Venezuelan criminal organizations (among other smugglers) routinely exploit a variety of routes and methods to move hundreds of tons of illegal drugs into Venezuela every year, and organized crime in Venezuela has begun to set up operations in foreign countries to receive and distribute drugs in addition to providing transportation services;

Whereas in September 2005, the Government of the United States determined that Venezuela had failed demonstrably to meet its counternarcotics obligations and that Venezuela could no longer be certified as an ally in the war on drugs;

Whereas the promulgation by Venezuela of two new laws in October 2005, the “Law against Organized Crime” and the “Law against the Trafficking and Consumption of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances”, brought Ven-

ezuelan law into compliance with the 1988 UN Drug Convention; however, it is not certain, according to the Department of State, whether Venezuela's political and judicial institutions are up to the task of vigorous and impartial implementation of such new laws;

Whereas on April 11, 2006, a commercial plane originating in Venezuela was seized in Mexico at the airport of Ciudad del Carmen, carrying 5.6 tons of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$100 million;

Whereas seizure statistics at the Simon Bolivar International Airport in Caracas are not available because the Government of Venezuela does not publicize such statistics;

Whereas estimates indicate that as much as 90 percent of the cocaine and heroin trafficked through the Simon Bolivar International Airport over the last 12 months was not intercepted;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela continues to fail to effectively utilize several airport security systems provided by the United States specifically aimed at increasing the Simon Bolivar International Airport counternarcotics capabilities;

Whereas the Government of Venezuela has not taken any steps unilaterally to prosecute any corrupt airport officials relating to cases of money laundering or drug trafficking at the airport despite credible intelligence estimates that there is potentially millions of dollars in narcotics proceeds passing through Simon Bolivar International Airport and Venezuela; and

Whereas the Government of Venezuela and the Venezuela National Anti-Drug Office (ONA) have officially reported only two seizures of currency in 2006, one for \$13,865

in United States currency and the other for 7,000 euros:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That—*

3 (1) Congress—

4 (A) strongly condemns the actions and in-
5 actions of the Government of the Bolivarian Re-
6 public of Venezuela which have created fertile
7 ground for criminal drug trafficking organiza-
8 tions;

9 (B) strongly condemns the failures on the
10 part of the Government of Venezuela to stem
11 the flow of illicit narcotics through its territory;
12 and

13 (C) strongly condemns the complicity of
14 senior Venezuelan Government law enforcement
15 officials and transportation officials who are ef-
16 fectively enabling large scale shipments of both
17 cocaine and heroin at the Simon Bolivar Inter-
18 national Airport and other transit points; and

19 (2) it is the sense of Congress that—

20 (A) it should continue to be the policy of
21 the United States to support cooperation be-
22 tween Venezuela and partners in the Andean
23 region to combat trafficking in narcotics and
24 other controlled substances;

1 (B) steps should continue to be taken to
2 restore bilateral law enforcement cooperation
3 between Venezuela and the United States Drug
4 Enforcement Administration;

5 (C) it should continue to be the policy of
6 the United States to work with the inter-
7 national community, including the Organization
8 of American States (OAS), to assist with a
9 thorough review of the measures in place at the
10 Simon Bolivar International Airport in Caracas;

11 (D) it should continue to be the policy of
12 the United States to work with other member
13 states of OAS to bring Venezuela into compli-
14 ance and fully adhere to OAS conventions and
15 comprehensive treaties to prevent, punish, and
16 eliminate narco-terrorism, which constitutes “a
17 serious threat to democratic values and to inter-
18 national peace and security”;

19 (E) the Secretary of Transportation should
20 provide to Congress not later than 180 days
21 after the date of the adoption of this resolution,
22 on behalf of the Department of State, Depart-
23 ment of Homeland Security, Department of
24 Justice, and the Department of Transportation,
25 a report with an assessment of the process un-

1 dertaken by the Government of Venezuela to-
2 ward restoring airport security measures and
3 controls that meet international standards of
4 safety; and

5 (F) the Secretary of State should provide
6 to Congress not later than 180 days after the
7 date of the adoption of this resolution a report
8 on Venezuela's compliance with its responsibil-
9 ities under international counternarcotics trea-
10 ties.

Passed the House of Representatives July 26, 2006.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk.