

Target Venezuela!

U.S. is now seeking to have Venezuela declared "a state sponsor of terrorism."

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Just days after president Hugo Chávez affirmed at the Rio Group summit that "our government only wants peace," the U.S. is now seeking to have Venezuela declared "a state sponsor of terrorism."

[McClatchy News](#) reported Monday,

The Bush administration has launched a preliminary legal inquiry that could land Venezuela on the U.S. list of nations that support terrorism, following reports of close Venezuelan links with Colombian rebels, a senior government official has confirmed. (Pablo Bachelet, "U.S. May Add Venezuela to List of Terrorist States," McClatchy Washington Bureau, Monday, March 10, 2008)

In other words, the U.S. State Department is using Uribe's "dodgy dossier" as a pretext for sanctions and embargoes against the Bolivarian republic. If implemented, such restrictions would severely limit the ability of U.S. firms to do business with Caracas while making it nearly impossible for Venezuela to export oil to the United States or import vital spare parts necessary to keep the economy going.

Under onerous rules now being considered, the Treasury Department's Office of Asset Control could potentially freeze Venezuelan financial assets in U.S. banks. Such aggressive action by the Bush administration would "[make the economy scream](#)," the infamous order given by Richard M. Nixon to the CIA in the run-up to the violent putsch that overthrew Chile's democratically-elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, on September 11, 1973.

The *McClatchy* report continues,

The legal review comes after Colombia captured four computers belonging to a guerrilla leader in a March 1 raid into Ecuador. The documents suggest the Venezuelan government was in the process of providing \$300 million to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

As investigative journalist [Greg Palast](#) reported after actually *reviewing* the documents, there is no mention whatsoever that the Venezuelan government was "in the process of providing \$300 million to ... FARC."

Commenting on the crisis, U.S.-Venezuelan attorney [Eva Golinger](#) wrote Tuesday,

Over the past year, the U.S. State Department has classified Venezuela as a

nation “not collaborating” with either the “war on drugs” or the “war against terrorism”. The Pentagon and the intelligence communities released reports earlier this year citing Venezuela as a “major threat to U.S. national security” and have proposed beefing up military presence in the region. The White House and Congress have increased USAID and National Endowment Funding to opposition groups in Venezuela in an effort to rebuild ailing conservatives that favor a U.S. agenda. International media portray Chávez as “public enemy #1” and the leader of a Latin American “axis of evil” that is threatening regional stability. (“The Peacemaker,” *Venezuela Analysis*, Tuesday, March 11, 2008)

With this in mind, Bill Conroy at [The Narco News Bulletin](#) is reporting that CIA and Pentagon corporate cut-outs have exported at least 11 aircraft to Venezuela since 2003, four of which have subsequently been linked to cocaine planes seized by Mexican and Central American authorities. Conroy’s extensive investigation into the mysterious aircraft and even dodgier companies have led him to conclude that the planes are linked “to an elaborate covert intelligence operation.” Conroy reports:

The covert program, law enforcement sources contend, likely involves the CIA and components of Defense Department intelligence agencies, and is focused, in part, on penetrating, or even propping up, narco-trafficking groups in Venezuela. That country’s outspoken leader, Hugo Chávez, is regularly demonized by U.S. policymakers for, among other things, supposedly allowing his country to become a haven for narco-traffickers. (“U.S. Cocaine-Plane Invasion Spooks Latin America,” *The Narco News Bulletin*, March 11, 2008)

The Narco News investigation dovetails with one that Florida-based journalist [Daniel Hopsicker](#) has been reporting for nearly two years when the first plane was seized on the Yucatan peninsula by Mexican authorities in April 2006, carrying some 5.5 tons of cocaine.

Conroy and Hopsicker have both reported that the operation, code-named [Mayan Express](#), appears to prioritize intelligence goals over law enforcement. Multi-ton loads of cocaine may have been allowed to flow freely into the United States as Washington’s “drug warriors” looked the other way, a classic sign of a sanctioned intelligence operation.

Two of the aircraft identified in their reports, a Gulfstream II jet (tail number N987SA), which crashed in Mexico last September with a payload of some four tons of cocaine, and a Beech 200 (N391SA) seized in Nicaragua “with the false tail number N168D,” have been linked to the CIA’s “extraordinary rendition” program, according to [Council of Europe](#) investigators.

In a prior interview with Conroy, attorney Mark Conrad, “a former high-level supervisory U.S. Customs agent who has an extensive background in the intelligence world,” told *Narco News*,

“Even though it looks as if you are unraveling odd connections you may be only seeing a small part of what is going on — or you may be seeing what you are expected to see, missing something else.

“My guess — and that is all that it is — is that this has something to do with operations in Venezuela — either to finance ops, or to divert attention from

Agency ops in Venezuela to **destabilize Chávez**. ... It is not in the U.S. interests for Chávez to create another Cuba on some of the largest oil field reserves in the world." [emphasis added]

Before the December 2007 constitutional referendum which the Chávez government lost, Golinger reported that Venezuelan counterintelligence obtained a CIA memorandum from the U.S. Embassy which revealed extensive CIA/Pentagon plans to destabilize the country. Code-named "Operation Pliers," the memo was dated November 20, 2007. [Golinger](#) wrote,

Operation Tenaza has the objective of encouraging an armed insurrection in Venezuela against the government of President Chávez that will justify an intervention of US forces, stationed on the military bases nearby in Curacao and Colombia. The Operation mentions two countries in code: as Blue and Green. These refer to Curacao and **Colombia**, where the US has operative, active and equipped bases that have been reinforced over the past year and a half in anticipation of a conflict with Venezuela. [emphasis added]

The document confirms that psychological operations are the CIA's best and most effective weapon to date against Venezuela, and it will continue its efforts to influence international public opinion regarding President Chávez and the situation in the country.

Operation Tenaza is a very alarming plan that aims to destabilize Venezuela and overthrow (again) its legitimate and democratic (and very popularly supported) president. The plan will fail, primarily because it has been discovered, but it must be denounced around the world as an unacceptable violation of Venezuela's sovereignty. ("CIA 'Operation Pliers' Uncovered in Venezuela," Venezuela Analysis, November 28, 2007)

While "Operation Pliers" may have failed back in December, the CIA has been ratcheting up tensions ever since, as the March 1 U.S.-Colombian attack on Ecuador clearly demonstrates. Since its failed April 2002 coup against the socialist government, the United States, working through a multitude of fronts—from the CIA, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, the International Republican Institute to the National Endowment for Democracy—have poured millions of dollars into Venezuela, funding a broad campaign of subversion and violence.

Utilizing assets such as Súmate, Acción Democrática, Comando Nacional de la Resistencia and media outlets such as Globovisión, RCTV and the Interamerican Press Society, Washington and their far-right allies are planning a "Pinochet option" to topple the democratically-elected government of Hugo Chávez.

Despite on-going attacks by Colombian far-right narco-trafficking paramilitary gangs such as the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) and Águilas Negras (Black Eagles) in the Venezuelan state of Tachira, analysts believe that the U.S.-funded Plan Colombia is being used by the Bush and Uribe regimes as part of a military "pincer" movement against Venezuela.

Tachira's governor, Blanco la Cruz, told the Australian socialist journal, [Green Left Weekly](#) that,

"The zones that suffer this problem most intensely are [the area] south of Lake

Maracaibo in Zulia, Alto Apure, and, obviously, Tachira. In these states, the paramilitaries, helped by the Colombian government, have taken control of various areas, buying up farms with the money from extortion, kidnapping and, principally, drug-dealing." (Jim McIlroy & Coral Wynter, "Venezuela: Guns, Drugs and Thugs: The threat from Plan Colombia, Number 684, September 20, 2006)

If the United States determines that Venezuela "has ... crossed the threshold of state sponsor of terror," according to an "unnamed official" cited by *McClatchy News*, full-blown U.S. sanctions would usher in a state of savage economic warfare as a prelude to a U.S. invasion and occupation of Venezuela and its strategic petroleum resources.

Additional documentation of U.S. destabilization operations against Venezuela can be found at Venezuelafoia.info

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