

## Venezuela's Foreign Minister Says Seventy US Military Bases in Latin America Must Go

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The foreign minister of Venezuela, Delcy Rodriguez denounced the existence of U.S. military bases in Latin American Thursday and called for the governments in the region to unite and demand their closing, remarks that came during the third annual Latin American Summit of Progressive Movements in Ecuador.

According to Rodriguez, who spoke to an audience in the capital city of Quito, these bases only provoke conflict in the region. "We denounce the presence of 70 U.S. bases in our region, we have to unite and demand the closing of these bases," said Rodriguez.

Ecuador's former foreign minister Ricardo Patiño introduced Rodriguez, warning that the imperialist powers will continue to attack the progressive forces in Latin America.

"But we are stronger," said Patiño. "We need to be better organized to be able to defend ourselves."

Patiño recalled the decision of Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa to close the U.S. navy base in the city of Manta in 2007. When faced with criticism, Correa said he would allow a U.S. base in Ecuador as long as the northern country allows an Ecuadorian navy base in its territory.

Rodriguez also spoke about the attacks against the progressive governments in the region by the new conservative leaders in Argentina and Brazil, with the support of imperialism.

"Right-wing governments in the region are franchises of the (U.S.) Pentagon and the Department of State, that are destroying what the left has achieved," said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez said she hopes the region could soon count again on Argentina and Brazil to work on a stronger integration.

The foreign minister reflected on the sovereignty struggles of Venezuela that late president Hugo Chavez, leader of the Bolivarian Revolution, often explained to the people.

"More than to rethink the integration process in the region, we have to defend it, we need to build a pluri-polar and multi-centered world like Chavez talked about," said Rodriguez.

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