



The Americas Report

From the Menges Hemispheric Security Project

Center for Security Policy

Vol. Nº 3 – Issue 40–November 21, 2007



Argentina



Bolivia



Brazil



Canada



Chile



Colombia



Costa Rica



Cuba



Dominican Republic



Ecuador



El Salvador



Guatemala



Haiti



Honduras



Mexico

The Americas Report is the continuation of the work of Dr. Constantine C. Menges' original Americas Report. For almost two years that report chronicled the efforts of the Castro-Chavez axis and their allies in their efforts to undermine the new spirit of democracy and freedom in Latin America, in favor of autocratic forms of regimes throughout the Western Hemisphere. The report also monitors events in the area as they effect regional and US security in this era characterized by the emergence of terrorist groups of global reach seeking international influence. The current Americas Report and the Menges Hemispheric Security Project of which it is a part will continue to support genuine democracy, free trade and the fostering of strong inter-American relationships as well as exposing growing tyrannies in the area.

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For any questions, comments, or those interested in receiving this report or seeking to have their email removed from our list please contact **Nicole Ferrand** at: mengesproject@centerforsecuritypolicy.org or hemisphericsecurity@gmail.com. If you have news stories that you think might be useful for future editions of this report please send them, with a link to the original website, to the same e-mail address. If you wish to contribute with an article, please send it to the same address, with your name and place of work or study.

Highlighted Story – [CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AGAINST CHAVEZ IS NOT UNDEMOCRATIC.](#) By Luis Fleischman*

The Constitutional reform in Venezuela that is scheduled to be ratified by popular referendum is having major repercussions in Venezuela now. President Hugo Chavez has been gradually reducing the power of civil society in Venezuela for the last several years. This present constitutional reform, which is another step in the same direction, has generated a stronger reaction. What we are facing now is probably the largest civil protests in Venezuela since February 2003 when groups in civil society were struggling to hold a re-call referendum on Chavez.

Indeed, in the last several years, Chavez has increased his political power and fully controls the legislature.



Nicaragua



Panama



Paraguay



Peru



The United States



Uruguay



Venezuela

In addition, he has manipulated the judiciary and the military by appointing officers and judges loyal to him. In the economic sphere, he has gone against the will of important groups in civil society by halting foreign exchange, and placing price controls on domestic and imported products. **Venezuela is moving from a relatively diverse economy into an Arab-like oil petro-tyrannical welfare state.** This situation has forced producers to stop producing, resulting in food shortages. By the same token, commerce and investment in the country has deteriorated tremendously.

In the area of human rights and freedom of expression, **Chavez has encouraged violence against journalists and passed laws criminalizing opinions.** He has denied jobs as well as identity cards and passports to people who signed in favor of the re-call referendum, a public referendum aimed at placing the continuation of the Chavez regime on the ballot.

It is interesting that the business association (*Fedecameras*) complains about the fact that petro-dollars circulating in the market are not a sign of economic strength, because there are shortages of food, medicines and materials. We are also beginning to hear again from press rights organizations that are denouncing deterioration of the freedom of the press in Venezuela and warning that further restrictions may come out of the constitutional reform. By the same token world intellectuals such as Mario Vargas Llosa and European philosophers such as Bernard Henri Levy and Andre Glucksmann are denouncing Chavez's abuses.

This new anti-Chavez movement has been brought about by one man. He is the former Chavez Defense Secretary; General Rafael Baduel. Baduel has publicly opposed the constitutional reforms in Venezuela calling them an attempt at a "coup d'etat. As a result he has become the new de-facto leader millions of Venezuelans were waiting for. Until recently, Baduel could be blamed for allowing Chavez to co-opt the military in Venezuela and use it to strengthen his regime and for loyalty to a man who spoke about installing a socialist, revolutionary regime backed by the military. Yet, it is the same Baduel that now begins to rebel.



General Rafael Baduel. Source: Soberania.

Whatever Baduel's reasons were, there is no doubt that the former Defense Secretary and Chief of staff has generated a new momentum and opportunity which will be foolish for those who oppose Hugo Chavez to miss.

In the last couple of weeks **students have gone to the streets demanding a halt to the constitutional reforms and** protests were organized across the country. Meanwhile the government became defensive; **Chavez called Baduel a traitor while Hanz Dietrich, the master intellectual of the Chavez socialist revolution, recommended that Chavez withdraw the proposed constitutional reform and try to co-opt Baduel to avoid further deterioration of the regime.** The governor of the State of Anzoátegui, **Tarek William Saab**, taking a defensive position, stated that Baduel responded to the wishes of the (American) “Empire and international Zionism”. (By the way, in the past Saab allegedly undermined the indictment process of three Arabs arrested in Venezuela for having allegedly participated in the terrorist attack that destroyed the Jewish community center (AMIA) in Buenos Aires in 1994).



Tarek William Saab. Source: Prensa Gobernación Anzoátegui.

In the pages of the *America's Report* we have repeatedly warned that those fighting for freedom against the Chavez tyranny in Venezuela have been abandoned. The student movement in Venezuela is today the Latin version of the Prague spring of 1968. Whereas the political opposition has become flaccid, legalistic and virtually shut down by the intimidating nature of the Chavez regime, it is the non-political students who are fighting. They are not doing it in pursuit of any gains other than a way of life free of the dogmas and dictates imposed by the growing Chavista state.

Chavez's image in the world is that of a highly distasteful leader. However, there is an unchallenged consensus that his regime is legitimate because it was democratically elected. Thus, Western common sense tells us that his removal must take place only through democratic means. **The reality is that Chavez has designed a model of “totalitarian democracy” where he has used state resources to gain political power at the expense of civil society and where petro-dollars have allowed him to buy the hearts and votes of people who have chosen to ignore the fact that they have less representation, less dignity, and fewer rights.** However, there is no doubt that Venezuelans are paying greatly now and will pay heavily in the future.

Democracy is not the mere act of conducting elections. Elections embody the last stage of a large system of liberties and rights that develop gradually over some period of time. Chavez is like Hamas in Gaza using elections to subjugate rights and impose his will. Chavez currently controls the electoral process. The Chavez regime is by far less respectful of the law than the Hungarian and Polish governments were during their last period of communist rule. Opponents could appeal to Hungarian or Polish law to achieve something. **In Venezuela to wait for legal means to remove Chavez from power is an illusion because the successive “constitutional” reforms in Venezuela were aimed at reducing rights and the rule of law not increasing rights as a real constitution should.**

This has been done in order to create a situation where Chavez will ultimately stand alone before the people with no law that restricts him and no rights that protect or empower them. This is why removing Chavez by non-electoral means is as much a legitimate act as acts of civil disobedience were forty years ago in the US South. **Disobedience is an expression of rebellion against unjust laws and an unjust regime.** As in the 1960's Southern United States, this experience could have an effect of a political renaissance and open better opportunities after Chavez's removal.

Civil society must come out now to the streets and show that they are protesting not for salaries, not for or against some specific policy carried by the Chavez regime but for the sake of human dignity and a free way of life. These are basic natural human rights that Chavez seeks to p swallow as a boa does with a rat.

If the citizens come out to the streets the world will respond. Baduel, for his part generated something important. If he can convince the military to resist Chavez, this could have key consequences.

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News Stories –The following are a summary of several news stories found in different media outlets. To access the information, we have provided the hyperlink below each news story.

[**Ortega angers Spanish monarch during Ibero-American Summit**](#) – *La Prensa, Nicaragua.*

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega also managed to anger the Spanish monarch with his fierce criticisms of the Spanish multinational Union Fenosa, which distributes electricity in Nicaragua. Saying that 90% of the Nicaraguan population is opposed to the company's ongoing presence in the country, Ortega accused Fenosa of providing bad service and of having participated in acts of corruption within the country. Ortega said that Union Fenosa "came to Nicaragua thanks to a government of front men" and that his government would not have allowed the privatization of electricity distribution. He said that planned investments in the electricity generation sector have been suspended because of the US\$35 million debt Union Fenosa has with the national generating companies. Ortega said that "Union Fenosa is part of a Mafioso structure, gangster politics within the global economy of which our countries are the victims thanks to the tradition of governments of front men." **During Ortega's attacks on the Spanish multinational King Juan Carlos stood up and walked out of the auditorium.** Official Spanish sources said the King was "angered by criticisms of Aznar, of Spain and of the Spanish foreign service." Spanish President Rodriguez Zapatero said that the King had left in order to "express the dissatisfaction of the Spanish delegation."

What Ortega needs to remember

A few months ago, the first Vice President of Spain, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, visited Nicaragua in early August to sign her country's seventh mixed cooperation commission agreement and **write off a Nicaraguan government debt of \$33 million dollars.** Spain's aid to Nicaragua will amount to \$84 million dollars this year

according to officials becoming the largest benefactor for Nicaraguans. Spain has pardoned approximately \$713 million dollars in debt to Nicaragua.

Watch Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59NV1J84BWQ>



During Ortega's attacks on Union Fenosa King Juan Carlos stood up and walked out of the auditorium. Source: La Prensa. <http://www-usa.laprensa.com.ni/archivo/2007/noviembre/11/noticias/politica/226471.shtml>

Brazil and Argentina discuss nuclear, oil cooperation – *La Nacion, Argentina.*

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Argentina's visiting president-elect Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner discussed cooperation in nuclear power production and oil exploration on Monday. "The nuclear power issue was raised, but only as a possibility, in terms of the subject of energy," Brazil's information minister Franklin Martins said. More important was oil cooperation, said Lula's special advisor Marco Aurelio Garcia said. "The president focused on the need for cooperation between both countries' national energy companies Enarsa and Petrobras, including deep water oil exploration," Garcia said. The two leaders also touched on topics of natural gas supplies and the need for coordination with Bolivia, which nationalized its energy sector last year. They also agreed to put on the agenda the construction of a bilateral hydro-electric plant at Garabi on the Uruguay River in a February meeting when Fernandez will take office next year. The two sides agreed to create a commission to meet twice a year to garner concrete results from the bilateral relationship, said Fernandez.



Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (R) meets Argentina's visiting president-elect Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner in Brasilia, capital of Brazil. Source: La Nacion.

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/edicionimpresa/politica/nota.asp?nota_id=963905

Venezuelan leader eager to start nuclear program – *IHT.*

The controversial Venezuelan President has announced that he plans to start a peaceful nuclear program for his nation. At the same time, President Hugo Chavez has defended Iran's nuclear program. Mr. Chavez made the announcement during an interview with the French news channel, France 24, in advance of a trip to Paris. He has been developing closer ties to Iran and during the interview he said that he believed Iran's nuclear endeavors were purely peaceful. Then he added that Venezuela would develop its own nuclear program, also for peaceful purposes. He compared it to programs in Brazil and

Argentina - where both countries have reactors for generating electricity. Several US politicians reacted to the news, saying Mr. Chavez has to be taken seriously. Even so, nuclear experts say Venezuela is many years away from having any nuclear technology.



Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (L) and his Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attend the opening session of the OPEC summit in Riyadh

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/11/27/news/chavez.php>

[Ahmadinejad and Chavez predict fall of US 'empire' – Infobae.](#)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on a visit to Tehran on Monday that the "empire of the dollar is crashing," one day after his country and anti-US ally Iran advocated action over the weakening US currency during an OPEC summit in Riyadh. Chavez, who on Saturday said oil prices could double to \$200 per barrel if the US attacked Iran over its disputed atomic ambitions, spoke to reporters after talks with his Iranian counterpart Ahmadinejad Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Tehran. The two leaders agreed to set up a joint Iranian-Venezuelan bank and signed deals to boost cooperation in the oil, petrochemical and industry sectors, Iranian media reported without giving details about the accords. Ahmadinejad - whose country is under banking and other international sanctions over its nuclear program - on Sunday called the US dollar a "worthless piece of paper" and Chavez took a similar line on Monday. "Soon we will not talk about dollars, because the dollar is falling in value and the empire of the dollar is crashing," Chavez said in comments translated into Farsi from Spanish. "Naturally, by the crash of the dollar, America's empire will crash," Chavez said a news conference with Ahmadinejad. The two presidents share the same viewpoint in denouncing US influence in the world.

<http://www.infobae.com/contenidos/349707-100556-0-Chávez-y-Ahmadinejad-Caerá-imperialismo-los-EEUU>

[Chavez and Ahmadinejad sign 186 accords – Infobae.](#)

Chavez and Ahmadinejad discussed the results of the OPEC summit that ended Sunday in Riyadh, and signed several accords on economic, industrial and financial cooperation. Chavez said that the cooperation of Iran and Venezuela has particular importance for Caracas "from the moral, political, economic, social and geopolitical points of view," and said that investments in each other's countries amount to \$4.6 billion. "During this visit we have signed solid agreements that, together with the 186 accords signed previously, establish a true network of collaboration and represent a comprehensive document of our alliance," Chavez said.

<http://www.infobae.com/contenidos/349805-100556-0-Chávez-y-Ahmadinejad-firmaron-186-acuerdos>

[Venezuela's Chavez demands Spanish king to apologize – Infobae.](#)

President Hugo Chavez demanded Friday that the king of Spain apologize for publicly telling him to "shut up" in a spat that has soured relations between the two nations and could endanger Spanish investment in Venezuela. "The king of Spain, he has to offer some type of apology because he attacked me," Chavez said in an interview on state television Friday. "I'm not going to ask him to get down on his knees, but to in some way recognize that he went too far, that he did something inappropriate." Chavez has since warned

that Venezuela doesn't need Spanish investment and that Spanish companies operating in the country will be held more accountable as a result of the spat. He has mentioned Spanish banks Banco Santander SA and Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA by name.

<http://www.infobae.com/contenidos/349958-100891-0-Chávez-insiste-que-el-rey-debe-disculparse>

OPEC summit closes in Saudi Arabia – *El Comercio, Peru.*

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) closed its two-day third summit meeting here Sunday afternoon after adopting a final declaration. The leaders from the OPEC countries pledged to provide "adequate, timely and sufficient" oil supplies to the market and voiced concern about global climate change. The final declaration of a summit of its heads of state also said that it recognized the importance of energy in fighting poverty, but it made no mention of the weak dollar. The third OPEC summit in the organization's 47-year history opened in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh on Saturday afternoon amid surging oil prices, which was presided over by host Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud. During the OPEC summit meeting Sunday, **Ecuador rejoined the oil cartel 15 years after its withdrawal and became the new comer of the OPEC** which has had 12 other member states of Algeria, Angola, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Venezuela.

[http://www.elcomercio.com.pe/ediciononline/HTML/2007-11-18 la opep concluyo su tercera cu.html](http://www.elcomercio.com.pe/ediciononline/HTML/2007-11-18%20la%20opep%20concluyo%20su%20tercera%20cu.html)

Chavez starts OPEC summit with \$200 oil warning – *Correo, Peru.*

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez opened an OPEC summit on Saturday with a chilling warning about US\$200 oil if the United States attacks Iran in a speech that also urged the cartel to be more political. But internal divisions about the role of the oil exporters' group were highlighted when King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, OPEC kingpin and key US regional ally, sounded a moderate note, saying oil "must not become an instrument for conflict." Chavez, a fiery leftist and fiercely anti-US leader, warned that crude prices could double from their current already-record level of near \$100 a barrel if Washington attacked Iran or launched action against Venezuela. "If the United States was mad enough to attack Iran or Venezuela the price of a barrel of oil won't just reach \$100, but even \$200," he said. He also urged assembled leaders from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, meeting for only the third time in the cartel's 47-year history, to club together for geopolitical reasons.

http://www.correoperu.com.pe/paginas/nota.php?nota_id=59113&seccion_notas=9

Chavez warns Europeans not to side with US on Iran nuclear standoff – *IHT.*

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Tuesday urged Europe not to side with the United States over Iran's nuclear program, dismissing as a "big lie" U.S. concerns that the Tehran is trying to develop an atomic bomb. Chavez, a leftist firebrand who was in Iran on Monday and has compared U.S. President George W. Bush to the devil, said the accusations against Iran were part of a U.S. plot to take over Iran's oil fields. "I'm sure it's just another excuse, another invention, another big lie by the imperialist government of the United States to justify any aggression against the Iranian people," Chavez told reporters at a news conference in Paris. "Europe should not, in my opinion, follow this path." Iran insists it is only seeking nuclear energy, while Washington suspects it is seeking a bomb. Tehran has been hit by two rounds of U.N. sanctions over its nuclear program. **Chavez said Europe should be more worried about the possibility that the U.S. might attack Iran, adding that Iran would not take a hypothetical attack lying down.**

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/11/20/europe/EU-GEN-France-Venezuela-Iran.php>

Reporters without Borders criticize Chávez in letter to Sarkozy – *El Universal, Venezuela.*

NGO Reporters without Borders (RSF) and a group of intellectuals Monday forwarded a letter to French President Nicolas Sarkozy criticizing Venezuelan President

Hugo Chávez's policies, claiming he is restraining freedom in his country, the same day the Venezuelan ruler was scheduled to arrive in Paris. Ahead of Chávez's visit to France, RSF secretary general Robert Ménard addressed a letter to Sarkozy reminding that Chávez has put many "obstacles" to press freedom during his government. According to Ménard, Chávez "has shut up any critic or dissenting voice in order to phase out any form of opposition." He claimed an example of such restrictions is the closure of private TV network RCTV last May, Efe quoted. Meanwhile, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), published a report in Paris on the situation of freedom of expression in Venezuela. The group claimed that the press is facing an increasingly "disturbing" situation amidst the "legal restrictions" the "President Hugo Chávez's regime" has implemented or is preparing.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_pol_art_rsf-criticizes-chave_20A1206845.shtml

First Chinese oilrigs arrive in Venezuela – *El Universal*.

The first Chinese oilrigs under an agreement between state-run oil firm Pdvsa and the Asian country have arrived in Venezuela. The first shipment arrived in Guanta port, eastern Anzoátegui state. It comprises two 1,000 HP oilrigs to be commissioned to Pdvsa Exploration and Production Eastern Division, Orinoco Oil Belt, in San Tomé District. Under the pact, Venezuela is allowed to purchase both technology and knowledge to manufacture oilrigs. 116 Venezuelan experts and 11 engineers spent 12 months in China training and cooperating in the manufacture of the equipment.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_eco_art_first-chinese-oilrig_20A1207077.shtml

Chávez, Sarkozy deal with humanitarian swap in Colombia – *El Universal*.

President Hugo Chávez arrived in the Élysée Palace for a luncheon with his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy, whom he had promised to deliver a "proof of life" of French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt, who has been held hostage by the rebel Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC). Chávez -wearing a black suit, a white shirt and a red tie- entered the official residence of the French President at 1:05 p.m. (local time). He was accompanied by his Foreign Affairs Minister Nicolás Maduro and Colombian Senator Piedad Córdoba. They declined talking to reporters. Sarkozy welcomed Chávez and his entourage at the stairways of the Élysée Palace, AFP reported. **The meeting came following gloomy remarks made by Fabrice Delloye, Betancourt's ex husband, claiming that the Venezuelan President "so far does not have the proof of life" he pledged to produce. Chávez "so far does not have the proof of life" he was supposed to deliver to Sarkozy, Delloye told French news network i-télé. No official French or Venezuelan source accepted to comment on Delloye's remarks.**

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_pol_art_chavez,-sarkozy-deal_20A1206757.shtml

Foreign investment in Venezuela down USD 317 million – *El Universal*.

During the first three quarters this year, foreign direct investment amounted to USD 317 million, which is a tiny sum compared to other countries in the region and to the size of the Venezuelan economy. In fact, it is lower than the amount of US dollars the Foreign Exchange Board (Cadivi) allocates in two days. Foreign investment -a useful tool to create jobs, attract technology and diversify the economy- injected USD 5 billion to Colombia in January-September this year, with Mexico receiving USD 13.24 billion in the first half this year, and Costa Rica attracting USD 819 million in the same period as Mexico. Experts believe the risks related to investment in Venezuela are high, given the price controls, the government's appetite to grasp the so-called "strategic sectors," the uncertainty related to the proposed changes to the Constitution, exchange controls that obstruct capital repatriation and restrictions on some imports. The indifference of the multinationals towards Venezuela is not a new issue. In 2006, foreign investment amounted to USD 590 million, and over the last nine months the country has not exceeded a peak of USD 4.98 billion in 1998. Edmond Saade, the chair of the Venezuelan-

American Chamber of Commerce (VenAmCham), last October 19 said **"US investments in the country (Venezuela) dried out last year and ended at USD 19 million, compared to an average USD 700-800 million over the last 10 years."**

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_eco_art_foreign-investment-i_20A1207039.shtml

Globovisión fears termination of license by Venezuelan government – *El Universal*.

Local news television network Globovisión fears the government of President Hugo Chávez may terminate the broadcast license -just like it did with private TV channel RCTV- said Globovisión's legal counsel Ana Cristina Núñez. "Both the government and the Congress have been preparing a strategy for some time now to take Globovisión off the air," said Núñez. **"We are the next RCTV,"** she added, as quoted by DPA. She explained that government agencies are preventing the TV channel from meeting the legal requirements to operate the television network. She interpreted such actions as an attempt to create an irregular situation that may be used as an excuse to terminate the broadcast license. Further, Núñez asserted that pro-government lawmakers in the National Assembly are allegedly encouraging people to take over Globovisión premises.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/16/en_pol_art_globovision-fears-te_16A1199917.shtml

IAPA: Freedom of expression and private property are at stake in Venezuela – *El Universal*.

The chairman of the Committee on Press Freedom, Inter-America Press Association (IAPA), Gonzalo Marroquín, Tuesday said in Caracas that the two major dangers the IAPA delegates found during their visit to Venezuela were two articles in the proposed changes to the Venezuelan Constitution that are related to freedom of expression and private property. "In the constitutional reform, we view as dangerous Article 337 regarding the states of emergency, under which the right to information can be suppressed, as this represents a setback in the Venezuelan Constitution. Before, freedom of expression of both journalists and the Venezuelan people could not be restricted even under a state of emergency." Marroquín added that private property of the news media could be endangered, and cited the case of private television station RCTV, particularly referring to a ruling the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (TSJ) issued to let state television channel TVes use RCTV broadcast equipment. "The other aspect is a little a bit more complicated, and I refer to private property. We believe, based on past experiences, especially that of the closure of RCTV and the takeover of RCTV equipment for other purposes, that some news outlets in Venezuela are facing a serious threat."

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_pol_art_iapa-freedom-of-exp_20A1207159.shtml

Student leader calls a march against changes to the Constitution – *El Universal*.

Ricardo Sánchez, the recently elected president of Federation of Student Councils of the Central University of Venezuela, called a march for Wednesday, November 21, to reject the proposed changes to the Constitution championed by President Hugo Chávez and to defend democracy and freedom. The march is to leave from the campus of the Central University of Venezuela and is scheduled to arrive in Bríon Square, Chacaíto, eastern Caracas, around 1 p.m. The student leader condemned the violent events registered Monday in western Táchira state, where a dean and three students were arrested following a demonstration against the proposed draft Constitutional reform. Sánchez ensured that the country's university students will prevent the State security forces from breaking into any college campuses.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_pol_art_student-leader-calls_20A1207357.shtml

National Assembly interrogates three university presidents – *El Universal*.

The presidents of the Central University of Venezuela (UCV), the Lisandro Alvarado Central-Western University (UCLA), and the University of Los Andes (ULA) were convened by the Committee on Domestic Policy, National Assembly, to brief on the violent incidents recorded in such institutions over the last few days. While the UCV and the ULA presidents said they were welcomed with cordiality, UCLA president Francisco Leone

claimed lawmakers brought him under an "uncomfortable" political interrogation. The university authorities asked parliamentarians' help to put an end to violence in Venezuela. UCV president Antonio París told the deputies that an enquiry into the riots in the UCV campus last November 1-7 is still under way. He vowed to punish the students involved in the incidents. París added he would allow state security bodies to enter the campus. ULA president Lester Rodríguez said five people seized the university television channel 20 days ago.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_refco_art_national-assembly-in_20A1206759.shtml

College dean and three students under arrest – *El Universal*.

Alí Alarcón, dean of the Libertador Pedagogic College (UPEL) based in Rubio, southwestern Táchira state, was arrested Monday following a protest rejecting President Hugo Chávez' proposed changes to the Venezuelan Constitution. On Monday, UPEL students staged a protest and burned a truck belonging to power company Cadafe. Alarcón was arrested together with three students who were wounded. Authorities arrested them when they were headed for a hospital. The students were allegedly wounded as a truck owned by the Mayorality of the Urdaneta Municipality ran over them.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_refco_art_college-dean-and-thr_20A1206797.shtml

Chávez has no proof of life of Betancourt – *El Universal*.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez on Sunday showed confidence that former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, who is held hostage by the rebel Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), is still alive, but denied having any proof of life. "I am sure Ingrid is alive, although I do not have any material, such as a video. But before leaving Caracas, I received a message from Marulanda (FARC leader), and he asked me to trust his word, and that is what I am going to tell French President Nicolas Sarkozy," Chávez said following the closing session of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Riyadh, DPA quoted. Chávez is meeting with Sarkozy Tuesday in Paris amidst expectations on their talks about Betancourt, who is a French-Colombian citizen who has been held hostage by the FARC since 2002. "I want to believe in Marulanda. There is no reason to think otherwise. Let us be positive," he added. "Ingrid is alive, as well as many other Colombians and three US nationals who are in the FARC's hands," he explained.



Ingrid Betancourt kidnapped by FARC in 2002. Source: Clarin.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/19/en_pol_art_chavez-has-no-proof_19A1204637.shtml

Colombia sets a deadline for Chávez's mediation – *El Universal*.

The Colombian government issued a communiqué setting next December as the deadline for the efforts to agree with the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) on a humanitarian swap of hostages for rebels Colombia on Monday established a deadline, until next December, to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's mediation efforts for the rebel Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) to release a number of hostages in exchange for the liberation of guerrilla troops who are in jail. Colombian "President (Álvaro) Uribe told President Chávez that this process of mediation should have a time limit, and President Chávez agreed. Today, the

government thinks the limit should be next December," the Colombian government said in a communiqué read by the High Commissioner for Peace Luis Carlos Restrepo, as quoted by Reuters. **Ruling adjourned:** A federal judge in the United States suspended for indefinite time a ruling on Simón Trinidad, a leader of the FARC that was scheduled for Tuesday. Judge Royce C. Lamberth, of the District of Columbia, said the hearing was adjourned "until further notice by the court," AP reported. Lamberth would not elaborate on this decision, but court sources claimed the decision was made following a request from the prosecution and the defense lawyers, amidst concerns about the fate of the civil and military hostages held by the FARC. The ruling could have facilitated or complicated the efforts -led by President Chávez- aimed at a humanitarian swap of hostages for FARC fighters who have been arrested by the Colombian government. Trinidad is waiting for a ruling in connection with the kidnapping of three US nationals in Colombia some five years ago.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_pol_art_colombia-sets-a-dead_20A1206397.shtml

EU reiterates support for Chávez's mediation in Colombia – *El Universal*.

The European Ministers of Foreign Affairs Monday voiced their support to the talks between the Colombian government and the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) to attain a humanitarian agreement to swap hostages for rebels, and showed a particular interest in the mediation efforts conducted by President Hugo Chávez, AFP reported. In a statement adopted during a meeting in Brussels, the 27 members of the European Union said the bloc "is closely watching the efforts of the Colombian government, particularly with the collaboration of the President of Venezuela, and supports the work of all the people committed to enforce the humanitarian international law in Colombia." The statement came on the eve of Chávez's visit to Paris, where he is to inform his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy on the progress made in his mediation efforts. Last October 9, the Portuguese Presidency of the EU supported Chávez's mediation between the Colombian government and the FARC.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/19/en_pol_art_eu-reiterates-suppor_19A1204723.shtml

Colombian government-ELN to resume peace talks in Caracas – *El Universal*.

One of the leaders of the rebel National Liberation Army (ELN) Monday disclosed that the guerrillas group next December is resuming peace talks with the government of President Álvaro Uribe, AP reported. The spokesman and member of the ELN leadership Antonio García added that the new round of talks was agreed due to the efforts Hugo Chávez made during recent meetings with ELN leaders and Colombian Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo to bring the parties closer. "Together with the Commissioner we defined a session of work in mid-December," García told radio station Caracol. "The delegation of the ELN and the Colombian government are going to meet in Caracas."

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/19/en_pol_art_colombian-government_19A1205237.shtml

Alan García invites Chávez to invest in Peru – *El Universal*.

President Alan García invited his Venezuelan counterpart Hugo Chávez to invest in Peru, but asked him to do so through the usual means, rather than "through the windows," AFP reported. "That is what I told Chávez. If he wants to come, then he should do it well, through the official, legal means. He may make any investments his companies want to make, but this means he should not enter through the window." During the Ibero-American Summit in Chile earlier this month, García and Chávez voiced interest in Pdvsa making investments in Peru. García branded Venezuela as "an oil and energy power," adding that the best way to have good relations with Caracas is through the official means, "rather than through the houses of ALBA (Chávez's Bolivarian Alternative for the peoples of the Americas) or the Venezuelan-Peruvian friendship groups." Over the

last few months, a number of the so-called "houses of ALBA" were inaugurated in Peru. The Peruvian rightwing claimed they were intended to destabilize García's government. However, the Venezuelan Embassy to Lima denied Venezuela's links to such institutions.



President Alan Garcia. Source: El Pais.

http://english.eluniversal.com/2007/11/20/en_pol_art_alan-garcia-invites_20A1206917.shtml

Peru's Government to Track 3,000 Ex-convicts and Freed Terrorists – LIP.

Since the year 2000, over three thousand people that were imprisoned for terrorism have been freed because their sentence was served or for other reasons, confirmed Peru's Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo during a presentation last night. Del Castillo officially presented these statistics in a plenary session of Congress held last night. After these figures were presented, **Peru's Premier requested that Congress establish the necessary means to track the convicted terrorists. Peru's Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defense were called to explain the efforts being made by the country to control the recent wave of narco-terrorist attacks.** During his presentation, Del Castillo explained the government's policies in its fight against drug trafficking and terrorism. Prime Minister del Castillo proposed that Congress create a law that allows the proper punishment of narco-terrorism and suggested that an agreement be made between Congress, Alan Garcia's administration and all the political parties to fight narco-terrorism. According to Peru's Premier, 473 terrorists were released on parole while 574 were released after they served their sentence.

<http://www.livinginperu.com/news-5137-law-and-order-perus-government-to-track-3000-ex-convicts-and-freed-terrorists>

Interpol Approves Warrants to Arrest Iranians for AMIA Bombing – AJC.

The American Jewish Committee applauded Interpol member states for affirming the arrest warrants against five Iranians and one Lebanese involved with Hezbollah sought by Argentina for their role in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA headquarters. **“Interpol is sending a powerful message to the world by proclaiming support for justice in Argentina and vigilance against state sponsors of terrorism,”** said **AJC Executive Director David A. Harris.** Interpol's executive committee had approved the arrest warrants in March 2007, after Argentina's special prosecutor, Alberto Nisman, appointed by President Nestor Kirchner, released a comprehensive report in November 2006 that claimed Iran masterminded the bombing in Buenos Aires and entrusted Lebanese militant group Hezbollah to execute it. Today's momentous vote in Marrakesh “sends a powerful message to the world,” said Harris. “Even if it takes thirteen years, involves missteps, cover-ups, and false starts, consumes countless man hours, and runs diplomatic risks, Argentina will not let go. The nation was attacked in 1994, its citizens were killed and maimed, and it demands justice.” Today's momentous vote in Marrakesh “sends a powerful message to the world,” said Harris. “Even if it takes thirteen years, involves missteps, cover-ups, and false starts, consumes countless man hours, and runs diplomatic risks, Argentina will not let go. The nation was attacked in 1994, its citizens were killed and maimed, and it demands justice.”

<http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=ijTI2PHKoG&b=849241&ct=4620969>

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