



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 2, 2010

## Chavez Regime's Drug Trafficking Back in Spotlight

After a series of reports brought the issue into the spotlight in recent years, allegations of involvement in drug trafficking by the regime of socialist Venezuelan "President" Hugo Chavez are making headlines once again.

In an [article](#) for *USA Today*, for example, Chris Hawley quotes multiple experts suggesting that the regime is at least turning a blind eye, if not directly supporting the traffickers.

"Parts of the Venezuelan military are probably trafficking with drugs and other stuff, and Chavez is not exactly motivated to crack down on them because he needs the military," claimed Brookings Institution fellow Vanda Felbab-Brown. "He is allowing them to dabble in the trade."



American and United Nations officials have also accused Chavez and his government of involvement in the drug trade, with the UN releasing a report in late June stating that more than 40 percent of all cocaine shipments to Europe were going through Venezuela.

"The increasing flow of illicit narcotics through Venezuela and the continuing flow through Mexico pose significant challenges to U.S. counternarcotics interdiction efforts," the U.S. Government Accountability Office said in a separate report released in July. Another GAO report released last year [claimed](#) that top Venezuelan military and government officials were involved in the trade.

The allegations of Chavez' complicity have been around for years, particularly since the regime expelled American drug agents from Venezuela. The U.S Drug Enforcement Administration was operating there until 2005, but Chavez kicked them out over supposed suspicions of spying, drug trafficking, and conspiring to bring down his regime.

"I think it is about time to face up to the fact that President Chavez is becoming a major facilitator of the transit of cocaine to Europe and other parts of this hemisphere," John Walters, former director of the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, [said](#) back in 2008. "It goes beyond 'I can't do it' to 'I won't do it'. And 'I won't do it' means that 'I am colluding'."

Media investigations have reached similar conclusions. For example, an investigation by the U.K. *Guardian* entitled "[Revealed: Chávez role in cocaine trail to Europe](#)" found the regime's fingerprints everywhere. "Different methods exist to transport the drug from Colombia to Europe, but what they all have in common is the participation, by omission or commission, of the Venezuelan authorities," wrote John Carlin after interviews with myriad government and guerilla sources.

And in 2009, the U.S. State Department said Chavez' refusal to cooperate with American authorities on counter-drug efforts was exacerbating the problem. "Venezuela remains a major drug-transit country



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with high-levels of corruption and a weak judicial system," [explained](#) the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report. "Growing illicit drug transshipments through Venezuela are enabled by Venezuela's lack of international counternarcotics cooperation," it said, adding that Venezuelan security officials often collaborated with Colombian traffickers and Marxist guerillas.

But the regime has been "cooperating" to some degree — Venezuela has been capturing alleged Colombian drug dealers and sending them to the United States for trial, with [several extraditions](#) just in July. And, perhaps more importantly, Chavez actually puts the blame for the trafficking on American officials. "The biggest support for narco-trafficking comes from the nation of the north," Chavez told legislators last year, criticizing both insatiable American demand for drugs and U.S. government involvement in drug trafficking. "The DEA is filled with drug traffickers," he [noted](#), referring to the American narcotics agency as a "drug cartel." The Venezuelan Interior Minister [accused](#) the DEA of attempting to monopolize the drug trade and of moving large drug shipments through the country.

Of course, the [allegations](#) of U.S. government involvement in the drug trade are nothing new. Even the former head of the DEA has [accused](#) the Central Intelligence Agency of importing drugs to the United States, and the accusations have been around for decades.

International anti-drug authorities have also been caught working with drug cartels. Mexico's Interpol boss Ricardo Gutierrez, for example, was [arrested](#) in late 2008 for aiding powerful Mexican traffickers.

But it isn't just Venezuelan, American, and global officials that are involved — to some extent, at least — in the global drug trade. For two decades, an alliance of drug traffickers, terrorists, social movements, and Latin American political parties (which rule most of the region today) has [lurked in the shadows](#). And it's a huge problem, analysts say.

The Foro de São Paulo includes the ruling parties in Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and many other nations, as well as Marxist terrorist groups at the center of the Latin American drug trade like the FARC, the ELN, and the MIR. It was founded by communist Cuban despot Fidel Castro, Brazilian President Inacio da Silva, the Sandinistas, and an assortment of terrorists and communists. It [uses](#) proceeds from drugs and oil to [finance "revolution" throughout the region](#).

And ironically, the U.S. government has helped the group thrive. "Bill Clinton's Plan Colombia only offered economic and military aid to the Colombian government on the explicit condition that ... criminal organizations of a political nature be preserved [from] any damage," [explained](#) Brazilian author and philosopher Olavo de Carvalho, one of the most important figures in exposing the Foro de São Paulo and its totalitarian expansion sweeping Latin America.

"The result was that the old cartels were destroyed and the FARC became the absolute rulers of drug trafficking in the continent. In reality this kind of 'war on drugs' is a war that favors the Left against Latin America," he told *The New American* earlier this year for an article on the [socialist resurgence in the region](#).

Government involvement in drug running has been a reality for a long time. And even if the entire state structure is not yet corrupt, the massive fortunes produced by the industry inevitably lead to increasing bribery and corruption.

And while the U.S. purports to be waging its "war on drugs" — unconstitutionally borrowing and squandering hundreds of billions of tax dollars, imprisoning more of its own citizens per capita than any nation in the world, and pointing fingers at the totalitarian Chavez regime for its involvement — American soldiers are busy [protecting opium fields in Afghanistan](#).



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Yes, the Venezuelan government is almost certainly involved in drug trafficking. But if it wasn't for the unconstitutional U.S. "war," there would be no reason for it. Crime, cartels, and the Latin American leftists would be devastated without it because profits would evaporate (the war on drugs merely reduces the supply of drugs, not eliminate it, driving up costs and profits).

Photo of Hugo Chavez: AP Images



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