

Brazil Makes the US's G-20 of Drug-Friendly Countries

Contributed by Newsroom
Monday, 18 September 2006

Brazil is in the company of Afghanistan, Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Venezuela as one of the countries that failed to adequately fight narcotics in the past year, contributing this way to the spread of drugs throughout the world.

This according to a State Department report on the state of drugs around the globe announced by the White House. The report lists not only nations producing drugs, but also those used as corridors for the distribution of the product. Brazil appears in the second group.

The White House statement follows in its entirety:

On September 15, 2006, President Bush authorized the Secretary of State to transmit to the Congress the annual report on the Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2007.

The report contains Presidential Determinations of the countries that have "failed demonstrably" to make substantial efforts during the previous 12 months to adhere to international counternarcotics agreements and to take measures specified in U.S. law.

In his report, the President identified as major drug transit or major illicit drug producing countries: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

The President also reported to Congress his determination that Burma and Venezuela have "failed demonstrably" during the previous 12 months to adhere to their obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and to take the measures set forth in U.S. law.

However, the President also determined to maintain U.S. programs that aid Venezuela's democratic institutions, establish select community development projects, and strengthen Venezuela's political party system.

The United States remains concerned about Bolivia's counternarcotics cooperation. Despite increased drug interdiction, Bolivia has undertaken policies that have allowed the expansion of coca cultivation and have significantly curtailed eradication. The United States will issue a set of substantive benchmarks for Bolivia and will conduct an interim assessment by March 2007.

These Determinations required the President to consider each country's performance in areas such as reducing illicit cultivation, interdiction, law enforcement cooperation, extradition, and measures to prevent and punish public corruption that facilitates drug trafficking or impedes drug-related prosecutions.

The President also considered these countries' efforts to stop production and export of, and reduce the domestic demand for, illegal drugs.

Bush's Act

Memorandum for the Secretary of State: Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2006-24

Pursuant to section 706(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FY03 (Public Law 107-228) (FRAA), I hereby identify the following countries as major drug transit or major illicit drug producing countries: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

A country's presence on the Majors List is not necessarily an adverse reflection of its government's counternarcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the United States. Consistent with the statutory definition of a major drug transit or drug producing country set forth in section 481(e)(2) and (5) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), one of the reasons that major drug transit or illicit drug producing countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographical, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit or be produced despite the concerned government's most assiduous enforcement measures.

Pursuant to section 706(2)(A) of the FRAA, I hereby designate Burma and Venezuela as countries that have failed demonstrably during the previous 12 months to adhere to their obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and take the measures set forth in section 489(a)(1) of the FAA. Attached to this report (Tab A) are justifications for the determinations on Burma and Venezuela, as required by section 706(2)(B).

I have also determined, in accordance with provisions of section 706(3)(A) of the FRAA, that support for programs to aid Venezuela's democratic institutions is vital to the national interests of the United States.

Although President Karzai has strongly attacked narcotrafficking as the greatest threat to Afghanistan, one third of the Afghan economy remains opium-based, which contributes to widespread public corruption. The government at all levels must be held accountable to deter and eradicate poppy cultivation; remove and prosecute corrupt officials; and investigate, prosecute, or extradite narcotraffickers and those financing their activities. We are concerned that failure to act decisively now could undermine security, compromise democratic legitimacy, and imperil international support for vital assistance.

My Administration is concerned with the decline in Bolivian counternarcotics cooperation since October 2005. Bolivia, the world's third largest producer of cocaine, has undertaken policies that have allowed the expansion of coca cultivation and slowed the pace of eradication until mid-year, when it picked up. The Government of Bolivia's (GOB) policy of "zero cocaine, but not zero coca" has focused primarily on interdiction, to the near exclusion of its necessary complements, eradication and alternative development.

However, the GOB has been supportive of interdiction initiatives and has had positive results in seizing cocaine and decommissioning rustic labs. We would encourage the GOB to refocus its efforts on eliminating excess coca, the source of cocaine. This would include eradicating at least 5,000 hectares, including in the Chapare region; eliminating the "cato" exemption to Bolivian law; rescinding Ministerial Resolution 112, Administrative Resolution 083, and establishing tight controls on the sale of licit coca leaf for traditional use; and implementing strong precursor chemical control measures to prevent conversion of coca to cocaine. My Administration plans to review Bolivia's performance in these specific areas within 6 months.

The Government of Canada (GOC) continued to effectively curb the diversion of precursor chemicals that are required for methamphetamine production to feed U.S. illegal markets. The GOC also continued to seize laboratories that produce MDMA/Ecstasy consumed in both Canada and the United States. The principal drug concern was the continuing large-scale production of high-potency, indoor-grown marijuana for export to the United States. The United States enjoyed excellent cooperation with Canada across a broad range of law enforcement issues and shared goals.

The Government of Ecuador (GOE) has made considerable progress in combating narcotics trafficking destined for the United States. However, a dramatic increase in the quantity of cocaine transported toward the United States using Ecuadorian-flagged ships and indications of increased illegal armed group activity along Ecuador's northern border with Colombia remain areas of serious concern. Effective cooperation and streamlined maritime operational procedures between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Ecuadorian Navy are resulting in an increase in the amount of cocaine interdicted. Building on that cooperation, we will work with Ecuador to change the circumstances that make Ecuadorian-flagged vessels and Ecuadorian citizenship so attractive to drug traffickers.

As a result of the elections in Haiti, the new government now has a clear mandate from the Haitian people to bring crime, violent gangs, and drug trafficking under control. We urge the new government to strengthen and accelerate ongoing efforts to rebuild and reform Haiti's law enforcement and judicial institutions and to consult closely with the United States to define achievable and verifiable steps to accomplish these goals.

While the Government of Nigeria continues to take substantive steps to curb official corruption, it remains a major challenge in Nigeria. We strongly encourage the government to continue to adequately fund and support the anti-corruption bodies that have been established there in order to fully address Nigeria's ongoing fight against corruption. We urge Nigeria to continue improving the effectiveness of the National Drug and Law Enforcement Agency and, in particular, improve enforcement operations at major airports/seaports and against major drug kingpins, to include targeting their financial assets. We look forward to working with Nigerian officials to increase extraditions and assisting in drug enforcement operations.

Although there have not been any drug seizures or apprehensions of drug traffickers with a connection to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) since 2004, we remain concerned about DPRK state-directed criminal activity. The United States Government has made clear to the DPRK that an end to all involvement in criminal activity is a necessary prerequisite to entry into the international community.

Under provisions of the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act (CMEA), which modified section 489(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and section 490(a) of the FAA, a report will be made to the Congress on March 1, 2007, naming the five countries that legally exported the largest amount of methamphetamine precursor chemicals, as

well as the top five methamphetamine precursor importers with the highest rate of diversion for illicit drug production. This report will be sent concurrently with the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, which will also contain additional reporting on methamphetamine precursor chemicals pursuant to the CMEA.

You are hereby authorized and directed to submit this report under section 706 of the FRAA, transmit it to the Congress, and publish it in the Federal Register.

GEORGE W. BUSH