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H. RES. 872

Calling for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to be designated a state sponsor of terrorism for its support of Iran, Hezbollah, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 27, 2009

Mr. MACK (for himself and Mr. KLEIN of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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RESOLUTION

Calling for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to be designated a state sponsor of terrorism for its support of Iran, Hezbollah, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).

Whereas state sponsors of terrorism provide critical support to non-state terrorist groups;

Whereas section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979, section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act, and section 640A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 stipulate that a designated state sponsor of terrorism is one ''that repeatedly provides support to acts of international terrorism'';

Whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism, in-

cluding support for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and Hezbollah and has also closely aligned itself with Iran, a designated state sponsor of terrorism;

Whereas Venezuela has become Iran's closest ally in the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas Iran has been designated by the United States Government as a state sponsor of terrorism and according to the 2008 State Department's Country Report on Terrorism ''has remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism'';

Whereas the 2008 Report states that the Government of Iran continues to pursue an expansion of its military ties into the Western Hemisphere and parts of Africa, including through its IRGC–Qods Force;

Whereas Venezuela has concluded more than 200 bilateral agreements with Iran on military cooperation, the sharing of intelligence, establishing direct civilian airline flights between Caracas and Tehran, expanding financial cooperation, and initiating cultural exchanges, among others;

Whereas Venezuela reportedly has large deposits of uranium ore in the Guiana Shield region;

Whereas in September 2009, Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez announced that Venezuela intends to develop nuclear technology with the assistance of Iran;

Whereas during a trip to Iran in September 2009, Chavez said that both Tehran and Caracas are ''facing the same enemy, which is the U.S. Empire and its lackeys. And we will defeat the empire and its lackeys'';

Whereas in a March 2009 congressional testimony, Admiral James G. Stavridis, then commander of the United States Southern Command, asserted that the main concern about Iran's increased activity in Latin America is its links to Hezbollah;

Whereas in a January 2009 congressional testimony, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates maintained that he was concerned about the level of ''subversive activity that the Iranians are carrying on in a number of places in Latin America, particularly South America and Central America'';

Whereas the State Department's 2008 Country Report on Terrorism has stated that Hezbollah closely follows the religious guidance of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei;

Whereas Hezbollah was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997, and is closely allied with Iran and often acts at its behest;

Whereas prior to September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was responsible for more deaths of United States citizens than any other terrorist group;

Whereas Hezbollah has already attacked Western Hemisphere targets, exemplified by the attacks on the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 and the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association in Buenos Aires in 1994;

Whereas the 2008 State Department's Country Report on Terrorism states that the FARC was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997;

Whereas the Report continues that ''[t]he Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is Latin America's

oldest, largest, most capable, and best-equipped insurgency'';

Whereas the Report states that the U.S. Department of the Treasury has designated a Venezuelan diplomat as a Hezbollah supporter and two senior Venezuelan Government officials and the former Justice and Interior Minister for materially assisting the narcotics trafficking activities of the FARC;

Whereas, for more than 40 years, the FARC has carried out bombings, mortar attacks, kidnappings, extortion, guerrilla warfare, and drug trafficking targeting Colombian and United States political, military, and economic interests as well as foreign citizens;

Whereas in July 2009, the Colombian military conducted a raid on a FARC training camp and recovered Swedish-made anti-tank rocket launchers sold to Venezuela in the 1980s;

Whereas seized documents from a Colombia-led raid against the FARC on March 1, 2008, suggest evidence of $300,000,000 in payments to the FARC from the Venezuelan Government, and efforts by the FARC to obtain 50 kilograms of uranium;

Whereas in January 2008, Chavez praised the FARC as ''a real army'' and ''an insurgent force with a political project'', and called upon foreign governments to cease referring to the FARC as a terrorist organization;

Whereas in May 2009, the Secretary of State renewed an arms embargo against Venezuela for all United States commercial arms sales and re-transfers to Venezuela;

Whereas the 2008 Country Report noted that Venezuelan citizenship, identity, and travel documents remained easy

to obtain, making the country a potentially attractive way-station for terrorists;

Whereas the Department of Homeland Security is required to assess security at foreign airports with direct service to the United States to determine compliance with standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);

Whereas the United States Transportation Security Administration says it ''has been unable to assess security measures at international airports in Venezuela that serve as the last point of departure for nonstop flights to the United States'';

Whereas the activities of supporters and financiers of terrorist organizations in the Western Hemisphere constitute a severe threat to the United States and its allies and interests; and

Whereas many countries in the Western Hemisphere make serious prevention and preparedness efforts, including cooperation with the United States, to address the mutual threat that terrorism poses to the region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for its state-sponsored support of international terrorist groups;

(2) calls on the Secretary of State to designate Venezuela as a state sponsor of terrorism; and

(3) urges increased and sustained cooperation on counter-terrorism initiatives between the government of the United States and allies in the region.

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