
US Starts to Backtrack, Admits Venezuela Not a Threat

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Last month, President Barack Obama signed an executive order declaring a national emergency with respect to the South American country, calling it an “extraordinary threat” to U.S. national security and foreign policy.

“The United States does not believe that Venezuela poses some threat to our national security,” said Benjamin J. Rhodes, a senior adviser to the White House, during a press conference about Obama's trip to Caribbean and Latin America where he will attend the Summit of the Americas.

Despite the inflammatory and threatening language in the decree, Rhodes said the language used was “completely pro forma.” However, the White House spokesman did not announce any intention to repeal the decree, which has further soured relations with Caracas and drawn harsh criticism from virtually every country in the region.

In response to the decree, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro launched a campaign to collect 10 million signatures demanding the declaration be repealed. On Tuesday, the Venezuelan leader announced that more than 9 million signatures had been collected so far. The socialist leader plans to hand the signatures to his U.S. counterpart at the Panama Summit,

which begins Friday.

Many international blocs, organizations and high profile world leaders have also come out in support of the democratically-elected government of President Maduro and have categorically rejected Obama's executive order against Venezuela.

In response to this widespread support, the U.S. Subsecretary for Latin America, Roberta Jacobson, said that she was "disappointed" by the levels of support shown for the South American nation.

Just days before the Summit of the Americas, a White House official says Venezuela does not pose a threat to U.S. national security. With much of the region's attention focused on the seventh Summit of the Americas starting later this week in Panama, the White House said Tuesday that the United States does not consider Venezuela a threat to its security. Last month, President Barack Obama signed an executive order declaring a national emergency with respect to the South American country, calling it an "extraordinary threat" to U.S. national security and foreign policy. "The United States does not believe that Venezuela poses some threat to our national security," said Benjamin J. Rhodes, a senior adviser to the White House, during a press conference about Obama's trip to Caribbean and Latin America where he will attend the Summit of the Americas. Despite the inflammatory and threatening language in the decree, Rhodes said the language used was "completely pro forma." However, the White House spokesman did not announce any intention to repeal the decree, which has further soured relations with Caracas and drawn harsh criticism from virtually every country in the region. In response to the decree, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro launched a campaign to collect 10 million signatures demanding the declaration be repealed. On Tuesday, the Venezuelan leader announced that more than 9 million signatures had been collected so far. The socialist leader plans to hand the signatures to his U.S. counterpart at the Panama Summit, which begins Friday. Many international blocs, organizations and high profile world leaders have also come out in support of the democratically-elected government of President Maduro and have categorically rejected Obama's executive order against Venezuela. In response to this widespread support, the U.S. Subsecretary for Latin America, Roberta Jacobson, said that she was "disappointed" by the levels of support shown for the South American nation.

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