

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2008

The Honorable José Miguel Insulza
Secretary General
Organization of American States
17th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Secretary General Insulza:

We are writing to convey our utmost concern about the events this past weekend along the Ecuador-Colombia border. Venezuela's troop buildup remains an irresponsible and provocative act aimed at inciting further hostility. Such actions are not productive and stand only to diminish cooperation and stability in the region. We call upon the Organization of American States (OAS) to continue to emphasize to all countries in the region that escalating tensions should be met with redoubled diplomatic efforts. Patient diplomacy, not military provocation, is the best path toward a peaceful resolution agreeable to all parties.

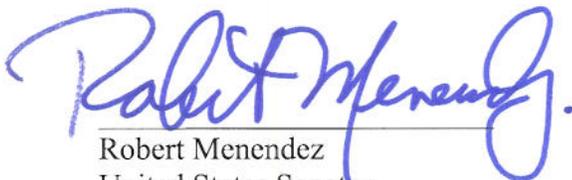
We are encouraged by today's resolution at the OAS and hope that it is viewed as a beginning to a longer process of engagement, rather than simply as an end to the recent tensions. While this agreement is a positive development, it does not solve the underlying issues of border security, terrorism, and militancy that require long-term diplomatic engagement to make meaningful progress.

In support of today's resolution and an ongoing dialogue, we urge the OAS to dispatch a team to objectively investigate information retrieved at the site of the raid. The OAS also has a vital role to play in keeping the lines of communication open between all countries in the region, especially among Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia.

These events underscore the necessity of multilateral forums, such as those provided by the OAS. Such forums have the power to turn events away from saber-rattling and threats of war, and instead toward engagement and constructive dialogue. In the Western Hemisphere, the OAS is the best environment for such dialogue to take place. In these troubled days, we urge the OAS to continue to serve as the Western Hemisphere's leading body for conflict mediation.

We look forward to working with you in the days ahead on this critically important matter.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Christopher Dodd
United States Senator