

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Illegally Detained at JFK Airport and Strip-Searched

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VHeadline.com broke the news early Saturday evening that Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Madura was prevented by airport officials from departing the US from JFK airport on a commercial flight on Saturday following the UN General Assembly meeting. He said officials demanded he surrender his ticket and boarding pass claiming his name was on a so-called "red list." He was then illegally detained, taken to a small room and strip-searched despite his strong protests after having clearly identified who he was. He explained once he did, his treatment only got worse.

This was a clear Bush administration attempt at harassment and deliberate Gestapo-like thuggery as well as a gross violation of international protocol. It was also an irrational act of retaliatory muscle-flexing by an administration losing control and reacting like a schoolyard hoodlum in response to President Hugo Chavez having had the courage to denounce George Bush's corrupted neoliberal policies on a world stage at the UN and to publicly call the US president the devil everyone knows he is. The Foreign Minister told Venezuelan reporters police officers threatened to handcuff and beat him physically if he resisted. They then held him in detention for 90 minutes before he was released denying him at any time any outside contact or legal help.

The reason given by airport officials for his detention was the allegation that he was involved in an aborted coup in Venezuela - 14 years ago in 1992 in which Hugo Chavez as an army officer was involved. It was directed against then President Carlos Andres Perez who happened to be a personal friend of GHW Bush. Perez at the time was extremely unpopular. During his 1988 winning presidential campaign, he promised vitally needed reforms for his people. Then after taking office in 1989 he adopted the same destructive neoliberal policies as before in violation of everything he said he would do. In 1993 Perez was impeached and jailed on multi-million dollar corruption charges but later was given asylum in the US where he now lives in a luxurious Manhattan apartment in New York city. This kind of treatment is a common practice by many US administrations as a show of gratitude to former deposed friendly dictators and former criminals in their employ or in service to their interests. They're allowed to come to the US to enjoy a permanent home in luxury out of the reach of authorities at home that wish to prosecute them for their crimes.

The situation with Minister Maduro is now resolved as inadequate as it is to say that. The Venezuelan government, of course, demands a full apology for this inexcusable act of abuse and effrontery. So far the only statement of apology has come from a low-level US State Department spokesperson, and it was a mealy-mouthed one that may have been intended to continue the insult against the Minister, his government, and, of course, Hugo Chavez

above all others.

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