



PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN DAN BURTON FIFTH DISTRICT, INDIANA

2308 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

CONTACT: Clark G. Rehme TEL: (202) 225-2276

FOR RELEASE: September 11, 2008

CONGRESSMAN DAN BURTON ASKS CONGRESS NOT TO EXTEND TRADE PREFERENCES TO BOLIVIA

(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Dan Burton [R-IN-05] issued the following statement today asking his colleagues in the House of Representatives to refuse extending the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) exclusively to the county of Bolivia while continuing the ATPDEA program to the countries of Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. Burton said:

“In the past, I have been a firm proponent of long term extension of the trade preference package for Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. I have stated over and over that it is the people that we are helping with these preferences by creating jobs and creating profitable alternatives to illegal activities. However, I must say today that, due to the Bolivian President Evo Morales’ decision to declare the United States Ambassador to Bolivia, Philip Goldberg, persona non grata, I can no longer support the extension of trade preferences for Bolivia.

“Through its recent actions, the Government of Bolivia has shown its lack of desire to have a constructive relationship with the United States, and I can no longer support providing it with preferential treatment.

“In June of this year, a mob of 20,000 marched to the gates of our American Embassy in La Paz; the protestors threatened to burn the building down while police tried to maintain order. This event prompted the State Department to temporarily recall Ambassador Goldberg in protest. Bolivian President Morales was on record praising these demonstrators. Later that same month, USAID workers were expelled from the coca-growing Chapare region. That particular USAID program was developed to wean farmers off the crop from which cocaine is produced. Meanwhile, increased Bolivian drug cultivation is causing an escalation of drugs flowing into Brazil and Europe, and Brazil is now estimated to consume half of the drugs that transit through the country on the way to Europe.

“Unfortunately, due to the obscure chance that trade preferences will now be approved for Bolivia, President Morales has directly hampered the progress and success of his own people - it is the Bolivians who will regrettably suffer the most as the result of President Morales’ confrontational approach toward the United States.