

News from
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For Release: Friday, September 4, 2009

**STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN ELIOT ENGEL
CONDEMNING PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ'S RECENT ATTACK
ON ISRAEL**

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Eliot L. Engel, the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, condemned the recent attack by President Hugo Chavez on the state of Israel.

“I strongly condemn Hugo Chavez's latest attack on Israel. His remarks are as offensive as they are absurd.

President Chavez's rhetoric in the past has created a climate of government-inspired anti-Semitism in Venezuela. Such continued demonization of the state of Israel can only foster that climate.

I find it ironic that President Chavez could sit in Damascus, which houses the offices of Hamas and other terrorist groups, while condemning the state of Israel. If anything, it is Hugo Chavez who has allowed Iran and its extremists allies to have a foothold in South America. I remind President Chavez that the Iranian-backed Hezbollah has already carried out two deadly terrorist attacks in South America.

Finally, it's hard to understand President Chavez's confused logic of linking Colombia to Israel. Other than the fact that both are vibrant democracies and good friends of the United States, these are two very different countries in different situations. The only connection one might draw is that President Chavez opposes countries which are fighting terrorism. I hope that other leaders throughout the Western Hemisphere stand up at this time and demand that President Chavez stop the nonsense.”

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