

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
FR: Jill Kozeny, 202-224-1308
for U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
RE: the President's determinations regarding Bolivia and Ecuador
under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act
DA: Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Senator Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member of the Committee on Finance, with jurisdiction over international trade, made the following comment in response to the President's determinations regarding the eligibility of Bolivia and Ecuador under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA).

“The President made the right decision. Bolivia's benefits under the ATPDEA were suspended last year after the country was identified by the State Department as failing demonstrably to adhere to its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements. Since then, Bolivia hasn't taken the necessary steps to conform to those obligations. In fact, the Bolivians seem to have gone backwards. If in the future we do see positive action by the government of Bolivia to meet its counternarcotics commitments, I stand ready to work with the Administration to respond to such constructive engagement. But right now, that's not the case.

“With respect to Ecuador, I remain concerned about our bilateral relationship going forward. For example, Ecuador's Foreign Ministry formally notified the United States that our lease on the Eloy Alfaro Air Base would not be renewed when it expires later this year. Interdiction activities originating from this air base have been an important part of our cooperative counternarcotics efforts over the past 10 years. I'm looking for constructive engagement between our two governments over the next six months to ensure that there is no diminution in our cooperative counternarcotics efforts once the lease expires.

“The authorization for Andean trade preferences expires at the end of this year. I will examine the conformity of each of the remaining eligible beneficiary countries with all of the program's various eligibility criteria over the next six months as I evaluate the extent to which these preferences should remain in place. And, I'll make that evaluation in the context of my ongoing effort to undertake a comprehensive legislative overhaul of all our trade preference programs.”