

THE VENEZUELA BUST

It's bad enough that the United States, a country that has provided election funds for its favored candidates in other countries for over fifty years (including, notably, Argentina and Venezuela), is now criminalizing the purported \$800,000 donation from Hugo Chávez to Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina. It's bad enough that it stinks of yet another silly anti-Chávez campaign.

But the criminal complaint just doesn't make any sense.

Here's the Miami Herald's description of the purported crime.

Their mission from the Chávez government, prosecutors say: to hush up a local Venezuelan man who was caught in August with a suitcase full of campaign cash as he arrived at a Buenos Aires airport with a high-ranking Argentine official. They pressured him not to reveal the source of the cash or its recipient.

And here are excerpts from some of the conversations between the accused and Guido Alejandro Antonini Wilson, the guy caught carrying the \$800,000 in Argentina.

At that meeting, FRANKLIN DURAN revealed to Guido Alejandro Antonini Wilson the identity of the candidate in the Argentine Republic presidential campaign who was intended to receive the approximately \$800,000 which had been confiscated at Aeroparque Jorge Newberry in Buenos Aires, Argentina. FRANKLIN DURAN further advised Guido Alejandro Antonini Wilson that he (Duran) had spoken with a very high ranking official of DISIP, and a very high ranking official of the Justice Ministry of Venezuela, concerning the aborted

donation.

[snip]

FRANKLIN DURAN identified the individual who had taken the seized cash on board the aircraft as the assistant to the Chief Executive of PDVSA.

[snip]

MOISES MAIONICA spoke on the telephone with Guido Alejandro Antonini Wilson and advised Antonini that his (MAIONICA's) involvement in this matter began with a three way telephone call between the Office of the Vice President of Venezuela, DISIP and himself (MAIONICA) in which MAIONICA was given the mission.

[snip]

MOISES MAIONICA informed Guido Alejandro Anonini Wilson that a very high ranking official of DISIP, using the name "Arvelo," would be calling Atonini.

You see the problem? The **whole reason** these guys were purportedly threatening Antonini is that they didn't want him to tell anyone where the money came from and who was the intended recipient. So the **very first thing they told him** was ... wait for it ... where the money came from and who was the intended recipient. Which suggests that the accused believed that Antonini didn't know where the money came from and who was the intended recipient, yet in a conversation designed to make sure he didn't tell anyone where the money came from and who was the intended recipient, they proceeded to tell him where the money purportedly came from and who was the intended recipient.

All the while making sure they named increasingly senior members of Chávez's government.

Now perhaps these guys are the most colossally bad spooks in creation (after the US spooks who

left cell phone records of their extraordinary rendition of Abu Omar, perhaps), or this is an elaborate set-up that should be transparent to the FBI.