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**MACK: PRESIDENT OBAMA AGAIN SACRIFICES SECURITY IN FOREIGN  
POLICY FAILURE, CONCEDES TO CHAVEZ**

WASHINGTON – Congressman Connie Mack (FL-14), the Ranking Republican of the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, blasted the Obama Administration today over news that alleged drug kingpin, Walid Makled-Garcia, could avoid extradition from Colombia to the United States and instead be sent to Venezuela. Makled-Garcia, who was arrested in Colombia on U.S. charges on August 18, 2010 and is currently in custody there, was designated one of the world’s most significant drug kingpins under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act.

Mack said:

“Reports that drug kingpin Walid Makled-Garcia will likely escape justice are deeply troubling and represent the chronic failure of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. The unacceptable transfer of drug kingpin Makled-Garcia and his vital information to Venezuela instead of the United States would mark a devastating loss for the Drug Enforcement Administration, the combined fight against drug trafficking, and the security of the entire region.

“The Obama Administration has once again squandered important relationships in this hemisphere, and this latest news is just another example of an unfocused foreign policy. By refusing to take a harder line with Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, the Administration has allowed this dangerous *thugocrat* to gain a foothold in the region and influence his neighbors.”

According to the Justice Department, Makled-Garcia is one of the world’s most dangerous and prolific drug traffickers.

Makled-Garcia, who earned the designation of a “Significant Foreign Narcotics Trafficker” under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, is purportedly ready to talk to the United States and could give the U.S. invaluable information about Venezuela’s drug trafficking activities – something that will not happen if Chavez gets to him first.

From approximately 2006 through August 2010, Makled-Garcia operated and controlled airstrips located in Venezuela. He used them to facilitate the shipment of multi-ton quantities of cocaine from Venezuela to Central America and Mexico by numerous drug trafficking organizations, knowing a portion were destined for the United States. To secure the safe passage of these cocaine shipments, Makled-Garcia bribed Venezuelan officials with fees he extracted from the drug trafficking organizations.

Makled-Garcia, 41, is charged with one count of conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 60 years in prison.