
US Senator Marco Rubio Calls for More Sanctions on Venezuela

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The former presidential candidate took to the Senate floor Wednesday calling on Washington to impose more sanctions on Venezuela.

U.S. Senator and former Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio called on Washington to extend its sanctions on the Venezuelan government Wednesday.

President Barack Obama renewed sanctions against Venezuela last March, which refers to the South American state as "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

During his comments on Wednesday, the Florida senator stated, "there will be an effort here, I hope, in the next day or so, to extend those sanctions for another three years."

In efforts to impose additional sanctions, Rubio called on allies within the Organization of American States or OAS to support actions against Venezuela.

"The United States should ask our allies in the region, countries that receive an extensive amount of aid from this country—Haiti, Colombia, the Central American nations, our neighbors up north in Canada, among others—to support this effort," Rubio added.

According to a 2014 Congressional Research Service report, the United States is the organization's largest donor, contributing nearly US\$65.7 million in fiscal year 2013, which is equivalent to 41 percent of the total 2013 OAS budget.

"We have poured millions of dollars into Haiti's reconstruction. We should use that as leverage to ask them to

support something happening at the OAS," Rubio added.

Meanwhile, Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has repeatedly called for talks with the United States to improve relations.

Venezuela and the U.S. have had strained relations since Hugo Chavez became president in 1999, with Washington supporting the right-wing opposition that has tried multiple times to overthrow the socialist government and destabilize the country.
