

April 2, 2019

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry:

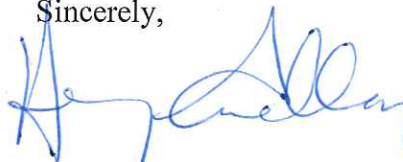
As you begin work on the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, I request that you please consider adding language to support Plan Latin America.

The United States has rightfully focused its attention on the near peer adversaries of China and Russia. However, the U.S. has been too focused on fighting this battle specifically in the European and Indo-Pacific regions. The lack of U.S. attention on the Latin America region has enabled China and Russia to take advantage in our absence. China and Russia are now investing in Latin America and creating partnerships with our neighboring countries. Russia is flying nuclear capable bombers out of Venezuela and within miles of the U.S. border. Multiple countries in the region are accepting Chinese funding for major infrastructure projects. Plan Latin America will place an increased strategic focus back on Latin America. The U.S. must remain vigilant in Latin America and help the region from succumbing to Chinese and Russian influences. Our adversaries are now in our backyard and if the U.S. is not careful, they will continue to make advancements in Latin America, creating the biggest threat to U.S. National Security.

Plan Latin America is not a means of militarizing the region and creating a forward military posture. Instead, the Plan is focused on creating partnerships in the region for training and exercise programs that will help ensure a U.S. presence in the region is sustained for years to come. The Plan will also focus on increased Foreign Military Financing to help strengthen those countries who cannot afford strong defense programs. The Plan will look to increase U.S. presence in the region through a multi-faceted approach between the Department of Defense, Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. It is time that we refocus our efforts in Latin America to advance our national security interests.

Thank you for your consideration. If you require further information, do not hesitate to contact me or Zack Linick, my Legislative Director, at [zack.linick@mail.house.gov](mailto:zack.linick@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-1640.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry Cuellar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "C".

Henry Cuellar, Ph.D.  
U.S. Congressman  
Texas, District 28