

## U.S. DETENTION OF VENEZUELAN AT J.F.K. AIRPORT RAISES TENSIONS

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CARACAS, [Venezuela](#), Sept. 24 — With political relations between the United States and Venezuela already very tense, the brief detention of the Venezuelan foreign minister over the weekend in New York worsened matters here on Sunday.

Demonstrators allied with President [Hugo Chávez](#) protested the treatment of Nicolás Maduro, the foreign minister, who was detained Saturday for about an hour at Kennedy International Airport while trying to fly home after the [United Nations General Assembly](#) meeting in New York last week.

Ismael García, secretary general of the pro-government party Podemos, told the local news media that if Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#) had been subjected to 20 percent of what Mr. Maduro went through, Venezuela would be under siege by the United States Marines. Even political opponents of Mr. Chávez criticized the detention of Mr. Maduro, which drew a rare apology from the State Department.

A woman who answered a call to the Venezuelan Mission to the United Nations in New York on Sunday said that Mr. Maduro had not yet left the United States. She declined to say more, or to identify herself, because she said she was not authorized to discuss the matter. She provided the name of a spokeswoman for Mr. Maduro, who did not return telephone requests for comment.

Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesman for Secretary General [Kofi Annan](#), said: “We have received from the Venezuelans a serious complaint. Our legal affairs office is now in touch with the U.S. authorities and the Venezuelan authorities to try to establish the facts of the case.” A United Nations official who said he was not authorized to discuss the incident for attribution said the organization had received a report that Mr. Maduro had first come to the authorities’ attention because he had arrived at the airport less than an hour before the flight and had purchased his ticket with cash.