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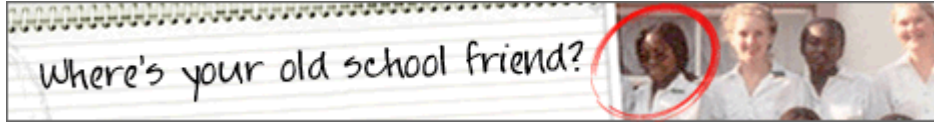
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2 5 8 27 39 43 45

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'US planning invasion'

17/09/2005 18:08 - (SA)

Washington - Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said he has documentary evidence that the United States plans to invade his country.

Chavez, interviewed on Friday on ABC television's *Nightline*, said the plan is called "Balboa" and involves aircraft carriers and planes. A transcript of the interview was made available by *Nightline*.

He said US soldiers recently went to Curacao, an island off Venezuela's northwest coast. He described as a "lie" the official US explanation that they visited Curacao for rest and recreation.

"They were doing movements. They were doing manoeuvres," Chavez said, speaking through a translator.

He added: "We are coming up with the counter-Balboa plan. That is to say if the government of the United States attempts to commit the foolhardy enterprise of attacking us, it would be embarked on a 100-year war. We are prepared."

Chavez has been attending the summit of world leaders at the United Nations in New York this week. On Thursday, he denounced the US-led war in Iraq and told other leaders they should consider moving the UN headquarters out of the United States.

To prove US intentions to invade Venezuela, Chavez offered to send *Nightline* host Ted Koppel maps and other documentation.

"What I can't tell you is how we got it, to protect the sources, how we got it through military intelligence," he said.

In the event of a US invasion, Chavez said the United States can "just forget" about receiving any more oil from his country.

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