

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

Nos. 18-2797 & 18-3124

CRYSTALLEX INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATION

v.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA;
PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA, S.A.

No. 18-2889

In re: PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA, S.A.,

[Filed: July 29, 2019]

Before: AMBRO, GREENAWAY, JR., and SCIRICA,
Circuit Judges

OPINION OF THE COURT

AMBRO, Circuit Judge

Crystalex International Corp., a Canadian gold mining company, invested hundreds of millions of dollars to develop gold deposits in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In 2011, Venezuela expropriated those deposits and transferred them to its state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (“PDVSA”). To seek redress, Crystalex invoked a bilateral investment treaty between Canada and Venezuela to file for arbitration before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. The arbitration took place in Washington, D.C., and Crystalex won; the arbitration panel awarded it \$1.2 billion plus interest for Venezuela’s expropriation of its investment. The United States

District Court for the District of Columbia confirmed that award and issued a \$1.4 billion federal judgment. Now Crystalex is trying to collect.

Unable to identify Venezuelan-held commercial assets in the United States that it can lawfully seize, Crystalex went after U.S.-based assets of PDVSA. Specifically, it sought to attach PDVSA's shares in Petróleos de Venezuela Holding, Inc. ("PDVH"), its wholly owned U.S. subsidiary. PDVH is the holding company for CITGO Holding, Inc., which in turn owns CITGO Petroleum Corp. ("CITGO"), a Delaware Corporation headquartered in Texas (though best known for the CITGO sign outside Fenway Park in Boston).

This attachment suit is governed by the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act of 1976, 28 U.S.C. §§ 1602–1611 (the "Sovereign Immunities Act"). Under federal common law first recognized by the Supreme Court in *First National City Bank v. Banco Para El Comercio Exterior de Cuba* ("Bancec"), 462 U.S. 611, 103 S.Ct. 2591, 77 L.Ed.2d 46 (1983), a judgment creditor of a foreign sovereign may look to the sovereign's instrumentality for satisfaction when it is "so extensively controlled by its owner that a relationship of principal and agent is created." *Id.* at 629, 103 S.Ct. 2591.

Interpreting *Bancec*, the District Court, per Chief Judge Stark, concluded that Venezuela's control over PDVSA was sufficient to allow Crystalex to attach PDVSA's shares of PDVH in satisfaction of its judgment against the country. PDVSA and Venezuela, along with PDVSA's third-party bondholders as *amici* (the "Bondholders"), challenge this ruling.

Venezuela and the Bondholders do not substantially contest the District Court’s finding that it extensively controlled PDVSA. Rather, they raise various jurisdictional and equitable objections to the attachment. Likewise, PDVSA primarily contends that its tangential role in the dispute precludes execution against its assets under *Bancec* irrespective of the control Venezuela exerts over it.

We affirm the District Court’s order granting the writ of attachment and remand for further proceedings consistent with this opinion.¹

I. Background

A. Factual background

In 2002, Crystalllex contracted with Corporación Venezolana de Guayanaan, an organ of the Venezuelan government, for the right to develop and extract exclusively for 20 years the gold deposits at Las Cristinas, Venezuela. *See Crystalllex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* (“D.C. Crystalllex I”), 244 F. Supp. 3d 100, 105–06 (D.D.C. 2017). The deposits are among the world’s largest. Per the contract, Crystalllex spent hundreds of millions of dollars developing the Las Cristinas site. *Id.* at 106. It also performed various other obligations under the contract. *Id.*

In 2011, Venezuela nationalized its gold mines and seized the Las Cristinas works without providing compensation. As Crystalllex asserts and PDVSA does not dispute, Venezuela then gave the mining rights at Las Cristinas to PDVSA for no consideration, and

¹ We also deny PDVSA’s petition for a writ of mandamus and dismiss as moot its second appeal.

PDVSA subsequently “sold to the Venezuelan Central Bank 40% of its shares in the affiliate that was created to exercise those mining rights.” J.A. 1194.

Later that year, Crystalex filed for arbitration under a bilateral investment treaty between Canada and Venezuela before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. As noted earlier, the arbitration took place in Washington, D.C., and Crystalex won an arbitration award of \$1.2 billion plus interest.

Crystalex had its award. Now it had to collect.

B. Crystalex’s collection efforts

1. Confirmation proceedings in the District of Columbia

Crystalex filed an action to confirm its award in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. It properly served Venezuela, who appeared to defend it. The Court confirmed the award and entered a federal judgment in favor of Crystalex. *D.C. Crystalex I*, 244 F. Supp. 3d at 122–23. After Venezuela failed to satisfy the judgment within 30 days, the Court ruled that Crystalex could execute on it. *Crystalex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, No. CV 16-0661 (RC), 2017 WL 6349729, at *1 (D.D.C. June 9, 2017). However, the Court expressly declined to address whether Crystalex could attach assets held by PDVSA and its subsidiaries. *Id.* at *2. Venezuela appealed the ruling, and the D.C. Circuit affirmed it. *Crystalex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, 760 Fed.Appx. 1, 2–3 (D.C. Cir. 2019).

2. Delaware Uniform Fraudulent Transfer Act proceedings

While arbitration was pending and then after the award was announced, Crystalex brought suits against CITGO, CITGO Holding, PDVH, and PDVSA in the Delaware District Court. *See Crystalex Int'l Corp. v. PDV Holding, Inc.* (1:15-CV-1082); *Crystalex Int'l Corp. v. PDV Holding, Inc.* (1:16-CV-1007). It claimed that Venezuela refused to pay its arbitration award and “thwart[ed] enforcement” by transferring its assets among several entities—PDVSA, PDVH, and CITGO—allegedly in violation of the Delaware Uniform Fraudulent Transfer Act, 6 Del. C. §§ 1301–11. *Crystalex Int'l Corp. v. Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.*, 879 F.3d 79, 82 (3d Cir. 2018). The Court denied PDVH’s motion to dismiss, but we reversed and held that a transfer from a non-debtor could not be a “fraudulent transfer” under the Act. *Id.* at 81 (“While we do not condone the debtor’s and the transferor’s actions, we must conclude that Crystalex has failed to state a claim under [the Act].”). That panel noted explicitly but reserved judgment on the question now before us—whether PDVSA could be liable for the arbitration award as an “alter ego” of Venezuela. *Id.* at 84 n.7.

3. Proceedings in this appeal

While the award-confirmation appeal was pending in the D.C. Circuit, Crystalex followed up its judgment by filing an attachment action against Venezuela in the Delaware District Court. Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 69(a), Crystalex attempted to attach PDVH shares owned by PDVSA. That rule provides: “A money judgment is enforced by a writ of execution, unless the court directs

otherwise. The procedure on execution—and in proceedings supplementary to and in aid of judgment or execution—must accord with the procedure of the state where the court is located,” here Delaware, “but a federal statute governs to the extent it applies.” Delaware law permits a judgment creditor to obtain a writ of attachment (known by its Latin name, *fieri facias*, or simply *fi. fa.*) over various forms of property belonging to the debtor, including its shares in a Delaware corporation. *See* 10 Del. C. § 5031; 8 Del. C. § 324(a).

Though not named in the attachment proceeding, PDVSA intervened in the District Court. It moved to dismiss the proceeding on the ground of sovereign immunity under the Sovereign Immunities Act.

After several rounds of briefing and hearings, the District Court concluded that PDVSA was Venezuela’s “alter ego” under *Bancec. Crystalex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* (“*Del. Crystalex*”), 333 F. Supp. 3d 380, 414 (D. Del. 2018). The Court held (1) it had jurisdiction to order attachment against PDVSA’s U.S.-based commercial assets, and (2) Crystalex could attach PDVSA’s shares of PDVH to satisfy the judgment against Venezuela. A follow-up order, dated August 23, 2018, directed the Clerk to issue the writ and have it served in furtherance of an execution through a public sale of PDVH stock. PDVSA appealed both of these orders (docketed in our Court as Nos. 18-2797 & 18-3124), and also filed a petition for a writ of mandamus (No. 18-2889) to prevent completion of the sale during this appeal. We consolidated all three appeals for oral argument and resolution.

While they were pending before us, Venezuela

moved to intervene and to stay these appeals for 120 days so that it could further evaluate its legal position. By order dated March 20, 2019, we granted Venezuela’s motion to intervene and participate in oral argument. We also permitted it to file supplemental briefing. We did not rule on its motion to stay but stated we would consider that motion at oral argument. At that argument, Venezuela chose to forgo further pursuit of a stay. Oral Arg. Tr. at 180:1–7 (Apr. 15, 2019).

C. Relationship between Venezuela and PDVSA

The District Court’s primary ruling was that PDVSA is Venezuela’s “alter ego” under *Bancec*. Numerous facts are relevant to that determination, as discussed in more detail below. In general, it is undisputed the relationship between PDVSA and Venezuela has tightened significantly since 2002, when then-President Hugo Chávez fired roughly 40% of the PDVSA workforce for protesting increased Venezuelan control over the company. Since then PDVSA’s presidents have generally been senior members of the Venezuelan president’s cabinet, including members of the Venezuelan military. Venezuela has also passed various laws that require PDVSA to fund both government initiatives and discretionary government funds. Venezuela controls PDVSA’s domestic oil production, sales, and pricing. It also requires that PDVSA supply Venezuela and its strategic allies with oil at below-market rates.

D. The Bondholders’ interests

Also relevant to this appeal are the various bonds that PDVSA has issued over the past decade or so. Several holders of PDVSA bonds due to mature in

2020 moved to intervene as *amici* in this appeal. They include BlackRock Financial Management, Inc. and Contrarian Capital Management, LLC. Their bonds have an outstanding face value of approximately \$1.684 billion and are secured by a 50.1% collateral interest in PDVH’s shares of Citgo Holding, Inc. as security for the bonds. According to the Bondholders, PDVSA has also issued roughly \$25 billion in bonds to U.S. and non-U.S. capital markets investors.

E. U.S. policy towards Venezuela and PDVSA

President Nicolas Maduro became the President of Venezuela in 2013. This year Juan Guaidó, Venezuelan’s opposition leader and president of the National Assembly, has made efforts to oust Maduro and take control of the Venezuelan government. The United States Government recognized Guaidó as the rightful leader of Venezuela on January 23, 2019.²

Five days later, as part of a broader effort to convince the Maduro regime to cede power, the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury (“OFAC”) imposed new sanctions against PDVSA by adding it to the List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons. As discussed further below, the U.S. Government has

² As a practical matter, there is reason to believe that Guaidó’s regime does not have meaningful control over Venezuela or its principal instrumentalities such as PDVSA. Nonetheless, under *Guaranty Trust Co. v. United States*, 304 U.S. 126, 138, 58 S.Ct. 785, 82 L.Ed. 1224 (1938), we recognize Guaidó’s regime as authorized to speak and act on behalf of Venezuela in these appeals.

also promulgated several executive orders limiting transfer of Venezuelan or PDVSA-controlled assets in the United States.

II. Jurisdiction and standard of review

The parties dispute whether the District Court had jurisdiction to attach PDVSA’s property to satisfy the judgment against Venezuela. The Court held that it had both ancillary jurisdiction to enforce the judgment and an independent basis for jurisdiction per 28 U.S.C. § 1330 and 28 U.S.C. § 1605(a)(6) because PDVSA was Venezuela’s alter ego. Section 1330 grants federal-court jurisdiction over “any nonjury civil action” against a foreign sovereign, so long as the sovereign is properly served under 28 U.S.C. § 1608 and is not entitled to sovereign immunity. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1330(a)–(b). Under 28 U.S.C. § 1604, foreign sovereigns and their instrumentalities are entitled to sovereign immunity in U.S. courts except as provided in 28 U.S.C. §§ 1605–1607. Section 1605(a)(6), the immunity exception applied by the District Court in this case, provides an exception to immunity for actions seeking to compel arbitration pursuant to an agreement or to enforce arbitration awards that meet certain criteria.

We have jurisdiction to review the District Court’s denial of PDVSA’s motion to dismiss as an immune sovereign and the grant of Crystalex’s motion for a writ of attachment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 69. We have jurisdiction to review the former under the collateral order doctrine. *See Fed. Ins. Co. v. Richard I. Rubin & Co.*, 12 F.3d 1270,

1279–82 (3d Cir. 1993).³ Our jurisdiction exists for the latter because it amounted to a final judgment under 28 U.S.C. § 1291 by leaving the District Court “nothing left to do but execute[.]” *Bryan v. Erie Cnty. Office of Children and Youth*, 752 F.3d 316, 321 (3d Cir. 2014).

We review questions of law *de novo* and findings of fact for clear error, and we review *de novo* the ultimate determination whether to treat PDVSA as Venezuela’s alter ego. *See Clientron Corp. v. Devon IT, Inc.*, 894 F.3d 568, 575 (3d Cir. 2018).

III. Analysis

The parties raise a host of issues. We group them into three core inquiries: (A) whether the *Bancec* “alter ego” doctrine determines the District Court’s jurisdiction to attach PDVSA’s assets (it does), (B) the scope of the *Bancec* inquiry and whether its factors are satisfied here (they are), and (C) whether PDVSA’s shares of PDVH are immune from attachment under the Sovereign Immunities Act (they are not).

³ The collateral order doctrine allows us to exercise jurisdiction over interlocutory appeals, such as this one, when the order “conclusively determines the disputed question, resolves an important issue completely separate from the merits of the action, and is effectively unreviewable on appeal from a final judgment.” *Fed. Ins. Co.*, 12 F.3d at 1279–80 (brackets and internal quotation marks omitted); *see also Cohen v. Beneficial Industrial Loan Corp.*, 337 U.S. 541, 545–47, 69 S.Ct. 1221, 93 L.Ed. 1528 (1949) (articulating the doctrine).

A. *Bancec* controls the jurisdictional inquiry here.

1. The District Court had jurisdiction over Venezuela.

As noted, Crystalex confirmed its arbitration award against Venezuela in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, which yielded a federal judgment. It then registered that judgment for enforcement in the Delaware District Court under 28 U.S.C. § 1963. That section provides that a judgment so registered “shall have the same effect as a judgment of the district court of the district where registered and may be enforced in like manner.” *Id.* After registering the judgment, Crystalex moved to enforce it by attaching assets under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 69(a).

As a threshold question, we consider whether the District Court in Delaware had jurisdiction over Venezuela, the only party named as a defendant here. It is undisputed that the D.C. District Court had jurisdiction over Venezuela under the Sovereign Immunity Act’s arbitration exception, 28 U.S.C. § 1605(a)(6). It is well established that federal courts have ancillary jurisdiction to enforce their judgments. *See IFC Interconsult, AG v. Safeguard Int’l Partners, LLC*, 438 F.3d 298, 311 (3d Cir. 2006). That jurisdiction applies to “a broad range of supplementary proceedings involving third parties to assist in the protection and enforcement of federal judgments—including attachment ... [and] garnishment.” *Peacock v. Thomas*, 516 U.S. 349, 356, 359 & n.7, 116 S.Ct. 862, 133 L.Ed.2d 817 (1996). Furthermore, ancillary enforcement jurisdiction—or its functional equivalent—has been routinely applied

to post-judgment enforcement proceedings against a foreign sovereign. *See First City, Texas Houston, N.A. v. Rafidain Bank*, 281 F.3d 48, 53–54 (2d Cir. 2002); *Peterson v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 627 F.3d 1117, 1123 (9th Cir. 2010); *Transaero, Inc. v. La Fuerza Aerea Boliviana*, 30 F.3d 148, 150 (D.C. Cir. 1994). In other words, when a party establishes that an exception to sovereign immunity applies in a merits action that results in a federal judgment—here, the exception for confirming arbitration awards, 28 U.S.C. § 1605(a)(6)—that party does not need to establish yet another exception when it registers the judgment in another district court under 28 U.S.C. § 1963 and seeks enforcement in that court. Rather, the exception in the merits action “sustain[s] the court’s jurisdiction through proceedings to aid collection of a money judgment rendered in the case” *First City*, 281 F.3d at 53–54.

According to Venezuela, we should forbid Crystalex from using the § 1963 procedure in this case, as that procedure for registering a judgment cannot be applied to a foreign sovereign at all because it is “preempted by [the Sovereign Immunities Act].” (Venezuela Br. at 9–16.)⁴ Venezuela presents this position as a two-pronged jurisdictional argument. First, it contends that § 1963 does not confer personal jurisdiction over it because the only method for establishing jurisdiction is by making proper service under the Sovereign Immunities Act’s service provisions, 28 U.S.C. § 1608. (Venezuela Br. at 9–12.) We disagree: § 1608 applies only to the “summons

⁴ We note that, as a doctrinal matter, “preemption” generally refers to the effect of a federal statute on state law rather than on other federal statutes.

and complaint,” *id.*, whereas “[s]ervice of post-judgment motions is not required.” *Peterson*, 627 F.3d at 1130.

Second, Venezuela asserts that § 1963 does not create subject matter jurisdiction over foreign sovereigns and cannot be used to “piggyback” on the subject-matter jurisdiction of the court that rendered the judgment being enforced. (Venezuela Br. at 12–16.) Regardless whether § 1963 separately confers subject-matter jurisdiction over foreign sovereigns, a district court has jurisdiction to enforce a federal judgment against a foreign sovereign when it is registered under § 1963. This is so, as noted, because the jurisdictional basis from the action resulting in the judgment carries over to the post-judgment enforcement proceeding in a manner akin to the ordinary operation of a district court’s enforcement jurisdiction over post-judgment proceedings. *See First City*, 281 F.3d at 53–54; *Peterson*, 627 F.3d at 1123; *Transaero*, 30 F.3d at 150.

A recent decision by the Supreme Court reinforces our rejection of Venezuela’s novel § 1963 argument. *See Republic of Sudan v. Harrison*, — U.S. —, 139 S. Ct. 1048, 1054, 203 L.Ed.2d 433 (2019). It involved a § 1963 proceeding against the instrumentalities of a foreign sovereign—the same procedural posture we have here. The Court resolved that case on a ground not relevant here, but, notably, it expressed no concern about the use of a § 1963 proceeding against a foreign sovereign. If Venezuela’s view of § 1963 were correct, *Harrison* would

presumably have said so.⁵

In short, before the Delaware District Court and us is a continuation of the action in the D.C. District Court. As the latter had jurisdiction over Venezuela—by virtue of the Sovereign Immunities Act’s arbitration exception, 28 U.S.C. § 1605(a)(6)—both Courts that follow, the Delaware District Court and our Court, also have jurisdiction.

2. The District Court properly used *Bancec* to extend its jurisdiction to assets held nominally by PDVSA.

Taking a different tack, PDVSA concedes the District Court had jurisdiction over Venezuela but believes that *Bancec* cannot be used to extend that jurisdiction to reach the assets of PDVSA, a non-party to the merits action. We part company again.

To reach this conclusion, we first consider our decision in *Federal Insurance*, 12 F.3d at 1287. There we joined other circuits in holding that, although the *Bancec* doctrine came in a case involving the shifting of substantive liability, it also applied to extend a district court’s jurisdiction over a foreign sovereign to reach an extensively controlled instrumentality. *See id.* (collecting cases). On a straightforward application of *Federal Insurance*, the District Court’s jurisdiction over Venezuela would extend to PDVSA so long as it is Venezuela’s alter ego under *Bancec*. *See De Letelier v. Republic of Chile*, 748 F.2d 790, 795 (2d Cir. 1984) (applying *Bancec* in post-judgment

⁵ Indeed, Justice Thomas would have affirmed the Second Circuit’s exercise of jurisdiction—implicitly concluding there was no § 1963 jurisdictional problem. *Id.* at 1066 (Thomas, J., dissenting).

enforcement proceeding); *Alejandre v. Telefonica Larga Distancia de Puerto Rico, Inc.*, 183 F.3d 1277, 1288 (11th Cir. 1999) (same).

That potential application of *Federal Insurance* deserves a closer look. The decision was in the context of a merits action—it did not address the post-judgment enforcement setting we have here. 12 F.3d at 1287. According to PDVSA, that distinction makes all the difference. It claims that a district court cannot exercise post-judgment enforcement jurisdiction over a party other than the judgment debtor based on a theory of “alter ego” or “veil piercing”⁶ unless it has an “independent basis” for jurisdiction over the third party. (PDVSA Br. at 24–27.) For that proposition, PDVSA cites *Peacock*, 516 U.S. at 357, 116 S.Ct. 862, in which a plaintiff who had obtained a federal judgment against his employer under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (“ERISA”) filed a new action in a federal court against a shareholder of the employer seeking to hold him liable by “piercing the corporate veil.” *Id.* at 353, 116 S.Ct. 862. The Court ruled that action was not within the district court’s ancillary enforcement jurisdiction because it does not extend to “a subsequent lawsuit to impose an obligation to pay an existing federal judgment on a person not already liable for that judgment.” *Id.* at 357, 116 S.Ct. 862.

According to PDVSA, *Peacock* precludes the District Court from exercising ancillary enforcement

⁶ These terms in legal context mean that if an entity’s separate form (typically as a subsidiary corporation) is so disregarded by the one who controls it (the “parent”), the “corporate veil” can be “pierced,” that is, separateness is ignored.

jurisdiction over this action because it seeks to “shift liability for payment of an existing judgment to a third party that is not otherwise liable on the judgment.” (PDVSA Br. at 24 (citing *Peacock*).) That reading of *Peacock* misfires. It was not a case involving foreign sovereigns or the Sovereign Immunities Act. The Act is a specialized jurisdictional statute designed to address a specific problem—the extent to which foreign sovereigns and their instrumentalities are immune from suit and attachment in our courts. And the *Bancec* doctrine—the applicability of which is the core question here—is a federal common-law outgrowth of that specialized statute. It (the doctrine) exists specifically to enable federal courts, in certain circumstances, to disregard the corporate separateness of foreign sovereigns to avoid the unfair results from a rote application of the immunity provisions provided by the Sovereign Immunities Act. Nothing in *Peacock* leads us to believe the Supreme Court expected or intended its decision in that case to restrain the application of *Bancec* in post-judgment proceedings.

Moreover, in *Rubin v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, — U.S. —, 138 S. Ct. 816, 823, — L.Ed.2d — (2018), the Supreme Court all but confirmed that *Bancec* can indeed be used to reach the assets of a foreign sovereign’s extensively controlled instrumentality through post-judgment attachment proceedings. The Court examined 28 U.S.C. § 1610(g), a provision of the Sovereign Immunities Act related to attachments of assets held by agencies and instrumentalities of states that have sponsored terrorism. *Id.* It observed that § 1610(g)(1), which was added to the Sovereign Immunities Act by congressional amendment in 2008, “incorporate[s] almost verbatim the five *Bancec*

factors [they are noted below], leaving no dispute that, at a minimum, § 1610(g) serves to abrogate *Bancec* with respect to the liability of agencies and instrumentalities of a foreign state where a [terrorism-related-judgment] holder seeks to satisfy a judgment held against the foreign state.” *Id.* We take from this the implication that in *ordinary* FSIA attachment proceedings—*i.e.*, those that do not involve judgments based on state-sponsored terrorism—the judgment holder may reach the assets of the foreign judgment debtor by satisfying the *Bancec* factors. *See id.* Indeed, the Court expressly stated that, where 28 U.S.C. § 1610(g) does not apply, a plaintiff with a judgment against the sovereign would need to satisfy the *Bancec* factors if it sought, for example, “to collect against assets located in the United States of a *state-owned telecommunications company*.” *Id.* at 23–24 (citing *Alejandre*, 183 F.3d 1277) (emphasis added).

These analyses confirm the relevance of *Bancec* here: so long as PDVSA is Venezuela’s alter ego under *Bancec*, the District Court had the power to issue a writ of attachment on that entity’s non-immune assets to satisfy the judgment against the country. *See Hercaire Int’l, Inc. v. Argentina*, 821 F.2d 559, 563–65 (11th Cir. 1987) (looking to the Sovereign Immunities Act and *Bancec* to determine “whether the assets of a foreign state’s wholly-owned national airline are subject to execution to satisfy a judgment obtained against the foreign state, where the airline was neither a party to the litigation nor was in any way connected with the underlying transaction giving rise to the suit”); *Arriba Ltd. v. Petroleos Mexicanos*, 962 F.2d 528, 532–38 (5th Cir. 1992) (doing the same to determine whether the district court had

jurisdiction to conduct a garnishment proceeding against a foreign instrumentality, where the purported basis for jurisdiction was solely the actions of the instrumentality's agents).

B. Whether Venezuela is PDVSA's alter ego under *Bancec*

“Due respect for the actions taken by foreign sovereigns and for principles of comity between nations” caused the Supreme Court to conclude in *Bancec* that “government instrumentalities established as juridical entities distinct and independent from their sovereign should normally be treated as such.” 462 U.S. at 626–27, 103 S.Ct. 2591. Recognizing the respect due to foreign sovereigns, the Court adopted a “presumption of independent status” for instrumentalities. *Id.* at 627, 103 S.Ct. 2591. PDVSA, as an instrumentality of Venezuela separately formed in 1976, is accorded that presumption. It is not to be taken lightly, as the District Court noted. *Del. Crystalllex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 396 (D. Del. 2018) (citing *Arch Trading Corp. v. Republic of Ecuador*, 839 F.3d 193, 201 (2d Cir. 2016)); *see also De Letelier*, 748 F.2d at 795 (“[B]oth *Bancec* and the [Sovereign Immunities Act’s] legislative history caution against too easily overcoming the presumption of separateness.”).

1. Extensive control standard under *Bancec*

In *Bancec* the Supreme Court allowed a U.S. bank to recover assets from a Cuban instrumentality to satisfy a debt owed by the Republic of Cuba. *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 613, 103 S.Ct. 2591. It held that while there exists a strong presumption that government instrumentalities have a separate legal identity

(along with limited liability) from their “parent” governments, this presumption can be overcome in certain situations—for example, “where a corporate entity is so extensively controlled by its owner that a relationship of principal and agent is created, we have held that one may be held liable for the actions of the other.” *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 629, 103 S.Ct. 2591 (citing *NLRB v. Deena Artware, Inc.*, 361 U.S. 398, 402–404, 80 S.Ct. 441, 4 L.Ed.2d 400 (1960)). “In addition,” it recognized “the broader equitable principle that the doctrine of corporate entity, recognized generally and for most purposes, will not be regarded when to do so would work fraud or injustice.” *Id.* (quoting *Taylor v. Standard Gas Co.*, 306 U.S. 307, 322, 306 U.S. 618, 322, 59 S.Ct. 543, 83 L.Ed. 669 (1939)). Thus we recognize *Bancec* establishes a disjunctive test for when the separate identities of sovereign and instrumentality should be disregarded: when there is “extensive[] control,” and when not disregarding separate identities would work a “fraud or injustice.” *Rubin*, 138 S. Ct. at 823.

Bancec did not develop a “mechanical formula” for determining when these exceptions should apply, however, which left “lower courts with the task of assessing the availability of exceptions on a case-by-case basis.” *Rubin*, 138 S. Ct. at 823. In ensuing decades district and circuit courts applied the *Bancec* extensive-control test in various contexts. Several multi-factor tests emerged in that period—the Second Circuit, for example, had a non-exhaustive five-factor test, *see EM Ltd. v. Banco Cent. De La Republica Argentina*, 800 F.3d 78, 91 (2d Cir. 2015), which the District Court applied here.⁷ By and large the multi-

⁷ These factors include:

factor tests for extensive control percolating through the federal courts covered similar ground, *see, e.g.*, *Walter Fuller Aircraft Sales, Inc. v. Republic of Philippines*, 965 F.2d 1375, 1380 n.7, 1381 (5th Cir. 1992) (identifying five extensive-control factors), though at least one court has piled on the factors, *see Bridas S.A.P.I.C. v. Gov't of Turkmenistan*, 447 F.3d 411, 418 (5th Cir. 2006) (recognizing 21 factors relevant to extensive control);

In *Rubin*, the Supreme Court recently provided a further gloss on the *Bancec* factors, which we believe clarifies the analysis of the extensive-control prong here. The plaintiffs there held a § 1605A-judgment against the Islamic Republic of Iran and attempted to attach and execute against certain Iranian artifacts on loan to the University of Chicago. *Rubin*, 138 S. Ct. at 820. In the course of addressing whether that attachment was proper (it was not), the Court identified five “*Bancec* factors” to aid circuit courts in their analysis:

- (1) the level of economic control by the government;
- (2) whether the entity’s profits go to the government;

whether the sovereign nation: (1) uses the instrumentality’s property as its own; (2) ignores the instrumentality’s separate status or ordinary corporate formalities; (3) deprives the instrumentality of the independence from close political control that is generally enjoyed by government agencies; (4) requires the instrumentality to obtain approvals for ordinary business decisions from a political actor; and (5) issues policies or directives that cause the instrumentality to act directly on behalf of the sovereign state.

EM Ltd., 800 F.3d at 91; *Del. Crystallex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 401.

- (3) the degree to which government officials manage the entity or otherwise have a hand in its daily affairs;
- (4) whether the government is the real beneficiary of the entity's conduct; and
- (5) whether adherence to separate identities would entitle the foreign state to benefits in United States courts while avoiding its obligations.

Id. at 823 (quoting *Walter Fuller Aircraft Sales, Inc.*, 965 F.2d at 1380 n.7). We use these factors identified in *Rubin* to structure our analysis here. At the same time, we recognize that they, like the other extensive control tests our sister circuits have adopted,⁸ are meant to aid case-by-case analysis rather than establish a “mechanical formula” for identifying extensive control. *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 633, 103 S.Ct. 2591.

2. *Bancec's scope*

PDVSA and the Bondholders raise together six challenges to the District Court's inquiry under *Bancec*: that (i) a sovereign's extensive control, alone, cannot allow courts to ignore the separateness of a corporation from the country it is in, (ii) Crystalex

⁸ We follow Crystalex's suggestion to apply the *Rubin* factors, and neither Venezuela nor PDVSA indicates a preference between them and those the District Court applied. Either inquiry compels the same result. *See generally Del. Crystalex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 406–14. But an unresolved point of ambiguity remains: whether the *Rubin* factors apply only to the extensive-control inquiry (as in *Walter Fuller*) or to both disjunctive tests. The parties do not address this issue, and so we leave it for a future panel.

must show PDVSA acted as Venezuela’s agent against Crystalex, (iii) we must consider the third-party interests of PDVSA’s bondholders, (iv) extensive control must be shown by clear and convincing evidence, (v) the *Bancec* inquiry must be examined in light of current circumstances, particularly the limited control of the Guaidó regime over PDVSA; and (vi) *Bancec* requires that courts also balance equities when they consider whether to discard an instrumentality’s presumption of separateness. We address each argument in turn.

i. Bancec’s extensive control prong does not require a nexus between the plaintiff’s injury and the instrumentality.

PDVSA contends that there must be some connection between the sovereign’s abuse of its instrumentality’s corporate form and the plaintiff’s injury. Indeed PDVSA declined our numerous invitations at oral argument to argue that any of the extensive control factors cut against Crystalex’s position. It reiterated its position that each is irrelevant here because Crystalex also needed to show that PDVSA did something to cause the plaintiff’s injury. Oral Arg. Tr. at 97:22–104:12 (Apr. 15, 2019). We differ.

First, though *Bancec* involved the “fraud or injustice” prong rather than the “extensive control” prong, no nexus existed between the dominated instrumentality and the plaintiff’s injury. Cuba had established in 1960 Banco Para El Comercio Exterior de Cuba (*Bancec*), “[a]n official autonomous credit institution for foreign trade ... with full juridical capacity ... of its own” *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 613, 103

S.Ct. 2591. Bancec was a creditor of Citibank and sued the bank to collect on a letter of credit. Days later, the Cuban government seized all of Citibank's Cuba-based assets. *Id.* It also dissolved Bancec after that proceeding began, and the remainder of its case was handled by the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Trade. *Id.* at 615, 103 S.Ct. 2591. Despite no link between Bancec and Cuba's seizure of Citibank's assets, the Supreme Court held Citibank could offset its debt to Bancec with the value of the expropriated assets. "Giving effect to Bancec's separate juridical status in these circumstances" would cause an injustice. *Id.* at 632, 103 S.Ct. 2591. In recounting the case's history, the Court also expressly noted that the Second Circuit, from where the case came, had applied a nexus requirement and then did not adopt one itself. *See id.* at 619, 103 S.Ct. 2591 (quoting the Second Circuit as saying the presumption of separate identities may be overcome only "when the subject matter of the counterclaim assertible against the state is state conduct in which the instrumentality had a key role").

Like *Bancec*, not a single factor recognized in *Rubin* suggests any link between the dominated instrumentality and the injury to the plaintiff. The *Rubin* Court's brief discussion of the hypothetical plaintiff seeking to collect against "the assets located in the United States of a state-owned telecommunications company," and citation to *Alejandre* (which in turn involved no connection between the telecommunications agency and the plaintiff's injury), likewise suggest no tying requirement. *Rubin*, 138 S. Ct. at 824. Similarly, the vast majority of circuits have required no link between the abuse of the corporate form and the

plaintiff's injury under the first *Bancec* path for veil-piercing. *See, e.g., EM Ltd. v. Republic of Argentina*, 473 F.3d 463, 478 (2d Cir. 2007); *Flatow v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 308 F.3d 1065, 1071–73 (9th Cir. 2002); *Transamerica Leasing, Inc. v. La Republica de Venezuela*, 200 F.3d 843, 848 (D.C. Cir. 2000); *Hercaire Int'l, Inc. v. Argentina*, 821 F.2d 559, 565 (11th Cir. 1987).⁹

Second, as Crystalex observes, requiring an independent nexus requirement would likely read the *Bancec* extensive-control test out of the doctrine. When pressed at oral argument to identify the circumstances where *Bancec* could be applied, PDVSA offered two: under *Bancec*'s "fraud or injustice" prong (*i.e.*, where a sovereign uses its instrumentality's separate status to perpetuate a fraud or injustice) or where the instrumentality was itself "responsible on the arbitration award as a participant in the events." Oral Arg. Tr. at 91: 7–18. But if the instrumentality were directly liable for the award, there would be no need to invoke *Bancec* at all. PDVSA thus tries to read the extensive control prong out of *Bancec*. We cannot.

The District Court concluded correctly that *Bancec* does not require a connection between a sovereign's extensive control of its instrumentality and the plaintiff's injury. Control alone, if sufficiently

⁹ One panel of the Fifth Circuit has suggested that *Bancec*'s alter ego standards are the same as common state-law requirements, many of which include a nexus requirement. *See Bridas S.A.P.I.C. v. Gov't of Turkmenistan*, 447 F.3d 411, 416 (5th Cir. 2006). *But see First Inv. Corp. of Marshall Islands v. Fujian Mawei Shipbuilding, Ltd.*, 703 F.3d 742, 752–53 (5th Cir. 2012), as revised (Jan. 17, 2013).

extensive, is an adequate basis to disregard an instrumentality's separate status.¹⁰

ii. Bancec does not require a principal-agent relationship.

PDVSA also argues that the requirement in *Bancec* of extensive control such "that a relationship of principal and agent is created" requires the instrumentality to act as the sovereign's agent with respect to the events in dispute. *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 629, 103 S.Ct. 2591. Before *Rubin*, courts struggled with how to give meaning to *Bancec*'s apparent

¹⁰ At oral argument, PDVSA stressed that *Bancec* clearly assumed for "extensive control" a connection between the abused form and the plaintiff's injury when it cited to the 1974 edition of *W.M. Fletcher, Cyclopedia of the Law of Private Corporations*. Oral Arg. Tr. at 77: 9–11 ("Fletcher says domination and control [are] not enough. You need to have an abuse of the form that results in an injury to the plaintiff."). But the excerpt *Bancec* quotes squarely contradicts such a narrow view: "[A] corporation will be looked upon as a legal entity as a general rule, and until sufficient reason to the contrary appears; but, when the notion of legal entity is used to defeat public convenience, justify wrong, protect fraud, or defend crime, the law will regard the corporation as an association of persons." *Bancec*, 462 U.S. 611, 630 n.19, 103 S.Ct. 2591, 77 L.Ed.2d 46 (quoting 1 *W.M. Fletcher, Cyclopedia of the Law of Private Corporations* § 41 (rev. perm. ed. 1974)). Further, *Bancec* does not even cite to *Fletcher* to support the proposition that extensive control can be sufficient to disregard corporate formalities. For this, it cited to *N.L.R.B. v. Deena Artware, Inc.*, 361 U.S. 398, 402, 80 S.Ct. 441, 4 L.Ed.2d 400 (1960), where the Court held that the National Labor Relations Board was entitled to seek discovery on an alternative theory of liability—"that these separate corporations are not what they appear to be, that in truth they are but divisions or departments of a 'single enterprise.'" *Id.* at 402, 80 S.Ct. 441.

reference to a principal–agent relationship. *See, e.g.*, *Doe v. Holy See*, 557 F.3d 1066, 1080 (9th Cir. 2009). The most persuasive interpretation of the various approaches is by the D.C. Circuit, which recognized that “[c]ontrol by the sovereign is relevant in two distinct contexts[.]” *Transamerica Leasing*, 200 F.3d at 848. “First, … when it significantly exceeds the normal supervisory control exercised by any corporate parent over its subsidiary and, indeed, amounts to complete domination of the subsidiary.” *Id.* “Second, … when the sovereign exercises its control in such a way as to make the instrumentality its agent; in that case control renders the sovereign amenable to suit under ordinary agency principles.” *Id.* at 849. These examples of control are disjunctive. Only one method of domination needs to be shown, and Crystalex opts to pursue the former. Thus further discussion of a principal-agent relationship is not necessary.

**iii. Bancec does not require
consideration of the third-party
bondholders.**

Amici bondholders of PDVSA contend *Bancec*’s extensive-control analysis requires consideration of the interests of other creditors of the judgment debtor’s alleged alter ego, both as a matter of doctrine and of equity. That argument, plausible on its face, does not prevail here. As a doctrinal matter, the overarching framework of the extensive-control test tells us that third-party creditors’ interest is a reason for—not a separate criterion of—the analysis. *Bancec* explained that those creditors’ interests are part of the reason the presumption of separate juridical status is so difficult to overcome: “Freely ignoring the

separate status of government instrumentalities would result in a substantial uncertainty over whether an instrumentality's assets would be diverted to satisfy a claim against the sovereign, and might thereby cause third parties to hesitate before extending credit to a government instrumentality without the government's guarantee." 462 U.S. at 626, 103 S.Ct. 2591. For that reason (among others), *Bancec* counsels courts not to ignore separate status. *See also De Letelier v. Republic of Chile*, 748 F.2d 790, 795 n.1 (2d Cir. 1984) (noting that abuse of the corporate form of the type identified in *Bancec* "must be clearly demonstrated to justify holding the 'subsidiary' liable for the debts of its sovereign 'parent,' particularly where, as here, LAN apparently has non-party private bank creditors"). To add to this analysis an additional unspecific consideration of third-party interests would double-count the creditors' concern in an arena of many competing concerns.

The difficulty of overcoming the *Bancec* presumption is also practical comfort: where there is extensive control, we can expect reasonable third parties to recognize the risks of extending credit. Here, for example, Venezuela's relationship to PDVSA was clearly disclosed to any prospective holder of the latter's bonds in the offering circular for that issuance: "We are controlled by the Venezuelan government"; obligations imposed by the government "may affect our ... commercial affairs"; and "we cannot assure you that the Venezuelan government will not, in the future, impose further material commitments upon us or intervene in our commercial affairs." JA-608. Perhaps recognizing that risk, the Bondholders protected their extension of credit to

PDVSA by obtaining as collateral a 50.1% security interest in PDVH's shares of Citgo Holding, Inc., which, of course, will not be impaired by the District Court's writ of attachment.

iv. Timeframe: What is the appropriate point of reference for the extensive-control analysis?

Venezuela argues that the relevant time for a *Bancec* analysis of the relationship between a sovereign and its instrumentality is the moment the writ is issued. But it points to no authority for that proposition, and it does not explain why our review of the District Court's *Bancec* analysis would be any different than in the normal course, where we render our decision based on the record before the district court and "do[] not purport to deal with possible later events." *Standard Oil Co. v. United States*, 429 U.S. 17, 18, 97 S.Ct. 31, 50 L.Ed.2d 21 (1976) (*per curiam*); *Rubin*, 12 F.3d at 1284; *Fassett v. Delta Kappa Epsilon (New York)*, 807 F.2d 1150, 1165 (3d Cir. 1986). We follow the standard practice. On remand, Venezuela may direct to the District Court credible arguments to expand the record with later events.

v. The burden of proof is preponderance of the evidence.

PDVSA contends that the District Court erred by reviewing the parties' evidence under a "preponderance of the evidence" rather than a "clear and convincing" burden of proof. We disagree, but also note that our decision as to the burden of proof has no effect on the outcome of our *Bancec* analysis; indeed, the implications of this question matter little to this appeal. PDVSA conceded as much at oral argument that our decision as to burden of proof has

no effect on the outcome of our *Bancec* analysis. Oral Arg. Tr. at 95–96: 20–14 (Apr. 15, 2019).

PDVSA points to our ruling in *Trustees of Nat. Elevator Indus. Pension, Health Benefit & Educ. Funds v. Lutyk*, 332 F.3d 188, 194 (3d Cir. 2003), an ERISA veil-piercing case, where at summary judgment we re-affirmed that “evidence justifying piercing the corporate veil must be ‘clear and convincing.’” *Id.* (quoting *Kaplan v. First Options of Chicago, Inc.*, 19 F.3d 1503, 1522 (3d Cir. 1994), *aff’d*, 514 U.S. 938, 115 S.Ct. 1920, 131 L.Ed.2d 985 (1995)). Should this federal common law be applied here? We think not.

The Sovereign Immunities Act is the exclusive basis for finding jurisdiction in suits involving foreign sovereigns and instrumentalities, and *Bancec* is binding federal common law for disputes under the Act. Neither indicates that plaintiffs must show clear and convincing evidence, while many courts have applied a preponderance-of-the-evidence standard to inquiries under it. *See, e.g., Owens v. Republic of Sudan*, 864 F.3d 751, 784 (D.C. Cir. 2017); *Sachs v. Republic of Austria*, 737 F.3d 584, 589 (9th Cir. 2013), *rev’d on other grounds sub nom. OBB Personenverkehr AG v. Sachs*, — U.S. —, 136 S. Ct. 390, 193 L.Ed.2d 269 (2015); *S & Davis Int’l, Inc. v. The Republic of Yemen*, 218 F.3d 1292, 1300 (11th Cir. 2000); *Kirschenbaum v. 650 Fifth Ave.*, 257 F. Supp. 3d 463, 472 (S.D.N.Y. 2017) (requiring preponderance of the evidence for *Bancec* inquiries); *First Inv. Corp. of the Marshall Islands v. Fujian Mawei Shipbuilding, Ltd. of People’s Republic of China*, 858 F. Supp. 2d 658, 668 n.54 (E.D. La. 2012) (also conducting a *Bancec* extensive control inquiry), *aff’d* 703 F.3d 742 (5th Cir. 2012); *In re 650 Fifth Ave.*

& Related Properties, 881 F. Supp. 2d 533, 544 (S.D.N.Y. 2012) (same); *Kensington Int'l Ltd. v. Republic of Congo*, No. 03 CIV. 4578 LAP, 2007 WL 1032269, at *5 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 30, 2007) (same). Further, no case cited by the parties suggests that the *Bancec* extensive-control inquiry requires clear and convincing evidence.

Lutyk drew from our Court's existing precedent holding that, where a plaintiff relies on a fraud theory for alter ego, it must be shown by clear and convincing evidence. *See Kaplan*, 19 F.3d at 1522. But here Crystalex does not attempt, nor need, to satisfy an element of fraud.¹¹ Further distinguishing *Lutyk* or *Kaplan*, it here seeks to survive a factual challenge under Rule 12(b)(1), which generally requires the plaintiff to establish jurisdiction by a preponderance of the evidence. *See, e.g., Makarova v. United States*, 201 F.3d 110, 113 (2d Cir. 2000).

We also see scant policy reason to depart from existing caselaw and require plaintiffs to make a clear and convincing showing. The difficulties of marshaling evidence sufficient to show a *Bancec* relationship present "a substantial obstacle to [Sovereign Immunities Act] plaintiffs' attempts to satisfy judgment." *Estate of Heiser v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 885 F. Supp. 2d 429, 435 (D.D.C. 2012), *aff'd* 735 F.3d 934 (D.C. Cir. 2013). In addition to the initial information imbalance between the

¹¹ Even if it did, as the Supreme Court has observed, the traditional state-law presumption in favor of clear and convincing evidence for fraud claims has not always extended to Congress, which frequently has required preponderance of the evidence for federal fraud claims. *See Grogan v. Garner*, 498 U.S. 279, 288–89, 111 S.Ct. 654, 112 L.Ed.2d 755 (1991).

judgment creditor and the foreign sovereign, the creditor must gather evidence related to events, witnesses, and relationships between a foreign sovereign and its own instrumentality, the bulk of which is often within the territorial control of the sovereign itself, making discovery a particularly onerous task. Given the difficulties inherent in this evidence gathering,¹² the preponderance standard is “the measure of respect due foreign sovereigns.” *Bank of New York v. Yugoimport*, 745 F.3d 599, 614 (2d Cir. 2014). A more onerous requirement would tip the balance too far in favor of the foreign sovereign at the expense of *Bancec*’s other core concern—ensuring that foreign states not dodge their obligations under international law. Thus we conclude that preponderance of the evidence is the appropriate burden of proof under *Bancec*.

vi. Is there an equitable component to the “extensive control” prong of *Bancec*?

PDVSA proposes that an “equitable basis” is required “to rebut the presumption of separateness” under *Bancec*’s extensive-control prong. The District Court observed that even though *Bancec*’s two prongs are disjunctive, the extensive-control inquiry “inherently assumes that some element of unfairness would result if the Court fails to treat one entity as the alter ego of the other.” *Del. Crystalllex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 397 n.15. We need not determine whether this is an independent or necessary factor in an extensive-control inquiry. The test discussed in *Rubin*

¹² The parties here rely chiefly on expert affidavits, publicly available corporate documents, and news articles.

appears to treat it as such, and, as discussed below, it is easily satisfied here.

C. Extensive control determination under *Bancec*

Having clarified the contours of the *Bancec* extensive-control inquiry, our applying that analysis here is straightforward. Though the factors the District Court applied differ slightly from those in *Rubin*, they are similar enough that its factual findings, which we review for clear error, direct the same result under either approach to the *Bancec* inquiry. While PDVSA effectively conceded that Crystalex satisfied each factor under *Rubin* at oral argument, we summarize the evidence for the sake of clarity, as the facts are paramount in determining when control is so extensive that entity separateness fades away as a legal distinction.

1. Factor 1: the level of economic control by the government

Venezuela wields extensive economic control over PDVSA. Venezuela's bondholder disclosures in 2011 and 2016 stated: "[G]iven that we are controlled by the Venezuelan government, we cannot assure you that [it] will not, in the future, impose further material commitments upon us or intervene in our commercial affairs in a manner that will adversely affect our operations, cash flow and financial results." JA-645; 1921. They leave no doubt Venezuela has the power to intervene and mandate PDVSA's economic policies. In 2011 PDVSA disclosed that "the Venezuelan government required us to acquire several electricity generation and distribution companies, as well as certain food companies ... [,] and required ... us to acquire the assets of [another

Venezuelan company] at a price to be determined in the future.” JA-608–09. The District Court found that Venezuela requires PDVSA to fund

Venezuelan programs that have nothing to do with its business, causing PDVSA to take on additional debt. Such programs include PDVSA Agricola S.A., which subsidizes Venezuela’s agriculture, industrial infrastructure, and produce sectors, and PDVSA Desarrollos Urbanos S.A., which subsidizes Venezuela’s housing projects. ... PDVSA’s total contributions to the Venezuelan budget between 2010 and 2016 were in excess of \$119 billion.

Del. Crystalllex, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 409. In 2014 and 2015, PDVSA was required to contribute U.S. \$974 million and U.S. \$3.3 billion, respectively, to social programs and projects. *Id.*

As its 2011 offering circular to prospective bondholders explains, PDVSA’s legal obligations stem in part from the Venezuelan constitution, which endows the State with significant control over PDVSA and the oil industry in the country. Article 12 provides hydrocarbon deposits within the territory of the state are the property of the Republic, JA-1722, and Article 302 reiterates “the State reserves to itself, through the pertinent organic law, and for reasons of national convenience, petroleum activity,” *id.* at 1558. Article 303 addresses the state’s control over PDVSA specifically: “For reasons of economic and political sovereignty and national strategy, the State shall retain all shares in Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A.” *E.g.*, JA-350; 386. In addition, as PDVSA disclosed to

bondholders, under Article 5 of the Organic Hydrocarbons Law, its revenues “are required to be used to finance health and education, to create funds for macroeconomic stabilization and to make productive investments, all in favor of the Venezuelan people. Those social commitments may affect our ability to place additional funds in reserve for future uses and, indirectly, our commercial affairs.” *Id.* at 608.

The District Court also found that Venezuela exercises its economic control over PDVSA by dictating to whom PDVSA must sell oil to and at what price. The 2011 circular explains that “[t]he Venezuelan government, rather than the international market, determines the price of products ... sold by us through our affiliates in the domestic market.” *Id.* at 643. Thus Venezuela “dictates the severely discounted price at which PDVSA must sell its product to Venezuelan citizens” and “forces PDVSA to ‘sell’ oil to third parties for no, or *de minimis*, consideration.” *Del. Crystalllex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 408 (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). Per Venezuela’s “Petrocaribe” agreements with its allies, PDVSA must provide oil to member states at a steep discount on price, along with a two-year grace period for payments, on a payment schedule up to 25 years in length with interest rates as low as 1% (with the option, on Venezuela’s part, to accept deferred payments directly in the form of goods and services). JA-928. Under the agreement, Venezuela “may acquire at preferential prices ... sugar, bananas, or other goods or services to be determined, which are adversely affected by trade policies of rich countries.” *Id.* In other words, as the District Court found, PDVSA

provides oil while Venezuela maintains the right to accept payment. PDVSA's financial reports show that, from 2010 to 2016, it contributed approximately USD \$ 77 billion under the Petrocaribe agreements. *Id.* at 1178.

The District Court wasn't finished: "Venezuela manipulates PDVSA's conversion of U.S. Dollars to Venezuelan Bolivars to leverage PDVSA's revenues. ... PDVSA is required to convert foreign currency into Venezuelan Bolivars at an artificially low U.S. Dollar to Bolivar exchange rate (which is approximately 1/500th of the market rate)." *Del. Crystalllex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 410 (internal quotation marks omitted).

Finally, Venezuela controls PDVSA's debt structure. Dr. Roberto Rigobon's supplemental declaration states that in November 2017 President Maduro decreed that Venezuela would restructure the external debt of both Venezuela and PDVSA. JA-2013. He also provided evidence that Venezuela made a \$1.2 billion payment on a 2017 PDVSA bond. *Id.* at 2014.

2. Factor 2: whether the entity's profits go to the government

As PDVSA's lone shareholder, all profit ultimately runs to the Venezuelan government. In addition, PDVSA pays Venezuela taxes and royalties on the oil it produces. The Rigobon Declaration contends that PDVSA pays "extraordinary taxes," *i.e.*, taxes at an artificial rate designed to collect more of PDVSA's revenues. *Id.* at 1172.

**3. Factor 3: the degree to which
government officials manage the entity
or otherwise have a hand in its daily
affairs**

The Venezuelan government exercises direct and extensive control over PDVSA. President Maduro appoints PDVSA's president, directors, vice-presidents, and members of its shareholder council. *Del. Crystalex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 407–08. Crystalex introduced a declaration from Jose Ignacio Hernandez, a Venezuelan legal academic, which notes that it has been "commonplace" since 2002 for PDVSA's president also to serve as Venezuela's oil minister. JA-1195. "This arrangement allowed the Government to control the daily operations of PDVSA." *Id.* PDVSA and Venezuela's Ministry of Petroleum and Mining share physical office space for its headquarters. *Id.* at 1196 & n.51. In a 2014 speech discussing the state of Venezuelan control over PDVSA since this reorganization, then-PDVSA President Rafael Ramirez Carreño, and the country's Vice Minister for Petroleum, stated that "we are one of the few oil producing countries in the world that has a strict and tight control over the sovereign management of its natural resources." *Id.* at 594.

The military increasingly exercises control over PDVSA. In November 2017, President Maduro appointed Major General Manuel Quevedo as Petroleum Minister and PDVSA president. *Id.* at 2018. Earlier that year, he also created a new post—Executive Vice-President of PDVSA—and appointed Vice-Admiral Maribel del Carmen Parra de Mestre to the position. *Id.* at 1198.

Venezuela has also wielded substantial influence

over PDVSA’s employees through a series of politically motivated firings. The highest profile of these occurred in 2002, when President Chávez fired roughly 40% of the PDVSA workforce in response to a strike protesting his regime. *Id.* at 1054. Employees continue to face pressure from the state today. The District Court found that, “[a]s recently as July 2017, Venezuela continued to threaten to terminate PDVSA employees who were opposed to the governing regime.” *Del. Crystalex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 407. Employees face pressure to attend Socialist Party rallies and have been threatened with termination unless they voted in elections. *Id.* at 408.

4. Factor 4: whether the government is the real beneficiary of the entity’s conduct

The District Court found that PDVSA’s cheap oil to Venezuela’s strategic allies also creates a mechanism whereby Venezuela extracts value from PDVSA’s oil without paying the company. “Venezuela also uses PDVSA to achieve its foreign policy goals by committing PDVSA to sell oil to certain Caribbean and Latin American nations at substantial discounts, without PDVSA’s consent. ... Even when those oil debts are repaid, the money is given to Venezuela, not PDVSA....” *Id.* at 410.

PDVSA’s actions with respect to this litigation also show how Venezuela is the real beneficiary of PDVSA’s conduct. For example, “it is undisputed that PDVSA paid the administrative fees Venezuela incurred in connection with the arbitration with Crystalex, which amounted to around \$249,000.” *Id.* And, when Venezuela expropriated the La Cristinas mines, it gave to PDVSA for no consideration a

number of mining rights, including rights in Las Cristinas that it had expropriated from Crystallex. JA-1194. This seamless transfer of value between PDVSA and Venezuela also suggests an alter ego relationship.

5. Factor 5: whether adherence to separate identities would entitle the foreign state to benefits in United States courts while avoiding its obligations

Venezuela owes Crystallex from a judgment that has been affirmed in our courts. Any outcome where Crystallex is not paid means that Venezuela has avoided its obligations. It is likewise clear from the record that PDVSA, and by extension Venezuela, derives significant benefits from the U.S. judicial system. Its 2020 bonds are backed by the common stock and underlying assets of U.S.-based corporations, and hence disputes stemming from default will be subject to U.S. laws and presumably be resolved through the U.S. legal system.¹³ *See, e.g.*,

¹³ Crystallex has not identified any Venezuelan commercial assets in Delaware or the District of Columbia and may be unable to find satisfaction if attachment of PDVSA property is impermissible. *See Crystallex Int'l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, No. CV 16-0661 (RC), 2017 WL 6349729, at *2 (D.D.C. June 9, 2017) (“Petitioner has been unable to identify any commercial assets belonging to [Respondent] in the District of Columbia but believes that Respondent possesses assets elsewhere in the United States, including in Delaware. ... The assets Petitioner identifies are connected to Respondent through a variety of corporate structures ...[,] in particular [Respondent’s] indirect subsidiaries, PDVH, CITGO Holding, and CITGO Petroleum”) (citations and internal quotations omitted).

Bayrock Exhibit 6 at 131–32, *Crystalex Int'l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, F. Supp. 3d 380 (D. Del. 2018), ECF No. 99-1. Indeed, it is probable the U.S. legal system is the backstop that gives substantial assurance to investors who buy PDVSA's debt.

Nor does ignoring separate identities run against the equities here. PDVSA profited directly from Crystalex's injury: Venezuela transferred the rights to the expropriated mines to PDVSA for no consideration. Hence this factor too is satisfied.

D. PDVSA's Shares of PDVH are attachable under the Sovereign Immunities Act.

Crystalex must also show that the particular property at issue in the attachment action—the PDVH stock—is not immune from attachment under the Sovereign Immunities Act. It provides that “the property in the United States of a foreign state shall be immune from attachment arrest and execution” unless one of the Act’s statutory exceptions is met. 28 U.S.C. § 1609. The exception Crystalex invokes states that the “property in the United States of a foreign state ..., *used for a commercial activity* in the United States, shall not be immune from attachment in aid of execution, or from execution, upon a judgment entered by a court of the United States” based on an order confirming an arbitral award rendered against the foreign state. 28 U.S.C. § 1610(a)(6) (emphasis added).¹⁴

¹⁴ Section 1610(b) governs execution of a foreign instrumentality’s property, but only section 1610(a) is relevant because the jurisdictional immunity is overcome for Venezuela,

The Act defines “commercial activity” as “either a regular course of commercial conduct or a particular commercial transaction or act. The commercial character of an activity shall be determined by reference to the nature of the course of conduct or particular transaction or act, rather than by reference to its purpose.” 28 U.S.C. § 1603(d). The Supreme Court in *Republic of Argentina v. Weltover, Inc.*, 504 U.S. 607, 613, 112 S.Ct. 2160, 119 L.Ed.2d 394 (1992), stated that the phrase “commercial activity” captures the “distinction between state sovereign acts, on the one hand, and state commercial and private acts, on the other.” *Id.* “[W]hen a foreign government acts, not as a regulator of a market, but in the manner of a private player within it, the foreign sovereign’s actions are ‘commercial’ within the meaning of the [Sovereign Immunities Act].” *Id.* at 614, 112 S.Ct. 2160. Commercial actions include those that “(whatever the motive behind them) are the *type* of actions by which a private party engages in ‘trade and traffic or commerce.’” *Id.* (quoting Black’s Law Dictionary) (emphasis in original).¹⁵

PDVSA contends that the commercial activity exception requires current commercial use (*i.e.*, at the moment the writ is executed), which PDVSA contends is impeded by the current U.S. sanctions regime. There is some support for PDVSA’s interpretation. *See Aurelius Capital Partners v.*

not PDVSA, who only enters the picture as Venezuela’s alter ego.

¹⁵ *Weltover* involved the commercial-activity exception to jurisdictional immunity, 28 U.S.C. § 1605(a), but its interpretation of “commercial” would apply equally here.

Republic of Argentina, 584 F.3d 120, 130 (2d Cir. 2009) (“[T]he property that is subject to attachment and execution must ... have been ‘used for a commercial activity’ *at the time* the writ of attachment or execution is issued.”) (emphasis in original). But narrowing the temporal inquiry to the day the writ is executed unnecessarily leaves room for manipulation, as any jurisdictional determination under the Sovereign Immunities Act is immediately appealable for interlocutory review, and courts (like the District Court here) may elect not to issue the writ alongside analysis of the jurisdictional and execution immunity. A strict day-of-writ inquiry could allow parties to avoid execution by freezing assets or otherwise ceasing commercial use when the appeal decision is handed down. Instead, a totality-of-the-circumstances inquiry seems more appropriate, as the Fifth Circuit aptly described: “This analysis should include an examination of the uses of the property in the past as well as all facts related to its present use, with an eye toward determining whether the commercial use of the property, if any, is so exceptional that it is ‘an out of character’ use for that particular property.” *Af-Cap Inc. v. Republic of Congo*, 383 F.3d 361, 369 (5th Cir. 2004). And “it would be appropriate for a court to consider whether the use of the property in question was being manipulated by a sovereign nation to avoid being subject to garnishment under [the Sovereign Immunities Act].” *Id.* at 369 n.8.

But whether we apply the date the writ was issued—August 23, 2018—or the date of the August 9 opinion, PDVH shares are not immune from attachment. PDVSA argues that the shares cannot be used in commerce because they are subject of

sanctions contained in two Executive Orders. *See* Exec. Order. No. 13835, 83 Fed. Reg. 24,001 (May 21, 2018) (“E.O. 13835”); Exec. Order No. 13808, 82 Fed. Reg. 41, 155 (Aug. 24, 2017) (“E.O. 13808”).

This argument fails because the sanctions regime prohibits only some commercial uses of the shares; other commercial uses continue to be exercised by Venezuela. Section 1(a)(iv) of E.O. 13808 bars PDVH from paying dividends or other distribution of profits to the Government of Venezuela,¹⁶ and section 1(b) prohibits the “purchase, directly or indirectly, by a United States person or within the United States, of securities from the Government of Venezuela.” In addition, Section 1(a)(iii) of E.O. 13835 precludes United States persons or those within the United States from engaging in any transactions, provisions of financing, and other dealings related to “the sale, transfer, assignment, or pledging as collateral by the Government of Venezuela of any equity interest in any entity in which [it] has a 50 percent or greater ownership interest.”

However, the shares can still be used by PDVSA to run its business as an owner, to appoint directors, approve contracts, and to pledge PDVH’s debts for its own short-term debt. Venezuela illustrates its continued use of this power, noting that President Guaidó in February 2019 appointed an *ad hoc* administrative board to represent PDVSA in its

¹⁶ The Executive Orders of our Government define “the Government of Venezuela” as specifically including PDVSA. E.O. 13808, 82 Fed. Reg. 41156 (“[T]he term ... means the Government of Venezuela, any political subdivision, agency or instrumentality thereof, including ... [PDVSA] ...”); E.O. 13835, 83 Fed. Reg. 24001–02 (same).

capacity as sole shareholder of PDVH for appointing a new board of directors of that entity. These actions are available to the sole shareholder of a company, and so the shares continue to be used in commerce.

This is not to say that the sanctions of PDVSA assets play no role in whether Crystalex ultimately recovers. According to a Treasury Department Frequently Asked Question, any attachment and execution against PDVSA's shares of PDVH would likely need to be authorized by the Treasury Department. *See Del. Crystalex*, 333 F. Supp. 3d at 420–21. In a case like this, “[Treasury’s Office of Foreign Asset Control, called by its acronym OFAC] would consider license applications seeking to attach and execute against such equity interests on a case-by-case basis.” *Id.* at 421. Whether that FAQ is legally binding, Crystalex has committed that it “will seek clarification of the current license ... and/or the issuance of an additional license to cover the eventual execution sale of the shares of PDVH once the [attachment w]rit has issued.” *Id.* at 421 n.40 (internal quotation marks omitted) (ellipsis in original).

Though the U.S. State Department has not sought to provide a statement of interest, it is nonetheless conceivable that short- or long-term U.S. foreign policy interests may be affected by attachment and execution of PDVSA's assets. The Treasury sanctions provide an explicit mechanism to account for these. Whether the Treasury Department permits execution in this case, it is clear that the sanctions do not make the PDVH shares immune from attachment under the Sovereign Immunities Act.

IV. Conclusion

Under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, there is a strong presumption that a foreign sovereign and its instrumentalities are separate legal entities. But the Supreme Court made clear in *Bancec* and *Rubin* that in extraordinary circumstances—including where a foreign sovereign exerts dominion over the instrumentality so extensive as to be beyond normal supervisory control—equity requires that we ignore the formal separateness of the two entities. This clears that bar easily. Indeed, if the relationship between Venezuela and PDVSA cannot satisfy the Supreme Court’s extensive-control requirement, we know nothing that can.

The District Court acted within its jurisdiction when it issued a writ of attachment on PDVSA’s shares of PDVH to satisfy Crystalex’s judgment against Venezuela, and the PDVH shares are not immune from attachment. Thus we affirm.

APPENDIX B

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

Civil Action No. 17-mc-151-LPS

CRYSTALLEX INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,

v.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA,
Defendant.

[Filed August 9, 2018]

LEONARD P. STARK, UNITED STATES DISTRICT
JUDGE

OPINION

Plaintiff/Judgment Creditor Crystalex International Corporation (“Crystalex”) holds a \$1.2 billion judgment against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (“Venezuela” or “the Republic”). (D.I. 1) Crystalex has registered the judgment in Delaware. (*Id.*) Venezuela has not appeared in the litigation. However, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (“PDVSA”), an oil company, has intervened. (D.I. 14) This is because Crystalex seeks to collect on its judgment against Venezuela by executing on property nominally owned by PDVSA, specifically shares of common stock PDVSA owns in PDV Holding Inc. (“PDVH”), a Delaware corporation. Crystalex’s theory is that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela, making PDVSA’s property subject to execution for payment of Venezuela’s debt.

Crystalex and PDVSA have each filed a motion.

Crystalex moves for a writ of attachment *fieri facias* (“*fi. fa.*”) pursuant to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1601(c). (D.I. 2) In turn, PDVSA has filed a motion to dismiss for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. (D.I. 25) Together, the parties¹ motions present numerous complex questions, some of which have been addressed by no previous court, and others on which different courts have reached competing conclusions. The Court’s careful consideration of the issues before it has included reviewing numerous briefs (D.I. 3-1, 26, 33), letter briefs (D.I. 51-54, 70-71), submissions of supplemental authority (D.I. 41, 46, 59-60, 63-65), six substantive declarations (D.I. 7-8, 28-29, 35-36), and hundreds of exhibits (see, e.g., D.I. 4-6, 11, 27, 34, 37, 47). The Court also heard oral argument on two separate occasions. (See Transcript of Dec. 21, 2017 Hr’g (D.I. 49) (“Tr.”); Transcript of Aug. 3, 2018 Hr’g (D.I. 74) (“Aug. Tr.”))

Having undertaken the required analysis, the Court will grant Crystalex’s motion and deny PDVSA’s motion.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, the Government of Venezuela awarded Crystalex, a Canadian corporation, a Mine Operating Contract (“Contract”) by which Crystalex was granted the opportunity to develop the Las Cristinas gold mines. (D.I. 3-1 at 1; D.I. 26 at 4-5) Completion of the mining project was dependent on Crystalex obtaining certain permits from Venezuela.

¹ The Court will refer to Crystalex and PDVSA as “the parties,” as they are the only entities who have appeared and have provided briefing and evidence to the Court.

(D.I. 26 at 5) Crystalex never obtained such permits. (*Id.*) Instead, in 2011, Venezuela seized the Las Cristinas mines. (D.I. 3-1 at 5)

“In accordance with a bilateral investment treaty (BIT) between Canada and Venezuela, Crystalex pursued its grievances against Venezuela before an international arbitration tribunal” *Crystalex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, 244 F. Supp. 3d 100, 105 (D.D.C. 2017) (“Crystalex”). Specifically, in 2011, Crystalex initiated arbitration proceedings against Venezuela before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (“ICSID”) in Washington, D.C. (D.I. 3-1 at 1, 5) On April 4, 2016, an arbitration panel found that Venezuela’s actions constituted an indirect expropriation of Crystalex’s rights under the Contract. (D.I. 26 at 5) The ICSID awarded Crystalex \$1.2 billion plus interest. (*Id.*; D.I. 3-1 at 5)

Crystalex then filed suit in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia (the “D.C. Court”) seeking to confirm the arbitral award. *See Crystalex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, C.A. No. 16-0661 (RC) D.I. 1 (D.D.C. Apr. 7, 2016). On March 25, 2017, Judge Rudolph Contreras issued an opinion and order confirming the award. (See D.I. 1; D.I. 26 at 6; D.I. 4-1 Exs. 6, 7) On April 7, 2017, the D.C. Court entered judgment against Venezuela. (D.I. 1; D.I. 26 at 6) Just over two months later, on June 9, 2017, Judge Contreras found that a “reasonable period” had elapsed since entry of judgment but Venezuela had not paid its debt. *Crystalex Int’l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, C.A. No. 16-0661 (RC) D.I. 36 (D.D.C. June 9, 2017) (see D.I. 4-1 Ex. 8) (“Crystalex II”). Hence, pursuant to Section 1610(c) of the FSIA, the

D.C. Court ruled that Crystalex could commence proceedings in aid of execution of the judgment. *Id.*²

Accordingly, on June 19, 2017, Crystalex registered the D.C. Court's judgment in this Court. (D.I. 1; *see also* 28 U.S.C. § 1963 (providing district court in which judgment is registered with same power to enforce it that is possessed by district court which issued judgment))³ Crystalex filed its pending motion for a writ of attachment on August 14, 2017, seeking to attach shares of PDVH, which are owned by PDVSA, which Crystalex alleges is an alter ego of Venezuela. (D.I. 3-1 at 1; *see also* Tr. at 36 (PDVSA stating "the PDV Holding shares they want to attach belong to PDVSA")) Thereafter, PDVSA moved to intervene for the purpose of opposing the attachment motion (D.I. 14), a request the Court granted on August 28, 2017 (D.I. 17), without objection from

² When advised that Crystalex viewed PDVSA's holdings in Delaware as attachable to satisfy Crystalex's judgment against Venezuela, and that Venezuela challenged whether PDVSA's assets would be subject to the judgment against Venezuela, Judge Contreras "decline[d] the invitation to adjudicate whether or not those assets will ultimately be attachable by Petitioner [Crystalex] because such a determination is unnecessary at this stage." (*Crystalex II* at 4) As the instant motions make plain, such a determination is necessary now.

Venezuela's appeal of the D.C. Court's orders is pending before the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. *See* C.A. No. 16-0661 (RC) D.I. 34.

³ Crystalex has also filed the judgment in other courts, including the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. (*See* D.I. 3-1 at 2; *Crystalex Int'l Corp. v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, C.A. No. 17-mc-205-VEC) According to the parties, there has been no litigation in S.D.N.Y. that is of any relevance to any of the issues before this Court. (*See* Tr. at 66; Aug. Tr. at 13)

Crystalex (D.I. 16). Subsequently, on November 3, 2017, PDVSA filed its pending cross-motion to dismiss for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. (D.I. 25)

The parties initially completed briefing on the motions on November 22, 2017 (D.I. 3-1, 26, 33) and were scheduled for oral argument on December 5, 2017 (D.I. 23). When they appeared on December 5, Crystalex requested a continuance in light of a recent settlement reached between it and Venezuela. (*See* D.I. 40; *see also* Transcript of Dec. 5, 2017 Chambers Conference) The Court continued the argument until December 21, at which point the parties again appeared, indicated that Venezuela had not met a condition precedent to the settlement, and proceeded to present argument. (*See* D.I. 43; Aug. Tr. at 12-13)

Over the ensuing months, the parties have advised the Court of subsequent authorities and developments (*see, e.g.*, D.I. 59-60, 63-65) and responded to the Court's orders for supplemental briefing (*see* D.I. 51-54, 70-71). On July 30, 2018, the Court provided the parties with a list of additional questions on which it sought their input. (*See* D.I. 68) Then, on August 3, the Court heard additional oral argument. (*See* Aug. Tr.)

APPLICABLE LAW

A. Writ Of Attachment

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 69(a)(1), “[a] money judgment is enforced by a writ of execution, unless the court directs otherwise. The procedure on execution – and in proceedings supplementary to and in aid of judgment or execution

– must accord with the procedure of the state where the court is located, but a federal statute governs to the extent it applies.” Under Rule 69, “a district court has the authority to enforce a judgment by attaching property in accordance with the law of the state in which the district court sits.” *Peterson v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 876 F.3d 63, 89 (2d Cir. 2017) (internal quotation marks omitted).

Delaware law permits a judgment creditor to obtain a writ of attachment *fi. fa.*, as set out in 10 Del. C. § 5031:

The plaintiff in any judgment in a court of record, or any person for such plaintiff lawfully authorized, may cause an attachment, as well as any other execution, to be issued thereon, containing an order for the summoning of garnishees, to be proceeded upon and returned as in cases of foreign attachment.^[4] The attachment, condemnation, or judgment thereon, shall be pleadable in bar by the garnishee in any action against the garnishee at the suit of the defendant in the attachment.

As expressly provided by statute, the types of property a judgment creditor may attach include a debtor’s shares in a Delaware corporation:

⁴ “By its reference to cases of foreign judgment, § 5031 incorporates Chapter 35 of Title 10 of the Delaware Code. Under those provisions, ‘[g]oods, chattels, rights credits, moneys, effects, lands and tenements’ may be attached.” *LNC Invests., Inc. v. Democratic Republic of Congo*, 69 F.Supp.2d 607, 611 (D. Del. 1999) (citing 10 Del. C. § 3508).

The shares of any person in any corporation with all the rights thereto belonging ... may be attached under this section for debt, or other demands, if such person appears on the books of the corporation to hold or own such shares, option, right or interest.

8 Del. C. § 324(a).⁵ Delaware law further provides that judgment creditors may execute on their judgments by “the attachment of a defendant’s property in the hands of a third party.” *UMS Partners, Ltd. v. Jackson*, 1995 WL 413395, at *5 (Del. Super. Ct. June 15, 1995).

B. Subject Matter Jurisdiction

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) “authorizes dismissal of a complaint for lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter, or if the plaintiff lacks standing to bring his claim.” *Samsung Elecs. Co., Ltd. v. ON Semiconductor Corp.*, 541 F.Supp.2d 645, 648 (D. Del. 2008). “At issue in a Rule 12(b)(1) motion is the court’s very power to hear the case.” *Petruska v. Gannon Univ.*, 462 F.3d 294, 302 (3d Cir. 2006) (internal quotation marks omitted).

Usually, a motion to dismiss for lack of subject matter jurisdiction presents either a facial or factual challenge. *See CNA v. United States*, 535 F.3d 132, 139 (3d Cir. 2008). A facial attack “concerns an alleged pleading deficiency,” while a factual attack concerns the “failure of a plaintiff’s claim to comport factually with the jurisdictional prerequisites.” *Id.*

⁵ The statute sets out specific procedural requirements for, among other things, a “public sale to the highest bidder.” 8 Del. C. § 324(a).

(internal quotation marks and brackets omitted).

Where the motion presents a facial challenge to the Court's jurisdiction, or one based purely on the sufficiency of the plaintiff's allegations, the Court must accept well-pled factual allegations as true and generally may consider only the complaint and any documents referenced in or attached to it. *See Lincoln Benefit Life Co. v. AEI Life, LLC*, 800 F.3d 99, 105 (3d Cir. 2015); *see also Mortensen v. First Fed. Sav. & Loan Ass'n*, 549 F.2d 884, 891 (3d Cir. 1977) ("[T]he court must consider the allegations of the complaint as true."). "Affidavits and briefs in opposition do not fall in this category." *Lincoln Benefit*, 800 F.3d at 110.

"The factual attack, however, differs greatly" *Mortensen*, 549 F.2d at 891.

Because at issue in a factual 12(b)(1) motion is the trial court's jurisdiction ... there is substantial authority that the trial court is free to weigh the evidence and satisfy itself as to the existence of its power to hear the case. In short, no presumptive truthfulness attaches to plaintiff's allegations, and the existence of disputed material facts will not preclude the trial court from evaluating for itself the merits of jurisdictional claims. Moreover, the plaintiff will have the burden of proof that jurisdiction does in fact exist.

Id.

Occasionally, the Court must consider both facial and factual challenges to its subject matter jurisdiction. *See Carrier Corp. v. Outokumpu Oyj*, 673

F.3d 430, 440 (6th Cir. 2012) (“Outokumpu has presented arguments for both a facial and factual challenge to subject-matter jurisdiction, and we address each in turn.”); *Hopewell Valley Reg'l. Bd. of Ednc. v. J.R.*, 2018 WL 2411616 (D.N.J. May 29, 2018) (addressing motion to dismiss presenting both types of challenges); *In re PennySaver USA Publ'g, LLC*, 587 B.R. 43, 48 (Bankr. D. Del. 2018) (“Defendant has made both factual and facial challenges in its Rule 12(b)(1) Motion.... [T]he Court will review the factual and then facial challenges, in that order.”). When a motion presents both types of attacks, the plaintiff must overcome both in order for its claims to proceed.

Here, PDVSA presents both a facial and factual attack to subject matter jurisdiction. (See, e.g., D.I. 26 at 20 (discussing facial attack); *id.* at 22-27 (discussing factual attack); *see also infra* n.16)

DISCUSSION

A. Foreign Sovereign Immunity

1. The Parties' Disputes Are Governed By The FSIA

The Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (“FSIA” or “Act”), 28 U.S.C. § 1602 *et seq.*, “establishes a comprehensive framework for determining whether a court in this country, state or federal, may exercise jurisdiction over a foreign state.” *Republic of Argentina v. Weltover, Inc.*, 504 U.S. 607, 610, 112 S.Ct. 2160, 119 L.Ed.2d 394 (1992). The FSIA is the “sole basis for obtaining jurisdiction over a foreign state in our courts.” *Argentine Republic v. Amerada Hess Shipping Corp.*, 488 U.S. 428, 434, 109 S.Ct. 683, 102 L.Ed.2d 818 (1989). “[F]oreign sovereign

immunity is a matter of grace and comity on the part of the United States, and not a restriction imposed by the Constitution.” *Verlinden B.V. v. Centr. Bank of Nigeria*, 461 U.S. 480, 486, 103 S.Ct. 1962, 76 L.Ed.2d 81 (1983).

“Under the Act, a ‘foreign state shall be immune from the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States and of the States’ unless one of several statutorily defined exceptions applies.” *Weltover*, 504 U.S. at 610-11, 112 S.Ct. 2160 (quoting 28 U.S.C. § 1604). Hence, “a district court has subject matter jurisdiction over a suit against a foreign state if – and only if – the plaintiff’s claim falls within a statutorily enumerated exception.” *Odhambo v. Republic of Kenya*, 764 F.3d 31, 34 (D.C. Cir. 2014). Accordingly, the FSIA

must be applied by the District Courts in every action against a foreign sovereign since subject matter jurisdiction in any such action depends on the existence of one of the specified exceptions to foreign sovereign immunity, 28 U.S.C. § 1330(a).^[6] At the threshold of every action in a District Court against a foreign state, therefore, the court must satisfy itself that one of the exceptions applies – and in doing so

⁶ Section 1330(a) provides: “district courts shall have original jurisdiction without regard to amount in controversy of any nonjury civil action against a foreign state as defined in section 1603(a) of this title as to any claim for relief in personam with respect to which the foreign state is not entitled to immunity either under sections 1605-1607 of this title or under any international agreement.”

it must apply the detailed federal law standards set forth in the Act.

Verlinden, 461 U.S. at 493-94, 103 S.Ct. 1962 (internal footnote omitted). “[T]he FSIA exceptions are exhaustive; if no exception applies, the district court has no jurisdiction.” *Odhambo*, 764 F.3d at 34; *see also Verlinden*, 461 U.S. at 497, 103 S.Ct. 1962 (“[I]f a court determines that none of the exceptions to sovereign immunity applies, the plaintiff will be barred from raising his claim in any court in the United States”).

Therefore, the disputes among Crystalex, Venezuela, and PDVSA are governed by the FSIA. Unless Crystalex can meet its burden to establish the applicability of exceptions to sovereign immunity, the Court is required to dismiss this case.⁷

2. Crystalex Must Establish An Exception to Jurisdictional Immunity, Although It Need Not Show An Independent Basis For Subject Matter Jurisdiction With Respect to PDVSA

Venezuela, as a foreign sovereign state, is presumptively immune from suit in all courts in the United States. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1604 (“Subject to existing international agreements to which the United States is a party at the time of enactment of

⁷ The FSIA also imposes procedural requirements that must be met before a party may execute on property held by a foreign sovereign state or its agency or instrumentality, including (i) that a “reasonable period of time has elapsed following the entry of judgment” and (ii) “the giving of ... notice.” 28 U.S.C. § 1610(c). It is undisputed that these procedural conditions have been satisfied here.

this Act a foreign state shall be immune from the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States and of the States except as provided in sections 1605 to 1607 of this chapter.”). Crystalex contends, and PDVSA does not dispute, that Venezuela is subject to the Court’s jurisdiction under § 1605(a)(6), the arbitration exception. Section 1605(a)(6) states, in relevant part:

- (a) A foreign state shall not be immune from the jurisdiction of courts of the United States or of the States in any case
- ...
- (6) in which the action is brought, ... to confirm an award made pursuant to ... an agreement to arbitrate, if (A) the arbitration takes place or is intended to take place in the United States

The Act defines a “foreign state” to include “a political subdivision of a foreign state or an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state.” 28 U.S.C. § 1603(a). In turn, an “agency or instrumentality of a foreign state” is defined as any entity:

- (1) which is a separate legal person, corporate or otherwise, and
- (2) which is an organ of a foreign state or political subdivision thereof, or a majority of whose shares or other ownership interest is owned by a foreign state or political subdivision thereof, and

(3) which is neither a citizen of a State of the United States as defined in section 1332(c) and (e) of this title, nor created under the laws of any third country.

28 U.S.C. § 1603(b). It is undisputed that PDVSA is an “agency or instrumentality” of Venezuela within the meaning of the FSIA. (*See* D.I. 26 at 12 (“PDVSA indisputably is an ‘agency or instrumentality of a foreign state’ as defined in the FSIA”); Tr. at 36 (“Where the plaintiffs and PDVSA agree is that PDVSA is an agency or instrumentality of Venezuela”))

Where the parties’ views first diverge is on the question of whether the Court must have an independent basis for subject matter jurisdiction with respect to PDVSA. PDVSA contends that because Crystalex’s motion seeks to impose liability on PDVSA for Venezuela’s debt, Crystalex is in effect suing PDVSA, and the Court cannot adjudicate such a suit without having a basis to exercise subject matter jurisdiction over PDVSA. (*See, e.g.*, D.I. 26 at 10-11; *see also* Tr. at 36-37) To PDVSA, the effect of Crystalex prevailing on its motion would be the same as if PDVSA were added to the judgment Crystalex holds against Venezuela, rendering PDVSA – a third party, which had no involvement in the events that harmed Crystalex and no involvement in the arbitration giving rise to the judgment against Venezuela – potentially liable for all of Venezuela’s debts. Crystalex counters that once it establishes the Court has subject matter jurisdiction with respect to its dispute with Venezuela, and further establishes that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela, it will have met its burden to show that the Court has subject

matter jurisdiction with respect to PDVSA as well. To Crystalex, the crucial facts are that Crystalex has not sued PDVSA and does not seek to add PDVSA as a liable party on its judgment against Venezuela. (*See, e.g.*, D.I. 70 at 8) (“Crystalex does not seek to hold PDVSA liable for its judgment but rather seeks a more limited finding, namely that the specific property at issue on this motion – the shares of PDVH – though nominally held in the name of PDVSA, are, at this time, really the property of Venezuela.”) Alternatively, if an independent basis for subject matter jurisdiction is necessary with respect to PDVSA, Crystalex argues that it, too, is present. (*See id.* at 4-5) (“[T]his Court has an independent basis for jurisdiction against PDVSA under 28 U.S.C. § 1330 and Section 1605(a)(6) of the FSIA.”) On these points, the Court agrees with Crystalex.

PDVSA’s position is based on the Supreme Court’s decision in *Peacock v. Thomas*, 516 U.S. 349, 357, 116 S.Ct. 862, 133 L.Ed.2d 817 (1996), which stated, “We have never authorized the exercise of ancillary jurisdiction in a subsequent lawsuit to impose an obligation to pay an existing federal judgment on a person not already liable for that judgment.” *See also Butler v. Sukhoi Co.*, 579 F.3d 1307, 1313 (11th Cir. 2009) (“Because the Butlers sought to invoke the jurisdiction of the United States courts to enter a new judgment in a separate cause of action against appellants, they bore the burden of presenting a *prima facie* case that jurisdiction [against the third party] existed.”) (footnote omitted).

However, as Crystalex emphasizes, the Third Circuit has had occasion to consider the applicability of *Peacock* in the context of garnishment actions.

(See, e.g., Tr. at 10) (arguing “*Peacock* has no application to proper Rule 69 motions”) In *IFC Interconsult, AG v. Safeguard International Partners, LLC*, 438 F.3d 298, 310 (3d Cir. 2006), the Third Circuit held that Rule 69 authorizes a garnishment action against an indemnitor of a judgment debtor even when there is no independent basis for federal subject matter jurisdiction – such as diversity – for a new action by the judgment creditor directly against that indemnitor.⁸ As the *IFC* Court stated: “*Peacock* itself made clear that it does not apply to Rule 69 actions.” *Id.* at 311. *IFC* adds: “Although garnishment actions are new actions in the sense that there is a new party and a new theory for that party’s liability, they are not new actions in the sense of a new direct claim.” *Id.* at 314.

Crystalex brings its motion for a writ of attachment *fi. fa.* pursuant to, *inter alia*, Rule 69, contending that it, as the garnishor, “is seeking to collect its judgment against Venezuela (the judgment debtor) by stepping into Venezuela’s shoes and demanding Venezuela’s alter ego’s shares from PDVH (the garnishee).” (D.I. 70 at 7; *see also* D.I. 3 at 1; Tr. at 82-83 (“Rule 69 actions are to be treated as part of the original suit. Therefore, if the original suit was a suit against Venezuela, and there was jurisdiction under [Section] 1330, there is jurisdiction to adjudicate rights in the property.”)) According to Crystalex, “[t]he fact that this garnishment proceeding involves an alter ego theory does not

⁸ In reaching this conclusion, the Third Circuit reaffirmed its prior *en banc* holding in *Skevofilax v. Quigley*, 810 F.2d 378, 385 (3d Cir. 1987), finding that *Skevofilax* was not abrogated by *Peacock*. *See IFC*, 438 F.3d at 310.

change the nature of the proceeding.” (D.I. 70 at 7; Tr. at 11 (“[T]he fact that you could have a broader alter-ego theory does not mean that all alter-ego theories fall under *Peacock*.’’))

Again, the Court agrees. Unlike the situation presented in *Peacock*, 516 U.S. at 350, 116 S.Ct. 862, this case is not “a subsequent lawsuit” to “impose an obligation to pay” an “existing federal judgment on a person not already liable for that judgment.” To the contrary, it is part of the “same lawsuit” – that is, the action giving rise to the judgment against Venezuela, which has been registered in this District – and does not seek to impose any obligation on PDVSA to pay Venezuela’s existing judgment, but, instead, seeks to attach property nominally belonging to PDVSA as truly belonging to Venezuela. (See D.I. 70 at 7-8) Rather than attempting to hold PDVSA primarily liable or shifting the judgment to PDVSA, Crystalex seeks to enforce its judgement against debtor Venezuela, “whose immunity has already been defeated on the FSIA and the arbitra[tion] exception,” by attaching PDVSA property because it is “**property of the debtor**” under an alter ego theory. (Aug. Tr. at 31) (emphasis added)⁹

⁹ As Crystalex acknowledges, because its theory is not based on establishing primary liability or adding PDVSA to the judgment, if the Republic were to sell PDVSA before the Court rendered its judgment, Crystalex would have no redress against PDVSA. (See Aug. Tr. at 33 (“If you were to rule for us and PDVSA were sold, PDVSA would not be liable in personam if sold to [e.g.] Exxon.”); *id.* at 35-36 (“It’s very different to get a Writ of Fi Fa against a particular asset than it is to get a judgment. If we were to get a judgment against PDVSA, ... [w]e could then go and attach any asset of PDVSA. We could take that judgment and go to other courts.... What we’re asking here ... is [for] an order [that] applies only to [a] particular asset.”))

Such a theory, seeking only to collect a judgment but not to establish liability, does not require an independent basis for jurisdiction. *See EM Ltd. v. Banco Cent. de la Republica Argentina*, 800 F.3d 78, 91 n.56 (2d Cir. 2015) (“*EM Ltd. II*”) (“Our precedent supports the view ... that once an instrumentality of a sovereign state has been deemed to be the alter ego of that state ... the instrumentality and the state are to be treated as one and the same for all purposes.”); *Transfield ER Cape Ltd. v. Lndus. Carriers, Inc.*, 571 F.3d 221, 224 (2d Cir. 2009) (stating alter egos “are treated as one entity for jurisdictional purposes”) (internal quotation marks omitted); *Patin v. Thoroughbred Power Boats, Inc.*, 294 F.3d 640, 654 (5th Cir. 2002) (alter egos “are considered to be one and the same under the law”); *Epperson v. Entm’t Express, Inc.*, 242 F.3d 100, 106 (2d Cir. 2001) (“Where the post-judgment proceeding is an effort to collect a federal court judgment, the courts have permitted judgment creditors to pursue, under the ancillary enforcement jurisdiction of the court, the assets of the judgment debtor even though the assets are found in the hands of a third party.”); *U.S.I Props. Corp. v. M.D. Constr. Co.*, 230 F.3d 489, 496 (1st Cir. 2000) (“Where the postjudgment claim is simply a mode of execution designed to reach property of the judgment debtor in the hands of a third party, federal courts have often exercised enforcement jurisdiction.... Where the state procedural enforcement mechanisms incorporated by Rule 69(a) allow the court to reach assets of the judgment debtor in the hands of third parties in a continuation of the same action, such as garnishment or attachment, federal enforcement jurisdiction is clear.”); *Thomas, Head & Greisen Emps. Tr. v.*

Buster, 95 F.3d 1449, 1454 & n.7 (9th Cir. 1996) (stating that where judgment creditor “is not attempting to establish the [third party’s] liability for the original judgment,... *Peacock* [is] inapposite.... *Peacock* suggested that whether a judgment creditor’s post-judgment action is within a federal district court’s ancillary enforcement jurisdiction hinges on whether it seeks not merely ‘to **collect** a judgment’ but also ‘**to establish liability**’ on the part of the third party.”).

The Court acknowledges that the proper resolution of this issue is not free from doubt. This case is certainly not an “ordinary” Rule 69 garnishment action. Moreover, PDVSA directs the Court’s attention to *Gambone v. Lite Rock Drywall*, 288 Fed. App’x 9, 12 (3d Cir. 2008), in which the Third Circuit described *Peacock* as holding “that ancillary jurisdiction was not intended for use as a tool for establishing personal liability on the part of a new defendant, for instance by designating that third party **as an alter ego of the indebted party or by piercing the corporate veil**” (emphasis added). *Gambone*, then, suggests that seeking to attach a third-party’s property on the basis that the third-party is the alter ego of a judgment-debtor is an effort to impose primary liability on the third-party, an outcome requiring an independent jurisdictional basis with respect to the third party. However, the *Gambone* Court elaborated that “[n]othing in *Peacock* ... precludes ancillary jurisdiction over suits involving assets already subject to the judgment; it only bars the exercise of ancillary jurisdiction over attempts **to impose personal liability for an existing judgment on a new party.**” *Id.* (emphasis added).

Just as the creditor in *Gambone* was not seeking to impose personal liability on the third party transferees, and thus, the Third Circuit concluded that the district court there had ancillary jurisdiction (*see id.* at 13), here, too, Crystalex does not attempt to impose personal liability on PDVSA, but instead seeks to attach assets that it alleges belong to Venezuela – assets which belong only nominally to Venezuela’s alter ego, PDVSA. Where, as here, a plaintiff “does not seek to impose personal liability on” a third party, but rather “the relief [it] seek[s] is solely to corral [the debtor’s] assets in an effort to preserve [its] access to them,” *id.*, an independent basis for subject matter jurisdiction is not required. Moreover, while the *Gambone* Court explained that “*Peacock* holds that ancillary jurisdiction does not extend to suits demanding that a third party use its legitimately held assets to satisfy a previously rendered judgment,” *id.*, the Court finds it is appropriate – if it finds PDVSA is Venezuela’s alter ego – to view the instant case as **not** involving a demand that PDVSA use *its* “legitimately held assets” to satisfy Venezuela’s judgment. Rather, the issue here is whether PDVSA’s assets are, in effect, **Venezuela’s** assets; for if they are, then this case is not correctly characterized as one in which Crystalex is attaching a third-party’s property.

PDVSA also directs the Court to *IFC*, 438 F.3d at 312, in which the Third Circuit described veil-piercing as a mechanism for imposing “primary liability” on a third party. *Id.* The *IFC* Court explained, “[v]eil-piercing does not make a party secondarily liable. Rather, it collapses corporate distinctions to make for joint primary liability. This contrasts with garnishment, in which there is a new

party and a new theory of liability, but not a new direct claim.” *Id.* Like *Gambone*, then, *IFC* seems to suggest that the Third Circuit would hold that alter ego liability is a form of “primary liability,” which, pursuant to *Peacock*, requires an independent basis to exercise subject matter jurisdiction as to the third party. *See Epperson*, 242 F.3d at 106 (“Since *Peacock*, most courts have continued to draw a distinction between post-judgment proceedings to collect an existing judgment and proceedings, such as claims of alter ego liability and veil-piercing, that raise an independent controversy with a new party in an effort to shift liability.”).

But the Court finds persuasive Crystalex’s notion of “two different contexts” of alter ego liability. (D.I. 70 at 7-8 & n.8) (citing, for example, *First Horizon Bank v. Moriarty-Gentile*, 2015 WL 8490982, at *4 n.4 (E.D.N.Y. Dec. 10, 2015) (finding independent jurisdiction, but also noting “alternate basis for jurisdiction” based on finding that third party was alter ego of debtor); *Aioi Seiki, Inc. v. JIT Automation, Inc.*, 11 F.Supp.2d 950, 952-54 (E.D. Mich. 1998) (“An action to pierce the corporate veil is not a new cause of action, but merely a determination of whether multiple entities exist as separate entities or as mere alter egos of each other.... Accordingly, [such actions are] brought supplementary to and in an effort to enforce a previous judgment of this court and should therefore be brought pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 69(a).”) An alter ego (or veil piercing) theory may be raised either as a basis for primary liability, in which “the judgment creditor seeks to establish that the alleged alter ego is liable for the original judgment, and thus obtain a new judgment against the alter ego,” or alternatively as a basis for

secondary liability, in which the judgment creditor “seeks a more limited finding, namely that the specific property at issue ... though nominally held in the name of [a third party, is], at this time, really the property of the [judgment debtor].” (D.I. 70 at 7-8) For the reasons already discussed in relation to *Gambone*, the Court views the present case as involving garnishment, seeking only to establish secondary liability (by attaching certain specified property), rather than an action seeking to impose primary liability on PDVSA.

Therefore, the Court concludes that if Crystallex meets its burden to show that the Court has subject matter jurisdiction with respect to Venezuela under Section 1605(a)(6), and if Crystallex further demonstrates that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela, then Crystallex will also necessarily have established that the Court may exercise subject matter jurisdiction with respect to PDVSA as well. Crystallex does not need to additionally prove that some other independent basis of subject matter jurisdiction exists with respect to PDVSA. *See Kensington Int'l Ltd. v. Republic of Congo*, 2007 WL 1032269, at *13 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 30, 2007) (“[I]f the facts alleged in the Complaint claiming that SNPC is an alter ego of Congo are accepted as true, then SNPC is Congo, and the only immunity at issue is Congo’s immunity.”).¹⁰

¹⁰ Even if an independent basis for jurisdiction were required, it is present, based on § 1330 and FSIA § 1605(a)(6). (See D.I. 70 at 4-5) (Crystallex: “[T]his Court has an independent basis for jurisdiction against PDVSA under 28 U.S.C. § 1330 and Section 1605(a)(6) of the FSIA.”) The Court further concludes that whether an independent basis for jurisdiction is required is a question that does not necessarily need to be answered in this

3. Crystalex Must Establish An Exception to Attachment and Execution Immunity

In addition to showing that Venezuela and PDVSA are not immune from exercise of this Court’s subject matter jurisdiction, Crystalex must also establish an exception to attachment and execution immunity. *See Rubin v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 637 F.3d 783, 793 (7th Cir. 2011) (“The Act contains two primary forms of immunity[:] ... Section 1604 provides jurisdictional immunity from suit ... [while] Section 1609 ... codifies the related common-law principle that a foreign state’s property in the United States is immune from attachment and execution”). In order for the Court to issue the requested writ of attachment, the Court must be satisfied that the specific property on which Crystalex seeks to execute – PDVSA’s shares of stock in Delaware corporation PDVH – are not immune from attachment and execution under the FSIA. *See generally Rubin v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, — U.S. —, 138 S. Ct. 816, 823-25, — L.Ed.2d — (2018) (discussing “attachment and execution immunity” in relation to FSIA terrorism exception, 28 U.S.C. § 1605A).

“[T]he FSIA’s provisions governing jurisdictional immunity, on the one hand, and execution immunity, on the other, operate independently.” *Walters v. Indus. & Commercial Bank of China, Ltd.*, 651 F.3d 280, 288 (2d Cir. 2011).¹¹ “[T]his means that ‘a waiver

case. Subject matter jurisdiction here is so intertwined with the merits of the alter ego issue that the Court must address Crystalex’s alter ego contentions, one way or the other.

¹¹ Because the FSIA does not specify the “circumstances and manner of attachment and execution proceedings,” courts apply

of immunity from suit does not imply a waiver of immunity from attachment of property, and a waiver of immunity from attachment of property does not imply a waiver of immunity from suit.” *Id.* (quoting *Restatement (Third) of Foreign Relations Law of the United States* § 456(1)(b)(1987)).¹²

Notably, “the exceptions to attachment immunity are narrower than the exceptions to jurisdictional immunity. Although there is some overlap between the exceptions to jurisdictional immunity and those for immunity from execution and attachment, there is no escaping the fact that the latter are more narrowly drawn.” *Rubin*, 637 F.3d at 796 (internal quotation marks omitted). That is, all else being equal, it is easier to establish subject matter jurisdiction over a foreign sovereign entity than it is to attach and execute on the property in the United States of such an entity.

In the instant case, it is also important to

Rule 69(a) in attachment actions involving foreign states. *EM Ltd. v. Republic of Argentina*, 473 F.3d 463, 474 n.10 (2d Cir. 2007) (“*EM Ltd. I*”).

¹² Several circuits have expressly held that “[f]ederal sovereign immunity from execution does not defeat a court’s jurisdiction.” *Peterson v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 627 F.3d 1117, 1125 (9th Cir. 2010); *see also Weinstein v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 831 F.3d 470, 479, 484 (D.C. Cir. 2016) (subject matter jurisdiction can exist even where plaintiff did not establish exception to attachment immunity under FSIA); *Rubin*, 637 F.3d at 799-800 (finding FSIA § 1609 attachment and execution immunity is “not jurisdictional”). Regardless of whether this would be a correct statement of the law in the Third Circuit, the Court has decided that it must address both jurisdictional immunity and attachment/execution immunity and, accordingly, does so in this Opinion.

understand that the scope of the exceptions to attachment and execution immunity vary depending on whether the property targeted by the plaintiff is property of the foreign sovereign itself or, instead, is property of an agency or instrumentality of the foreign sovereign. Consequently, “property owned by a foreign state’s instrumentalities is generally more amenable to attachment than property owned by the foreign state itself.” *Id.* at 794. As applied here, however, because of the Court’s alter ego finding, Crystalex’s burden is the greater of the two: as the Court is treating PDVSA as Venezuela, and therefore treating the property of PDVSA as the property of Venezuela, Crystalex must satisfy the narrower exception to execution immunity applicable to property of foreign states.

4. PDVSA Is Presumptively Separate from Venezuela

It is undisputed that PDVSA is an agency or instrumentality of Venezuela, having been separately formed by Venezuela in the 1970s. (See, e.g., Tr. at 13, 36) “[D]uly created instrumentalities of a foreign state are to be accorded a presumption of independent status.” *First Nat’l City Bank v. Banco Para El Comercio Exterior de Cuba*, 462 U.S. 611, 627, 103 S.Ct. 2591, 77 L.Ed.2d 46 (1983) (“*BancecSee Arch Trading Corp. v. Republic of Ecuador*, 839 F.3d 193, 201 (2d Cir. 2016). “Both *Bancec* and the FSIA legislative history caution against too easily overcoming the presumption of separateness.” *De Letelier v. Republic of Chile*, 748 F.2d 790, 795 (2d Cir. 1984); *see also EM Ltd. II*, 800 F.3d at 99 (“[*Bancec*] sets a high bar for when an instrumentality will be deemed an alter ego

of its sovereign state.”).

Indeed, in *Bancec* – the leading case on how the presumption of separateness between a foreign state and its agency or instrumentality may be overcome – the Supreme Court explained that “the instrumentality’s assets and liabilities must be treated as distinct from those of its sovereign in order to facilitate credit transactions with third parties.” 462 U.S. at 626, 103 S.Ct. 2591. “Freely ignoring the separate status of government instrumentalities would result in substantial uncertainty over whether an instrumentality’s assets would be diverted to satisfy a claim against the sovereign, and might thereby cause third parties to hesitate before extending credit to a government instrumentality without the government’s guarantee.” *Id.* “Due respect for the actions taken by foreign sovereigns and for principles of comity between nations leads us to conclude ... that government instrumentalities established as juridical entities distinct and independent from their sovereign should normally be treated as such.” *Id.* at 626-27, 103 S.Ct. 2591 (citation omitted).

Therefore, the Court must presume that PDVSA retains its status as separate and distinct from the nation of Venezuela. Unless Crystalex can overcome this strong presumption, the Court must dismiss this case.

5. Federal Common Law Provides The Applicable Disjunctive Test For Rebutting Presumption of Separateness

The FSIA does not address the circumstances under which an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state may be treated as the sovereign state

itself for purposes of either jurisdiction or attachment and execution. Thus, to determine whether Crystalex has rebutted the strong presumption of separateness between PDVSA and Venezuela, the Court applies standards developed pursuant to federal common law. *See Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 623, 103 S.Ct. 2591. “The controlling case for when an instrumentality of a foreign sovereign state becomes the ‘alter ego’ of that state” is, once again, *Bancec. EM Ltd. II*, 800 F.3d at 89; *see also Doe v. Holy See*, 557 F.3d 1066, 1080 (9th Cir. 2009) (“The *Bancec* standard is in fact most similar to the ‘alter ego’ or ‘piercing the corporate veil’ standards applied in many state courts to determine whether the actions of a corporation are attributable to its owners.”).¹³

In *Bancec*, the Supreme Court explained that the “presumption may be overcome in certain circumstances:” (1) “where a corporate entity is so extensively controlled by its owner that a relationship of principal and agent is created, we have held that one may be held liable for the actions of the other,” ***and “[i]n addition,”*** (2) where adhering to “the broader equitable principle” of corporate separateness “would work fraud or injustice.” *Id.* at 628-29, 103 S.Ct. 2591 (emphasis added; internal quotation marks omitted). The test, then, is disjunctive. A party such as Crystalex may rebut the presumption of

¹³ Importantly, it is federal law, not state law, that applies. PDVSA’s reliance on *Canfield v. Statoil USA Onshore Props. Inc.*, 2017 WL 1078184, at *10-11 (M.D. Pa. Mar. 22, 2017), a case applying Delaware state law, is unpersuasive. *Canfield* involved an alter ego relationship between a Delaware corporation and its foreign-sovereign-owned parent corporation. Here, the pertinent relationship is that between Venezuela and PDVSA, neither of which is a Delaware corporation.

separateness by establishing either of the foregoing and need not establish both. *See Fed. Ins. Co. v. Richard I. Rubin & Co.*, 12 F.3d 1270, 1287 (3d Cir. 1993) (“We recognize that there are two major exceptions to the *Bancec* rule, namely, the independent corporate status of government-owned entities should be disregarded (1) ‘where a corporate entity is so extensively controlled by its owner that a relationship of principal and agent is created;’ **or** (2) where to give effect to the separate instrumentalities ‘would work fraud or injustice.’”) (emphasis added); *see also Arch Trading*, 839 F.3d at 201 (stating alter ego may be shown by either extensive control “or ... fraud or injustice”); *EM Ltd. II*, 800 F.3d at 90-91 (same); *Holy See*, 557 F.3d at 1077-80 (same).¹⁴

¹⁴ PDVSA has been somewhat inconsistent on this point. After agreeing at the hearing that the applicable standard is disjunctive (*see, e.g.*, Tr. at 50-52), it asserted in a post-hearing letter that “control alone” is not enough, as “it is well established that an alter ego theory, under *Bancec* or otherwise, requires evidence of both extensive control **and** an abuse of the corporate form resulting in an injury to the plaintiff.” (D.I. 51 at 3 n.2) (emphasis in original; citing D.I. 26 at 16-18) PDVSA likewise argued in its letter that “[a]n alter ego relationship exists **only if** (1) the owner exercised complete control over the corporation with respect to the transaction at issue **and** (2) such control was used to commit a fraud or wrong that injured the party seeking to pierce the veil.” (D.I. 51 at 1-2 (quoting *BRIDAS S.A.P.I.C. v. Gov’t of Turkmenistan*, 447 F.3d 411, 416 (5th Cir. 2006) (emphasis added)); *see also id.* at 3 (“[A]n abuse of PDVSA’s corporate form ... is **required** to establish an alter ego relationship under *Bancec*.”) (emphasis added); D.I. 54 at 2 (PDVSA reiterating view that “abuse of PDVSA’s corporate form resulting in harm to Crystalex [i]s **required** under *Bancec*”) (emphasis added)) As Crystalex observes, *BRIDAS* did not hold that the applicable test is conjunctive; it only held that under the facts presented there, both portions of the test were satisfied. (*See* D.I. 53 at 1 n.1) The Court concludes – consistent

The Court will refer to the *Bancec* disjunctive test for whether the presumption of separateness has been rebutted as the “extensive control” and “fraud or injustice” tests (or prongs), respectively.¹⁵

In “examin[ing] … the nature of government instrumentalities,” the *Bancec* Court noted these entities “vary considerably, but many possess a number of common features.” 462 U.S. at 623-24, 103 S.Ct. 2591.

A typical government instrumentality, if one can be said to exist, is created by an enabling statute that prescribes the powers and duties of the instrumentality, and specifies that it is

with the authorities cited in the text and Crystallex’s consistent position – that the applicable test is disjunctive.

¹⁵ While the applicable federal common law test is disjunctive, even its excessive control prong inherently assumes that some element of unfairness would result if the Court fails to treat one entity as the alter ego of the other. In this regard, the *Canfield* decision (noted at footnote 13, *supra*), is instructive (though not controlling). It observed, in discussing *Bancec*’s excessive control test, “[t]here are several alter ego tests within this circuit … but all seek the same purpose of holding a parent liable for the actions of a subsidiary or a corporation responsible for the actions of its shareholders.... In addition, there must be some overall element of injustice or unfairness present” (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). *Canfield*, 2017 WL 1078184, at *11. These generalized equitable considerations, while far from sufficient to overcome the strong immunities set out in the FSIA, have some relevance to any full and fair attempt to apply *Bancec* and distinguish the vast majority of “normal[]” cases – in which separate entities must be treated as separate – from those rare exceptional cases where the presumptions are overcome. See 462 U.S. at 627, 103 S. Ct. 2591.

to be managed by a board selected by the government in a manner consistent with the enabling law. The instrumentality is typically established as a separate juridical entity, with the powers to hold and sell property and to sue and be sued. Except for appropriations to provide capital or to cover losses, the instrumentality is primarily responsible for its own finances. The instrumentality is run as a distinct economic enterprise; often it is not subject to the same budgetary and personnel requirements with which government agencies must comply.

Id. at 624, 103 S.Ct. 2591. A typical government instrumentality would, normally, retain its separate juridical status. *See id.* at 633, 103 S.Ct. 2591.

Still, “[d]etermination of who is and is not an agent of whom will be in great part factual, and the fact-finding should be explicit.” *Foremost-McKesson, Inc. v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 905 F.2d 438, 448 (D.C. Cir. 1990) (internal citation and quotation marks omitted). In *Bancec*, the Supreme Court emphasized that it was not “announc[ing] [a] mechanical formula for determining the circumstances under which the normally separate juridical status of a government instrumentality is to be disregarded.” *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 633, 103 S.Ct. 2591; *see also Hester Int'l Corp. v. Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 879 F.2d 170, 179 (5th Cir. 1989) (describing how “determination of whether a government instrumentality is a separate juridical entity involves the application of the law to fact-specific situations”).

The burden of making the appropriate showing rests on the party seeking to rebut the presumption of separateness, which here is Crystalex. *See Hester*, 879 F.2d at 179; *see also Foremost-McKesson*, 905 F.2d at 447 (“It is further clear that the plaintiff bears the burden of asserting facts sufficient to withstand a motion to dismiss regarding the agency relationship.”) (emphasis omitted). The Supreme Court has held that a plaintiff must “make out a legally valid claim” and ultimately prove the facts supporting the court’s jurisdiction under the FSIA; it is insufficient simply to state a “non-frivolous” claim to that effect. *See Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela v. Helmerich & Payne Int’l Drilling Co.*, — U.S. —, 137 S. Ct. 1312, 1316, 1318-19, 197 L.Ed.2d 663 (2017) (considering jurisdictional standard under FSIA expropriation exception); *see also Owens v. Republic of Sudan*, 864 F.3d 751, 779 (D.C. Cir. 2017).

B. Crystalex Has Met Its Burden with Respect to Jurisdictional Immunity

It is undisputed that the Court has subject matter jurisdiction with respect to Crystalex’s claim against Venezuela, given the FSIA’s arbitration exception. Nonetheless, PDVSA has moved to dismiss Crystalex’s efforts to collect on its judgment against Venezuela by attaching the property in the United States of PDVSA, on the theory that PDVSA is Venezuela’s alter ego. In the Court’s view, PDVSA’s motion presents both a facial and factual attack on the Court’s subject matter jurisdiction.¹⁶

¹⁶ Among the questions the Court recently directed the parties to address were: “Is PDVSA’s motion to dismiss a facial or factual challenge, or both? Is the answer the same for jurisdictional

Below, after setting out the statutory basis for the Court’s undisputed jurisdiction with respect to Venezuela, the Court addresses PDVSA’s facial and factual challenges. As to the facial challenge to the sufficiency of Crystalex’s allegations, the Court determines that Crystalex’s burden is to rebut the presumption of separateness between Venezuela and PDVSA by showing probable cause. The Court then explains that, taking Crystalex’s allegations as true, Crystalex has met this burden by adequately alleging that Venezuela exerts extensive control over PDVSA, including its day-to-day operations, rendering PDVSA the alter ego of Venezuela. However, Crystalex has not shown probable cause to find that recognizing the separateness of PDVSA and Venezuela would work a fraud or injustice.

Turning next to PDVSA’s factual challenge, the Court concludes that Crystalex’s burden is to prove its allegations by a preponderance of the evidence – not, as PDVSA contends, by clear and convincing evidence. The Court then summarizes the evidence presented by both sides and finds that Crystalex has proven, by a preponderance of the evidence, that Venezuela extensively controls PDVSA, and has, thus, proven that PDVSA is Venezuela’s alter ego. With respect to the fraud or injustice prong, however, Crystalex has not met its burden.

immunity and for execution immunity?” (D.I. 68 at 1) The parties’ responses to these seemingly straightforward questions collectively amount to approximately three pages of single-spaced text. (See D.I. 70 at 1-2; D.I. 71 at 1-2) The Court’s best assessment is that it is presented with both facial and factual challenges. To the extent this is unclear, in an abundance of caution the Court treats PDVSA’s motion as if it presents both types of challenges.

1. The Court Has Undisputed Jurisdiction With Respect to Venezuela

PDVSA does not challenge the Court's subject matter jurisdiction with respect to Venezuela. It is undisputed that Crystalex has gone beyond probable cause and fully proven that Venezuela is not immune from suit due to registration of the confirmed arbitration award against Venezuela. (See D.I. 3-1 at 5-7)

As noted previously, § 1604 of the FSIA renders foreign states like Venezuela "immune from the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States and of the States except as provided in sections 1605 to 1607" of the Act. 28 U.S.C. § 1604. The exception Crystalex relies on to establish subject matter jurisdiction with respect to Venezuela is § 1605(a)(6), relating to arbitration:

- (a) A foreign state shall not be immune from the jurisdiction of courts of the United States or of the States in any case ...
- (6) in which the action is brought ... to confirm an award made pursuant to ... an agreement to arbitrate, if
 - (A) the arbitration takes place or is intended to take place in the United States

It is undisputed that the Court has subject matter jurisdiction over Venezuela under § 1605(a)(6)(A) due to Crystalex's \$1.2 billion arbitral award against Venezuela, which was confirmed by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, and is now registered in the District of Delaware.

2. PDVSA's Facial Attack

There is no dispute that this litigation can go forward against Venezuela. But Venezuela has not appeared and Crystalex has not identified any specific property directly owned by Venezuela that can be found in the District of Delaware. Instead, as noted throughout this Opinion, Crystalex seeks to execute its judgment against Venezuela by attaching and executing on property owned by PDVSA and found in Delaware; specifically, the shares of Delaware corporation PDVH, which are indisputably directly owned by PDVSA. Hence, the Court now addresses PDVSA's facial attack on the Court's subject matter jurisdiction.

a. Crystalex's burden is probable cause

As previously noted, when considering PDVSA's facial attack on the sufficiency of Crystalex's allegation that PDVSA is Venezuela's alter ego, the Court takes as true all of Crystalex's well-pled factual allegations. *See, e.g., Rong v. Liaoning Province Government*, 452 F.3d 883, 888 (D.C. Cir. 2006) ("If the defendant challenges only the legal sufficiency of the plaintiff's jurisdictional allegations, then the district court should take the plaintiff's factual allegations as true and determine whether they bring the case within any of the exceptions to immunity invoked by the plaintiff. If a foreign state argues that even if taken as true, the plaintiff's allegations are insufficient to come within the commercial activity exception, this amounts to a challenge to the legal sufficiency of the allegations.") (internal quotation marks and citations omitted); *see also Holy See*, 557 F.3d at 1073 ("[A] motion to dismiss for lack of jurisdiction under the FSIA is no

different from any other motion to dismiss on the pleadings for lack of jurisdiction, and we apply the same standards in evaluating its merit.”).¹⁷

The burden is on Crystalex to show that these allegations support a finding of at least probable cause that the *Bancec* presumption of separateness has been rebutted. *See Strick Corp. v. Thai Teak Prods. Co.*, 493 F.Supp. 1210, 1217 (E.D. Pa. 1980) (“The writ should issue only if on its face probable cause exists for accepting its conclusion.”); *Local Union No. 626 United Bhd. of Carpenters & Joiners*

¹⁷ Because this miscellaneous action was initiated not by a complaint but instead by a motion, there is some uncertainty as to what materials the Court should look to for purposes of the facial challenge. The Court concludes it is appropriate to take as true all “well-pled” factual allegations contained in Crystalex’s motion, briefs, letters, declarations, expert reports, exhibits, or during any hearing or teleconference with the Court. (See D.I. 70 at 3) There is no doubt PDVSA has had fair notice of each of these allegations and a full opportunity to rebut them. In any event, even were the Court to take a more restrictive approach – for instance, limiting its consideration to only those factual allegations contained in Crystalex’s opening brief in support of its motion – the Court would still find that Crystalex had met its burden to show probable cause.

Relatedly, both sides fault the other for purportedly fatal procedural failings. PDVSA complains that “Crystalex should have commenced a plenary action against PDVSA by filing a complaint and serving PDVSA in accordance with the procedures set forth in the FSIA.” (D.I. 71 at 2) Crystalex counters that PDVSA should have “move[d] to quash the writ after issuance, as is the ordinary course,” rather than intervening and “preemptively” moving to dismiss. (D.I. 70 at 3 n.5) In the Court’s view, both parties had options as to how to proceed, and there is nothing deficient in how they chose to do so. Certainly, neither party can credibly contend that it has been denied due process or had an inadequate opportunity to be heard.

of Am. Pension Fund v. Delmarva Concrete Corp., 2004 WL 350452, at *2-3 (E.D. Pa. Feb. 24, 2004) (requiring “factual basis for satisfying” alter ego standard); *see also* 10 Del. C. § 3507 (“A writ of foreign attachment may be issued against any corporation, aggregate or sole, not created by or existing under the laws of this State upon proof satisfactory to the court that the defendant is a corporation not created by, or existing under the laws of this State, and that the plaintiff has a good cause of action against the defendant in an amount exceeding \$50.”); Del. Super. Ct. Civ. R. 49(b)(1) (“The proof required for the issuance of a mesne writ of attachment under Chapter 35, Title 10, Delaware Code, will be satisfied by filing with the complaint an affidavit of plaintiff or some credible person setting forth the facts required by the applicable statute.”).

Undertaking this analysis, the Court concludes that Crystalex has met its burden to overcome PDVSA’s facial attack. Specifically, Crystalex has met this burden with respect to the extensive control prong of *Bancec*, but not with respect to the fraud or injustice prong.

b. Extensive control

Taking Crystalex’s allegations as true, Crystalex has shown at least probable cause for a finding that PDVSA is not immune from suit. This is because Crystalex has stated sufficient allegations that, if proven, would rebut the presumption of separateness and establish that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela.

In determining whether a corporate entity is “so extensively controlled” by a sovereign state, the Court considers “whether the sovereign state exercises

significant and repeated control over the instrumentality's day-to-day operations." *EM Ltd. II*, 800 F.3d at 91; *see also* *Walter Fuller Aircraft Sales, Inc. v. Republic of Philippines*, 965 F.2d 1375, 1382 (5th Cir. 1992) ("[W]e look to the ownership and management structure of the instrumentality, paying particularly close attention to whether the government is involved in day-to-day operations, as well as the extent to which the agent holds itself out to be acting on behalf of the government."); *Holy See*, 557 F.3d at 1079-80 (requiring "day-to-day, routine involvement" to overcome *Bancec* presumption).

Considerations relevant to the fact-intensive inquiry of whether a sovereign state exercises control over an instrumentality's day-to-day operations include:

whether the sovereign nation: (1) uses the instrumentality's property as its own; (2) ignores the instrumentality's separate status or ordinary corporate formalities; (3) deprives the instrumentality of the independence from close political control that is generally enjoyed by government agencies; (4) requires the instrumentality to obtain approvals for ordinary business decisions from a political actor; and (5) issues policies or directives that cause the instrumentality to act directly on behalf of the sovereign state. These factors are relevant to answering the touchstone inquiry for "extensive control": namely, whether the sovereign state exercises significant and repeated control over

the instrumentality's day-to-day operations.

EM Ltd. II, 800 F.3d at 91.

Crystalex makes sufficient allegations which, taken as true, establish probable cause that the presumption of separateness is rebutted. As summarized in Crystalex's briefing on the motions, Crystalex has alleged each of the factors identified above, as well as other bases for finding Venezuela exercised significant and repeated control over PDVSA's day-to-day operations. Borrowing from Crystalex's briefing, the Court sets out below the well-pled allegations that, collectively, demonstrate probable cause that Venezuela extensively controls PDVSA, rebutting the *Bancec* presumption of separateness.¹⁸

Venezuela Using PDVSA's Property As Its Own

- Venezuela uses PDVSA's property, including aircraft and tanker trucks, for its own political purposes

Ignoring PDVSA's Separate Status

- PDVSA discloses Venezuela's control and willingness to direct the company to act against its interests as risk factors in its bond offering

¹⁸ See, e.g., D.I. 3-1 at 7-23; D.I. 33 at 10-12 (internal quotation marks, citations, and footnotes omitted). Crystalex's allegations as set out in its briefing are rearranged here in order to track more closely the recitation of factors as contained in *EM Ltd. II*. The pertinent factors are not exhaustive – the Court can (and does) consider other factors, and not every factor need be present – nor are they mutually exclusive, as many of them overlap. Reasonable minds will differ as to the category into which to place any specific allegation or evidence.

documents

- At least for marketing purposes, including on Twitter, PDVSA regularly boasts “PDVSA es Venezuela,” which translates to “PDVSA is Venezuela”

Depriving PDVSA of Independence from Close Political Control

- Venezuela appoints PDVSA’s Board of Directors, and several Government Ministers are also members of PDVSA’s Board of Directors
- Venezuela’s Oil Minister has almost always also been PDVSA’s President and Director
- Venezuela’s Oil Ministry and PDVSA share physical office space
- Venezuela – including its President – hires and fires, and exerts political pressure on, both high- and low-level PDVSA employees, including by requiring that PDVSA managers be trained according to the Government’s social policies
- PDVSA’s Articles of Incorporation confirm that it is required to adhere to the guidelines and policies established or agreed upon by the National Executive

Requiring PDVSA to Obtain Approvals for Ordinary Business Decisions

- Venezuela’s National Executive regulates and supervises PDVSA’s operations
- Venezuela instructs PDVSA to whom it must sell oil internationally and at what price
- Venezuela dictates the price at which oil is sold domestically (forcing PDVSA to subsidize gas

prices)

Issuing Policies Causing PDVSA to Act Directly on Behalf of Venezuela

- PDVSA was created by presidential decree not to generate profits but as a national company to implement national policy on hydrocarbons
- From 2010 through 2016, Venezuela required PDVSA to contribute to the State directly (through taxes, royalties, and dividends in the amount of approximately \$119 billion) and indirectly (through off-budget social programs and other public expenditures that have nothing to do with the hydrocarbons industry in the amount of approximately \$82 billion)
- Venezuela uses PDVSA to achieve its social and political goals, both domestically (e.g., through Fondo Nacional para el Desarrollo Nacional (“FONDEN”), a social development fund) and abroad (e.g., through Petrocaribe)
- Venezuela forces PDVSA to provide oil to China and Russia as repayment for loans those countries made to Venezuela
- Venezuela directs PDVSA to sell oil to other friendly nations on non-economic terms to advance Venezuela’s foreign policy objectives

Additional Indications of Venezuela’s Extensive Control Over PDVSA

- Venezuela manipulates PDVSA’s conversion of U.S. Dollars to Venezuelan Bolivars to leverage PDVSA’s revenues for the sole benefit of Venezuela and to the detriment of PDVSA
- Venezuela uses PDVSA to expropriate private

investment

- PDVSA paid Venezuela's fees to the ICSID tribunal in the underlying arbitration between Venezuela and Crystalex

PDVSA's facial challenge can be summarized as follows:

[T]he facts asserted in [Crystalex's motion] and supporting memorandum of law demonstrate nothing more than ordinary shareholder control and government regulation that cannot, as a matter of law, satisfy the required showing that the shareholder exercise complete domination and control over the corporation's day-to-day operations.

(D.I. 71 at 4) The Court is not persuaded. Crystalex has shown probable cause to rebut the presumption of separateness between the Republic of Venezuela and PDVSA. PDVSA's arguments are weightier (though ultimately unsuccessful) in connection with its factual challenge, where the Court can (and does) consider PDVSA's evidence, and not just Crystalex's allegations.

c. Fraud or injustice

Crystalex contends that it has satisfied both prongs of the disjunctive *Bancec* test: extensive control as well as fraud or injustice. While, as already explained, the Court agrees with the former assertion, it rejects the latter. Even taking Crystalex's well-pled allegations as true, there is not probable cause that giving effect to the separateness of Venezuela and PDVSA would "work a fraud or injustice" as that term is used in *Bancec* (i.e., as a

stand-alone test that may be satisfied independent of whether there is extensive control).¹⁹ Instead, as PDVSA contends, Crystalex has not “show[n] that the Republic abused PDVSA’s corporate form to perpetrate a fraud or injustice resulting in harm to Crystalex.” (D.I. 71 at 5)

Crystalex alleges that the expropriation of its interest in the Las Cristinas mines “resulted in a multibillion dollar benefit to state-owned and controlled PDVSA.” (D.I. 3-1 at 32) Further, Crystalex contends that “Venezuela reaps enormous benefits from owning and operating an oil refining company under the protection of Delaware law ... in an attempt to protect Venezuela’s Delaware assets from execution.” (*Id.*) From these premises, Crystalex asks the Court to “deem PDVSA to be Venezuela’s alter ego to avoid the obvious injustice that would result if Venezuela were permitted to violate international law by taking Crystalex’s assets, transfer those assets [to] a state-owned and controlled company, PDVSA, for no consideration, and then use U.S. law to avoid paying its lawful obligations in the face of PDVSA’s receipt of billions for those stolen assets.” (*Id.*; *see also* D.I. 33 at 17 (“Venezuela uses PDVSA to generate billions of dollars in revenue in the United States through its commercial refining and oil industry subsidiaries, while simultaneously using PDVSA to shield those same assets from creditors in the United States.”))

Crystalex’s allegations fail because they do not

¹⁹ It follows that neither has Crystalex met its higher burden of proving fraud or injustice by a preponderance of the evidence. Therefore, Crystalex’s motion with respect to the fraud or injustice prong also fails to survive PDVSA’s factual challenge.

sufficiently allege that Venezuela used PDVSA as an instrument to defraud Crystalex. Everything Crystalex alleges that Venezuela did to harm Crystalex could have been done – and, indeed, was alleged to have been done – by Venezuela itself, regardless of whether PDVSA even existed. It was Venezuela, not PDVSA, which expropriated Crystalex's interests in the mines. While Venezuela may have subsequently transferred those interests to PDVSA, it did not need to do so as part of its scheme to defraud Crystalex or to engineer an unjust outcome. Crystalex does not even allege that PDVSA participated in or facilitated the expropriation. Nor does Crystalex allege in anything other than an insufficient, conclusory manner that PDVSA was created and/or is being maintained by Venezuela for the purpose of defrauding Crystalex and other creditors.

As PDVSA persuasively explains:

PDVSA had nothing to do with the underlying dispute between the parties to the arbitration. And PDVSA is not a newly created sham corporation designed to insulate the Republic from liability. PDVSA was established over 40 years ago and is one of the largest oil companies in the world.... [T]he mere fact that a government instrumentality benefits from the actions of the government does not demonstrate an abuse of the corporate form required to overcome the presumption of separateness under *Bancec*.

(D.I. 26 at 19-20)

Therefore, the Court concludes that Crystalex cannot meet its burden under *Bancec*'s fraud or injustice prong.

2. PDVSA's Factual Attack

As previously noted, PDVSA's motion presents both a facial and factual attack on Crystalex's efforts to establish subject matter jurisdiction. In evaluating the factual challenge, the Court does not assume the truth of Crystalex's allegations. Instead, the Court must consider the evidence presented by Crystalex, as well as any competing evidence presented by PDVSA, and determine, under the appropriate burden of proof, whether Crystalex's evidence meets that burden.

For the reasons set out below, the Court concludes that (1) Crystalex's burden is to prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that Venezuela extensively controls PDVSA, and (2) Crystalex has met this burden.

a. Crystalex's burden is preponderance of the evidence

While the parties agree that Crystalex bears some burden in order to obtain its requested writ, they disagree as to the nature of that burden. Crystalex argues for the "usual ... rule generally applicable to civil actions in federal courts": that the plaintiff must prove its case by a preponderance of the evidence. (D.I. 52 at 1) (quoting *Ramsey v. United Mine Workers of Am.*, 401 U.S. 302, 308, 91 S.Ct. 658, 28 L.Ed.2d 64 (1971)) PDVSA contends that Crystalex, as "a party seeking to rebut the strong presumption of separateness under *Bancec*, bears the heavy burden of proving an alter ego relationship by

clear and convincing evidence.” (D.I. 51 at 1) The Court agrees with Crystalex.

As Crystalex correctly points out, *Bancec* held there is “no mechanical formula” for assessing whether the presumption of separateness has been rebutted. 462 U.S. at 633, 103 S.Ct. 2591. Nor does *Bancec* speak of a heightened burden. Neither does the FSIA address the standard of proof or suggest it is a heightened one. (See D.I. 52 at 1) In this situation, the Court discerns no basis to depart from the ordinarily prevailing standard in a civil case, which is the preponderance of the evidence standard. *See generally McNutt v. Gen. Motors Acceptance Corp. of Indiana*, 298 U.S. 178, 189, 56 S.Ct. 780, 80 L.Ed. 1135 (1936) (“[T]he court may demand that the party alleging jurisdiction justify his allegations by a preponderance of evidence.”).

The sparse caselaw on the subject further supports this conclusion.²⁰ While many cases in this area fail to state the standard of proof being applied, Crystalex cites a handful of cases that expressly apply a preponderance of the evidence standard. *See, e.g., Kirschenbaum v. 650 Fifth Ave.*, 257 F. Supp. 3d 463, 472 (S.D.N.Y. 2017) (issuing findings of fact based on “assessment of the preponderance of the credible evidence,” while also finding “massive amount of evidence” that left Court “firmly convinced

²⁰ As the District Court for the District of Columbia has recognized, “[w]hile the D.C. Circuit has explained that the court must look beyond the pleadings and even conduct limited jurisdictional discovery when a foreign-sovereign defendant challenges the factual basis for subject-matter jurisdiction under the FSIA, there is no authority to direct this court as to the appropriate burden of proof.” *Kilburn v. Republic of Iran*, 277 F.Supp.2d 24, 33 n.5 (D.D.C. 2003).

... by far more than a preponderance of the evidence"); *Kensington*, 2007 WL 1032269, at *5 (applying preponderance of evidence standard). As Crystalex further notes, other courts have undertaken a "totality of the circumstances" analysis, *Bridas*, 447 F.3d at 417, or assessed whether claims were "well-supported" or supported by "sufficient [evidence of] control," *McKesson Corp. v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 52 F.3d 346, 351-52 (D.C. Cir. 1995) – approaches which do not suggest that these courts were applying any heightened evidentiary standard. In a case involving alter ego allegations outside the sovereign immunity context, the Third Circuit (applying state law) has applied a preponderance of the evidence standard. See *Plastipak Packaging, Inc. v. DePasquale*, 75 Fed. App'x 86, 90 (3d Cir. 2003).

PDVSA has not cited a single case that applied a clear and convincing evidence standard to an alter ego inquiry in the context of *Bancec* and the FSIA. PDVSA's cases applying state-law alter ego standards (like state-law cases cited by Crystalex) are unhelpful, as the Court is (by the parties' agreement) applying a federal law standard.²¹ PDVSA broadly asserts that "the clear and convincing evidence

²¹ As Crystalex acknowledges, "[t]he Third Circuit has also stated, without citation, that alter-ego claims that 'rely on a fraud theory' require proof by clear and convincing evidence." (D.I, 52 at 2 n.1) (quoting *Kaplan v. First Options of Chi, Inc.*, 19 F.3d 1503, 1522 (3d Cir. 1994)) Since the Court has already concluded that Crystalex failed to establish even probable cause to support application of the fraud or injustice prong of *Bancec*, and cannot prove fraud or injustice by a preponderance of the evidence, it follows that Crystalex also could not meet the clear and convincing evidence standard. Thus, there is no need for the Court to resolve which of the evidentiary standards applies to the fraud or injustice test.

standard applies any time a party seeks to overcome a legal presumption.” (D.I. 51 at 2) But this is incorrect, as Crystalex demonstrates. (See D.I. 53 at 2) (“That ignores decades of decisions holding that a wide range of presumptions across different subject-matter areas could be rebutted by a preponderance of the evidence.”) (citing cases)

The Court does not agree with PDVSA that “a preponderance of the evidence standard is inconsistent with” *Bancec*’s “strong presumption” of separateness. (D.I. 54 at 1-2) PDVSA does not cite authority to support the view that the strength of the presumption necessarily alters the standard of proof necessary to rebut it. The “strong” characterization of the presumption helps explain the justification for it and the importance of the Court enforcing it, unless and until it is overcome by the required amount of evidence. It does not, however, dictate a clear and convincing burden of proof.

Hence, the Court will now turn to evaluating whether Crystalex has met its burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence.

b. Extensive control

Based on the evidence presented by both parties,²² the Court finds that Crystalex has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that PDVSA is not immune from suit. The record contains sufficient

²² Crystalex requests that the Court take judicial notice of many of the exhibits included in its appendix, particularly those which are acts and statements of various branches of the Venezuela Government as well as orders issued by or public filings made in U.S. Courts. (See D.I. 9) No opposition to this request has been filed. (See generally Tr. at 67-68) The Court will take judicial notice as requested.

evidence to enable the Court to find – including by resolving disputed issues of fact²³ – that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela. In particular, Crystalex has met its burden to show that Venezuela extensively controls PDVSA.

As noted above, while there is no mechanical formula that applies to this inquiry, the Court finds it helpful to organize its discussion based initially on factors that are commonly looked to, in the same order that the Court identified these same factors in connection with PDVSA’s facial challenge. The Court then considers some additional evidence further supporting its findings.

i. Venezuela’s use of PDVSA’s property as its own

Crystalex has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that Venezuela regularly uses PDVSA’s assets as its own. (*See* D.I. 3-1 at 16-17, 31) (citing evidence)

Venezuela uses PDVSA aircraft for travel by Venezuelan officials and to escort other countries’ politicians who are “friendly to Venezuela,” even when they are not traveling to or from Venezuela. (*See* D.I. 3-1 at 16-17; *see also*, e.g., D.I. 5-1 Ex. 54 at 1 (LaPatilla reporting, “They don’t try to hide it any more. It is an official policy to use the large fleet of VIP ... airplanes of Pdvsa and the government itself not only for the private use of public officials ... but

²³ *See generally Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, 137 S. Ct. at 1324 (“If a decision about the matter requires resolution of factual disputes, the court will have to resolve those disputes, but it should do so as near to the outset of the case as is reasonably possible.”).

also to make use of the Venezuelan people's money"); *id.* Ex. 55 (BBC reporting, "The President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, stated ... that Colombian guerilla leader Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri, alias 'Timochenko', the senior commander of the [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia]..., traveled in an official Venezuelan airplane [owned by PDVSA] to Havana."); *id.* Ex. 56 (Noticias24 reporting "Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Madura ... stated ... that the deposed president of Honduras Manuel Zelaya has left the United States bound for his country in an airplane bearing Venezuelan registration number ... and flown by 'a Venezuelan captain'"); *id.* Ex. 57 (Reportero24 reporting, "Pdvsa allocates 3 luxury airplanes for the use of the Cuban regime," airplanes which "were previously utilized to serve executives of the state-owned Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) company" and which "only visit Venezuela when they require maintenance")) Venezuela also uses PDVSA trucks as physical barriers to prevent anti-government demonstrators from gathering. (See *id.* Ex. 58) (LaPATilla reporting PDVSA trucks were blocking central highway and being guarded by Bolivarian National Police and Bolivarian National Guard)

ii. Ignoring PDVSA's separate status

Crystalex has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that Venezuela regularly ignores PDVSA's separate status. This is evidenced in numerous statements PDVSA has made in filings associated with efforts to raise money, including bond offering documents.

For example, in a November 11, 2011 offering document, PDVSA disclosed:

[T]he Venezuelan government **required** us to acquire several electricity generation and distribution companies, as well as certain food companies The Venezuelan government has also nationalized and continues to nationalize other companies in Venezuela.. .. [T]he Venezuelan government announced the nationalization of Venoco ... and **required** ... us to acquire the assets of Venoco at a price to be determined in the future.

(D.I. 4-3 Ex. 40 at 16-17) (emphasis added) In September 2016, PDVSA advised its bondholders it could provide no assurances that Venezuela would not “**impose** further material commitments upon us or **intervene** in our commercial affairs in a manner that will adversely affect our operations, cash flow and financial results.” (*Id.* Ex. 44 at 28) (emphasis added)

In the context of the full record developed here, the Court finds that these acknowledgments by PDVSA of actions Venezuela has “required” it to take, and material commitments Venezuela has “impose[d]” on it, are indicative of Venezuela, its sole shareholder, ignoring the separate legal status of PDVSA.

This finding is bolstered by PDVSA’s repeated identification of itself, including on Twitter, as Venezuela. PDVSA has used the hashtag “#PDVSAesVenezuela,” which literally means “PDVSA is Venezuela.” (D.I. 4-1 Ex. 3) The Court disagrees with PDVSA that Crystallex’s arguments

relating to the Twitter hashtag are “frivolous.” (D.I. 26 at 37 n.13) PDVSA also disseminates Venezuelan propaganda through its social media presence by regularly tweeting messages in support of the Government and portraying a photograph of former President Hugo Chavez as its banner heading. (D.I. 5-1 Exs. 67-69)

In connection with other evidence in the record, these facts constitute additional evidence that Venezuela and PDVSA regularly ignore their separate legal status.

iii. Depriving PDVSA of independence from close political control

Crystallex has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that Venezuela has deprived PDVSA of independence from close political control.

This is illustrated by the fact that Venezuela’s President, Nicolas Maduro, appoints PDVSA’s directors, vice-presidents, and members of its shareholder council. (See D.I. 4-1 Ex. 13; *see also* D.I. 4-3 Ex. 40 at 16 (PDVSA Nov. 11, 2011 Notes Offering Circular) (“The President of Venezuela appoints our president and the members of our Board of Directors by executive decree.”)) In January 2017, President Maduro also appointed Nelson Martinez, former President of Citgo (a corporate subsidiary several steps below the Government of Venezuela), as Minister of the People’s Power for Oil and Mining (“Oil Minister”) and President of PDVSA. (See D.I. 4-2 Exs. 23-24) In November, 2017, a newspaper headline announced, “President Maduro Appoints Asdrúbal Chávez As New President of Citgo.” (D.I. 42-1 Ex. 110; *see also* Tr. at 30)

In 2002, then-President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, fired two PDVSA employees on national television, fired seven PDVSA executives, and forcibly retired 12 other PDVSA employees. (D.I. 8 at ¶ 21) In 2003, “the Government fired nearly 40% of the PDVSA’s workforce at the time (approximately 18,000 PDVSA employees) because of their role in opposing the Government.” (*Id.*; *see also* D.I. 7 at ¶ 11) As recently as July 2017, Venezuela continued to threaten to terminate PDVSA employees who were opposed to the governing regime. (*See* D.I. 4-2 Ex. 35 at 2 (“Political appointees are gaining clout at the expense of veteran oil executives, while employees are under mounting pressure to attend government rallies and vote for the ruling Socialists. The increasing focus on politics over performance is contributing to a rapid deterioration of Venezuela’s oil industry”); *id.* at 3 (“Managers told workers they would be fired unless they voted in Maduro’s controversial election”); *see also* D.I. 4-3 Ex. 66 (President Maduro reported as stating, “If there are 15,000 workers, all 15,000 workers must vote without any excuses”))

There is also a great deal of overlap between the leadership of Venezuela and that of PDVSA. In November 2017, President Maduro appointed a military general as Oil Minister and also as President of PDVSA. (*See* Tr. at 29-30) That individual’s predecessors, Nelson Martinez, Eulogio del Pino, and Rafael Ramirez Carreño, similarly served simultaneously as both Venezuela’s Oil Minister and PDVSA’s President. (*See* D.I. 4-2 Exs. 23-24) In a speech to the International Assembly in 2014, former Oil Minister and PDVSA President, Rafael Ramirez, said; “today we can say with clarity that we have the

lull and sovereign management of our oil industry.” (D.I. 4-3 Ex. 38 at 17; *see also* Tr. at 19) Given the evidence recited throughout this Opinion, the Court considers it reasonable to infer that when individuals who simultaneously hold office in the Government of Venezuela and in PDVSA confront situations in which the interests of their two “bosses” conflict, they make decisions based on what they view to be the best interests of Venezuela, even if that comes at the expense of PDVSA’s interests.²⁴

While hiring and firing board members may also be “an exercise of power incidental to ownership, and ownership of an instrumentality by the parent state is not synonymous with control over the instrumentality’s day-to-day operations,” *EM Ltd. II*, 800 F.3d at 92-93, given the totality of the circumstances here the Court finds these facts to be evidence that Venezuela “interfere[d] in and dictate[d] [PDVSA’s] daily business decisions,” *id.*

Additionally, PDVSA’s Articles of Incorporation require that it adhere to policies established by the National Executive. (*See* D.I. 4-1 Ex. 13; *see also* D.I. 8 at ¶ 20) Venezuela’s National Executive, through the Oil Ministry, also “regulates and supervises PDVSA’s operations, exercises control of PDVSA’s production and export of oil, and grants the rights

²⁴ Among other evidence supporting this inference is, as will be described further below, how PDVSA in its own public filings warns investors that the Republic of Venezuela may force PDVSA to take actions that are not in PDVSA’s own interests as a corporation, when, in the Republic’s view, those actions will further policies and goals of the nation itself. (*See, e.g.*, D.I. 4-3 Ex. 40 at 16) (“As a result, we may engage in activities that give preference to the objectives of the Venezuelan government rather than our economic and business objectives.”)

and mining areas as established under Venezuelan law.” (D.I. 8 at ¶ 20) (internal quotation marks omitted)

iv. Requiring PDVSA to obtain approvals for ordinary business decisions

Crystalex has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that in addition to designating oil production levels by official decree, Venezuela also “dictates the severely discounted price at which PDVSA must sell its product to Venezuelan citizens” and “forces PDVSA to ‘sell’ oil to third parties for no, or *de minimis*, consideration.” (D.I. 3-1 at 12) (citing evidence) In a 2011 debt offering, PDVSA explained: “[t]he Venezuelan government, rather than the international market, determines the price of products … sold by us through our affiliates in the domestic market.” (D.I. 4-3 Ex. 40 at 14) The Government sets the prices for oil sold within Venezuela and designates oil production levels. (*Id.* Ex. 39; D.I. 7 at ¶ 38)²⁵

Venezuela’s National Executive regulates and supervises PDVSA’s operations. (*See* D.I. 7 at ¶ 7; D.I. 4-3 Ex. 40) The Government compels PDVSA to sell oil to China, Russia, and 17 Caribbean countries at a discount in order to support Venezuela’s foreign policy. (*See* D.I. 5-1 Exs. 72-74, 77; *see also* D.I. 8 at ¶¶ 49-50; D.I. 7 at ¶¶ 9, 31-37) Energy Minister

²⁵ Crystalex points to PDVSA’s audited financial statements, which reveal that PDVSA received a government subsidy “corresponding to the difference between the cost of production and the regulated sale price of motor and diesel fuels in the national market,” which KPMG called “an unusual transaction” and “key audit issue.” (D.I. 3-1 at 20; D.I. 7 at ¶ 40)

Rafael Ramirez has explained that PDVSA “is not a company designed to generate profits;” instead, it “is a national company.” (D.I. 7 at ¶ 39)

PDVSA observes that other oil-producing nations similarly regulate oil policies, making PDVSA no different from any other national oil company. (D.I. 26 at 8, 31) Just because PDVSA shares this feature (and perhaps others) with “typical” national oil companies does not, however, deprive this feature of all evidentiary value in assessing whether Venezuela exercises extensive control over PDVSA. Nor, of course, is this the only evidence on which the Court is relying to find an alter ego relationship.

v. Issuing policies causing PDVSA to act directly on behalf of Venezuela

The record further establishes that Venezuela causes PDVSA to achieve domestic social and political goals and to advance Venezuela’s foreign policy goals. (D.I. 3-1 at 17-21) (citing evidence)

PDVSA was created by Presidential Decree, in 1975, to implement government policy. (See D.I. 4 Exs. 11, 12; D.I. 8 at ¶ 9) The “History” section of PDVSA’s website lists among the company’s “Strategic guidelines” the following: “Support the geopolitical position of the country and key objectives of Venezuelan foreign policy, such as the promotion of comprehensive cooperation with strategic allies” (D.I. 4-2 Ex. 32 at 1)

In 2002, the National Executive reorganized PDVSA, expanding its corporate mission beyond the hydrocarbons industry to “take on a more political role.” (D.I. 3-1 at 17) Under the new structure, PDVSA funds Venezuelan programs that have

nothing to do with its business, causing PDVSA to take on additional debt. Such programs include PDVSA Agrícola S.A., which subsidizes Venezuela's agriculture, industrial infrastructure, and produce sectors, and PDVSA Desarrollos Urbanos S.A., which subsidizes Venezuela's housing projects. (*Id.* at 18; D.I. 8 at ¶ 41) PDVSA's total contributions to the Venezuelan budget between 2010 and 2016 were in excess of \$119 billion. (D.I. 7 at ¶ 20)²⁶ As PDVSA disclosed to investors in September 2016: “[T]he government **requires** us to make significant financial contributions to social programs, including transfers to FONDEN, as well as requiring us to fund specific projects. In 2014 and 2015, we made total contributions to FONDEN in the amounts of U.S. \$974 million and U.S. \$3,306 million, respectively.” (D.I. 4-3 Ex. 44 (PDVSA Offer Sept. 16, 2016) at 29) (emphasis added); *see also* D.I. 4-2 Exs. 19, 30)

PDVSA asserts that “[t]hese taxes and currency regulations, which apply to companies other than PDVSA, are not a basis for disregarding PDVSA's legal separateness.” (D.I. 26 at 33 n.9) It is true that Venezuela regulates and taxes the entire oil industry operating in the country, not just PDVSA. (See D.I. 28 at ¶ 5; *see also* D.I. 26 at 7-8) But that does not mean the taxation and regulation of PDVSA is inconsistent with a finding of PDVSA being Venezuela's alter ego.

Moreover, the tax and regulatory policies are only some of the Venezuelan policies that cause PDVSA to act directly on behalf of Venezuela, as already noted.

²⁶ PDVSA points out that in this same period PDVSA had revenues of more than \$724 billion and earned a total net profit of over \$45 billion. (D.I. 27-1 Exs. 4-6)

Venezuela also uses PDVSA to achieve its foreign policy goals by committing PDVSA to sell oil to certain Caribbean and Latin American nations at substantial discounts, without PDVSA's consent. (D.I. 3-1 at 21) (citing evidence) Even when those oil debts are repaid, the money is given to Venezuela, not PDVSA. (*Id.*; D.I. 5-1 Ex. 77) Venezuela has entered into agreements with China whereby PDVSA acts "on behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" to repay China. (D.I. 4-3 Ex. 49 at 3; *see also id.* at 5 (additional references to PDVSA taking on duties "on behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" or "acting on behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela")) China has thereby paid more than \$50 billion to Venezuela (for oil) yet PDVSA itself has received nothing. (D.I. 7 at ¶ 37)

Consistent with the foregoing, PDVSA stated the following in a November 11, 2011 Notes Offering Circular:

We are controlled by the Venezuelan government, which ultimately determines our capital investment and other spending programs.... The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as our sole owner, has pursued, and may pursue in the future, certain of its macroeconomic and social objectives through us. As a result, we may engage in activities that give preference to the objectives of the Venezuelan government rather than our economic and business objectives. We may make investments, incur costs and engage in sales on terms that affect our results of operations and financial condition.

(D.I. 4-3 Ex. 40 at 16)

**vi. Additional indications of
Venezuela's extensive control over
PDVSA**

The record contains additional evidence of Venezuela's extensive control over PDVSA, evidence that does not neatly fit into one or more of the categories above.

For instance, it is undisputed that PDVSA paid the administrative fees Venezuela incurred in connection with the arbitration with Crystalex, which amounted to around \$249,000. (See Tr. at 40-41; D.I. 6 (Fung Decl.) at ¶¶ 3-5, Exs. 1-2)²⁷

Also, Venezuela manipulates PDVSA's conversion of U.S. Dollars to Venezuelan Bolivars to leverage PDVSA's revenues for the sole benefit of Venezuela and to the detriment of PDVSA. (See D.I. 7 at ¶ 26; *see also* D.I. 4-3 Exs. 47-48) PDVSA is required to convert foreign currency into Venezuelan Bolivars at an artificially low U.S. Dollar to Bolivar exchange rate "which is approximately 1/500th of the market rate." (D.I. 7 at ¶ 26; *see also* D.I. 8 at ¶ 46; D.I. 4-3 Ex. 48) The Republic can then exchange that currency at more favorable rates. (D.I. 7 at ¶ 26; *see also* D.I. 4-3 Ex. 48)

²⁷ PDVSA insists there is "nothing untoward" about an entity paying a debt of its shareholder owner. (Tr. at 41; *see also* *EM Ltd. II*, 800 F.3d at 93 (stating that "repayment by [a government instrumentality] of [a foreign country's] other debts does not establish the existence of an alter ego relationship," at least where instrumentality was a national bank, as "central banks commonly perform payment functions for their governments")) That this observation is true does not mean this evidence lacks relevance or contradicts the Court's findings.

Additionally, in November 2017, PDVSA announced: “As of today, the command of the oil industry passes into the hands of the country’s first worker, Nicolas Maduro.” (D.I. 42-1 Ex. 112 at 1) PDVSA has also stated that one of its objectives is to “guarantee control by the State over [PDVSA].” (D.I. 5-1 Ex. 60)

Finally, Venezuela has designated PDVSA as an expropriating entity, thereby authorizing it to exercise a sovereign power. (*Id.* Exs. 86-88, 99)

All of the foregoing is further evidence supporting the Court’s conclusion.

**vii. PDVSA’s contrary interpretation
wrongly fails to account for the
totality of the evidence**

PDVSA recognizes the support in the record for the Court’s findings identified above. Indeed, as Crystallex notes, the evidence here is “largely undisputed,” as PDVSA has instead “focus[ed] its challenges on the inferences that may be drawn from the undisputed facts.” (D.I. 52 at 2) PDVSA’s arguments against concluding an alter ego relationship exists rest largely on disputing the relevance of Crystallex’s evidence and insisting that none of the above-listed findings individually transforms PDVSA into Venezuela’s alter ego.

The Court disagrees with PDVSA’s protestations that all of Crystallex’s evidence is irrelevant. (*See, e.g.*, Tr. at 47 (“extensive regulation by an oil producing state of its hydrocarbon industry” is irrelevant); *id.* at 54 (characterizing as irrelevant whether Venezuela itself benefitted from acts taken by PDVSA); *id.* at 55 (contending designation of

PDVSA as expropriating entity, use by Venezuela of PDVSA property without reimbursement, and sale of oil to other countries at reduced prices are “totally irrelevant”)) Based on the caselaw discussed in this Opinion, the Court concludes that all of the considerations on which the Court has relied are relevant to the issue of whether Venezuela so extensively controls PDVSA, including its day-to-day conduct, that it should be treated as Venezuela’s alter ego for purposes of application of the FSIA. As has been noted repeatedly in this Opinion, *Bancec* did not establish a mechanical formula for courts to apply. It is appropriate for the Court to consider the totality of circumstances that either side wishes to present.

Much of PDVSA’s attack on Crystalex’s showing consists of dissecting the totality of Crystalex’s evidence and arguing that no single piece of evidence renders PDVSA the alter ego of Venezuela. (*See, e.g.*, D.I. 26 at 20 (“mere fact that a government instrumentality benefits from the actions of the government does not demonstrate an abuse of the corporate form”); *id.* at 33-34 (“mere fact that PDVSA may have been designated as an expropriating entity in certain other cases is not grounds for disregarding its separate legal personality”); *id.* at 35-36 (contending that Venezuela’s use of PDVSA’s planes “would not support” veil piercing); *id.* at 35 (contending sale of oil to other countries on deferred payment and other favorable terms “do[es] not support a finding of alter ego liability”)) Of course, no single piece of evidence in the record is sufficient on its own to enable Crystalex to meet its burden, but of course that also is not what the law requires. Again, the Court must consider all of the evidence in the record. When it does so, the Court finds that it

sufficiently proves, by a preponderance of the evidence, that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela.

PDVSA also characterizes itself as merely a “typical” national oil company, the type of creature that *Bancec* compels must retain its separate juridical status. (See Tr. at 53 (“[A]ll they have shown is that it is the same as other national oil corporations that are owned by petrol states.”); *see also* D.I. 26 at 2 (arguing PDVSA is “nothing more than a ‘typical government instrumentality’”) (quoting *Bancec*)) While the Court agrees with PDVSA that it possesses many of the characteristics *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 624, 103 S.Ct. 2591, ascribed to “typical” government instrumentalities – it was created by an enabling statute, is managed by a board selected by the government, has powers to hold and sell property and sue and be sued, and is primarily responsible for its own finances – PDVSA also has numerous other characteristics, which the Court has described above in detail. Considering the totality of the evidence, the Court finds that PDVSA is not merely a “typical government instrumentality” but is the alter ego of Venezuela.

viii. The parties’ declarations confirm the Court’s findings

The Court’s findings described above are further supported by the declarations the parties submitted. Together, Crystalex and PDVSA have filed six substantive declarations: two each from Dr. Roberto Rigobon and Professor Jose Ignacio Hernandez, who endorse Crystalex’s view that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela; and one each from Professor Luis A. Garcia Montoya and Mr. Alejandro Schmilinsky, supporting PDVSA’s view that the two entities are

properly viewed as separate. (See D.I. 7, 8, 28, 29, 35, 36)²⁸ While there are certainly disputes among the various declarations, to the limited extent those disputes are material, the Court resolves them in favor of Crystalex, for the reasons explained below.

Dr. Rigobon, a professor of management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research, opines on the economic realities of the relationship between PDVSA and Venezuela, specifically concluding that: (1) the Venezuelan Government exercises complete economic control over PDVSA's day-to-day operations; (2) Venezuela relies on PDVSA to sustain its economy; and (3) the Venezuelan Government uses PDVSA for political purposes. (See D.I. 7 at ¶¶ 7-9) Dr. Rigobon also explains that PDVSA was created by Presidential Decree and initially behaved "like an economically-driven company," including by setting its own budget, making its own decisions, and promoting, hiring, or firing its own staff. (See *id.* at ¶ 11) Then, however, in 2002 and 2003, the Government began getting involved in PDVSA's affairs, effectively converting the formerly commercial-minded PDVSA into the present State-controlled "New PDVSA." (See *id.* at ¶¶ 11-13)

This transformation was accomplished by the Government's appointment of then-President Chavez's "most trusted allies" to manage PDVSA, creating "substantial overlap between the [PDVSA] Board of Directors and senior members of the Government." (*Id.* at ¶¶ 13-14) In 2002, the

²⁸ Other declarations in the record (see, e.g., D.I. 4-6, 27, 34, 42, 47) transmit documents and additional evidence to the Court.

Government began requiring PDVSA to contribute monetarily to Venezuela, directly through oil revenues (totaling \$119 billion from 2010 to 2016) and “extraordinary taxes,” and indirectly through social programs such as FONDEN (to which, PDVSA contributed more than \$34 billion from 2010 to 2016) and other programs created to subsidize consumer housing and gasoline purchases through PDVSA. (*See id.* at ¶¶ 15, 21, 23-29; *see also* D.I. 36 at ¶ 2)

Regarding PDVSA’s day-to-day operations, Dr. Rigobon opines that “Venezuela dictates the quantity of oil that PDVSA must produce (partly through OPEC²⁹ commitments), the parties to which PDVSA must sell its oil, and the price at which PDVSA must sell its oil.” (D.I. 7 at ¶ 30) The Government does this, in part, through Petrocaribe, an agreement pursuant to which Venezuela committed PDVSA to supply oil to 17 Caribbean countries on favorable economic terms, and similar agreements Venezuela entered into with China and Russia, all to enable Venezuela to “reap[] enormous political benefits.” (*Id.* at ¶¶ 31-37) Venezuela controls PDVSA’s oil production levels and regulates the price at which all refined products are sold in Venezuela, often causing PDVSA to suffer a loss in profits. (*Id.* at ¶ 38)

Dr. Rigobon agrees with Professor Montoya that PDVSA is “financially autonomous” from Venezuela (see below), but persuasively opines how “[a]ll that means ... is that the budget of Venezuela and the budgets of State-owned companies are governed differently;” it does not mean that “PDVSA operates independently from Venezuela as a practical matter

²⁹ Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. (*See* D.I. 26 at 8)

(it does not).” (D.I. 36 at ¶ 3) The Court agrees with Dr. Rigobon that even if “PDVSA is on paper an independent organization from the Venezuelan Government,” PDVSA is not “a de-facto independent organization.” (*Id.*)

Professor Hernandez, Crystalllex’s Venezuelan law expert, opines that “Venezuela and PDVSA are one and the same as a matter of Venezuelan law.” (D.I. 8 at ¶ 7) He describes the Public Administration Organic Law, which “nominally” recognizes PDVSA’s “own legal personality,” but in fact allows PDVSA’s “activities” to be “controlled by the National Executive Branch by ‘control agencies or entities.’” (*Id.* at ¶¶ 13-14) Professor Hernandez further observes that the Venezuelan Supreme Court has recognized that PDVSA has all the “privileges” of the Republic, and “although PDVSA is a company constituted and organized as a corporation,” as is enshrined in the country’s Constitution, PDVSA nonetheless “falls within the framework of the general structure of the National Public Administration.” (*Id.* at ¶ 16)

Professor Hernandez also explains how Venezuela has used PDVSA to assist in the Government’s expropriation objectives. (*See id.* at ¶¶ 22-25) He opines as to the Government’s formulation of PDVSA’s pricing policies and management of PDVSA’s employment policies (*see id.* at ¶¶ 19-21), the overlap of directors and officers between PDVSA and the Government (*see id.* at ¶¶ 28-33), the Government’s increased control after the establishment of “New PDVSA” (*see id.* at ¶¶ 34-38), and the use of PDVSA to achieve Venezuela’s social and political objectives (*see id.* at ¶¶ 39-50). Citing the opinions of various “learned commentators,” all of

whom have concluded that “PDVSA and its affiliates are considered a state company of a unique nature” (*id.* at ¶ 26), Professor Hernandez persuasively concludes that whether PDVSA has its own legal personality “has no bearing” on the reality that Venezuela and PDVSA are not, in practice, separate entities (D.I. 35 at ¶ 2).

On behalf of PDVSA, Professor Montoya, PDVSA’s expert in Venezuelan law, opines that “PDVSA enjoys a legal personality of its own as a corporation separate and distinct from the Republic.” (D.I. 28 at ¶ 4) In his view, “neither the importance of PDVSA in the national economy nor the fact that it is highly regulated changes the fact that PDVSA has all the attributes in law of separate legal personality.” (*Id.*) Additionally, Professor Montoya asserts that PDVSA is “financially autonomous from the Republic,” “has its own budget, and ... is subject to a budgetary regime distinct from that of the Republic,” and that various tweets and press reports cited by Crystalex carry no legal significance under Venezuelan law. (*See id.* at ¶¶ 28, 33)

Much of Professor Montoya’s declaration emphasizes that, according to the PDVSA Bylaws, PDVSA operates as a *sociedad anónima* (“SA”), a corporate form having one or more shareholders, which makes it clear PDVSA is not a department of the Government. (*See id.* at ¶¶ 7-11, 18, 24-26) His opinion is echoed by Mr. Schmilinsky, PDVSA’s litigation corporate manager, who explains PDVSA’s corporate structure – naming the various directors, officers, and corporate managers – and points out that PDVSA is an SA, whose only shareholder has

ever been the Republic. (D.I. 29 at ¶¶ 4, 8-10)³⁰ Neither of Crystalex's experts disagrees with this conclusion: Dr. Rigobon and Professor Hernandez acknowledge that PDVSA is an SA with its own legal personality. (See D.I. 35 at ¶ 5; D.I. 36 at ¶ 3) But the important point - which is the opinion of Crystalex's experts, as well as the finding of the Court, after considering the totality of the evidence, including the views of PDVSA's experts – is that, in practice, PDVSA operates as the alter ego of Venezuela.

Professor Montoya further discusses the distinction made in the Public Administration Organic Law between Centralized Administration departments, which do not have their own legal personalities, and the Decentralized Administration, which consists of entities, like PDVSA, which do have their own legal personalities. (See D.I. 28 at ¶¶ 16-19) Professor Montoya cites a decision by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice (Constitutional Chamber), which recognized "the legal nature of PDVSA as [an SA] and confirmed that PDVSA is part of the Public Administration, but not part of the Centralized Administration." (*Id.* at ¶ 18) Again, Crystalex's declarants do not challenge the facts of this conclusion, just their significance, and again the Court agrees with Crystalex's view as to their minimal importance.

ix. Conclusion as to exclusive control test

Having made the factual findings noted

³⁰ Mr. Schmilinsky further states that "PDVSA is a stranger to the dispute between Crystalex and the Republic." (D.I. 29 at ¶ 14)

throughout the discussion above by a preponderance of the evidence after considering all of the record evidence cumulatively, the Court finds that Crystalex has rebutted the presumption of separateness and has shown that PDVSA may be deemed the alter ego of Venezuela pursuant to the exclusive control prong of *Bancec* and its progeny. Therefore, Crystalex has proven the applicability of an exception to PDVSA's sovereign immunity. The Court rejects PDVSA's factual challenge to the Court's subject matter jurisdiction.

C. Crystalex Has Met Its Burden with Respect to Execution Immunity

Having found that Crystalex has met its burden to rebut the presumption of separateness between PDVSA and Venezuela and proven that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela, and therefore no jurisdictional immunity prevents the Court from having authority to resolve the parties' disputes, the Court must next determine whether Crystalex has also overcome the immunities embodied in the FSIA relating to attachment and execution on property held by foreign sovereigns in the United States. On this issue, while again PDVSA's motion can be read as raising both facial and factual attacks, the analysis essentially overlaps and, hence, can be conducted once.

Three issues are presented: (i) which statutory provision applies, (ii) has the property Crystalex seeks to attach – the shares of Delaware corporation PDVH – been used for commercial activity, and (iii) even if the shares have been so used, are they currently being used for commercial activity, which requires consideration of certain Executive Orders issued by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of

Foreign Asset Control (“OFAC”). The Court addresses each in turn.

1. The Court Applies § 1610(a), Not § 1610(b)

“[T]he FSIA codifies the common-law rule that property of a foreign state in the United States is *presumed* immune from attachment and execution. To overcome the presumption of immunity, the plaintiff must identify the particular foreign-state property he seeks to attach and then establish that it falls within a statutory exception.” *Rubin*, 637 F.3d at 796. “The party in possession of the property may raise the immunity or the court may address it sua sponte.” *Id.* at 801.

While “the execution immunity afforded sovereign property is broader than the jurisdictional immunity afforded the sovereign itself,” *Walters*, 651 F.3d at 289, the statutory framework for attachment and execution immunity mirrors that for jurisdictional immunity. Attachment and execution immunity are governed by FSIA § 1609, subject to specific exceptions to that immunity recited in §§ 1610 and 1611.

Section 1609 provides:

Subject to existing international agreements to which the United States is a party at the time of enactment of this Act the property in the United States of a foreign state shall be immune from attachment arrest and execution except as provided in sections 1610 and 1611 of this chapter.

28 U.S.C. § 1609.

Section 1610 identifies exceptions to immunity based on whether the property subject to attachment is that of a foreign state, § 1610(a), or of an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state, § 1610(b). “[T]he property of an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state is afforded narrower protection from execution than the property of the foreign state itself.” *Walters*, 651 F.3d at 289-90.

For property of a foreign state to be subject to attachment under § 1610(a), it must be “**used for** a commercial activity in the United States” and, under the subsection implicated here, § 1610(a)(6), the attachment must be in aid of a judgment “based on an order confirming an arbitral award rendered against the foreign state” (emphasis added). Under the broader exceptions to immunity under § 1610(b), attachment is proper where the agency “**engaged in** commercial activity in the United States,” regardless of whether the particular property subject to attachment was used for commercial activity (emphasis added). Therefore, the Court must determine whether to apply § 1610(a) or § 1610(b).

Although there is no dispute that PDVSA is an agency of Venezuela (see D.I. 28 at 4-8, 12-14; D.I. 35 at 2, 4; D.I. 36 at 3) and, therefore, one might expect § 1610(b) to apply, because the Court concludes that PDVSA is to be treated as Venezuela’s alter ego for purposes of jurisdictional immunity, PDVSA must also be treated as Venezuela’s alter ego for purposes of execution immunity. Therefore, the property subject to attachment – PDVSA’s shares in PDVH – may properly be considered property of Venezuela, implicating § 1610(a).

Moreover, Crystalex expressly moves only under

§ 1610(a) – and PDVSA appears to agree that only § 1610(a) applies. (*See* Tr. at 6 (“[W]e have filed a motion under the FSIA, Section 1610(a).”); *see also* D.I. 3-1 at 25 (citing § 1610(a), (c)); D.I. 33 at 7 n.6 (same); D.I. 52 at 3 (relying on § 1610(a)); D.I. 26 at 37 (PDVSA stating, “where, as here, a judgment creditor of a foreign state attempts to reach the assets of an agency or instrumentality on the theory that it is the alter ego of the state under *Bancec*, the judgment creditor must satisfy the more restrictive exceptions to execution immunity set forth in Section 1610(a)’’); D.I. 51 at 4 (relying on § 1610(a))³¹ Thus, the Court will apply § 1610(a).

2. Used For Commercial Activity

As identified above, Crystallex proceeds under § 1610(a)(6), which recites:

(a) The property in the United States of a foreign state ... used for a commercial activity in the United States, shall not be immune from attachment in aid of execution, or from execution, upon a judgment entered by a court of the United States or of a State after the effective date of this Act, if ...

(6) the judgment is based on an order confirming an arbitral award rendered against the foreign state,

³¹ In the event that § 1610(b) were held to apply, the Court would be required to deny the requested writ, as Crystallex cannot meet its burden to show applicability of any exception to immunity enumerated in § 1610(b), as it has failed to prove (or even allege) waiver of attachment immunity by PDVSA or jurisdiction under §§ 1605(a)(2), (3), (5), (7), 1605(b), or 1605A. Nor does Crystallex have a judgment against PDVSA.

provided that attachment in aid of execution, or execution, would not be inconsistent with any provision in the arbitral agreement.^[32]

As it is undisputed that Crystalex's judgment is based on an order confirming an arbitral award rendered against Venezuela, PDVSA's shares in PDVH are subject to post-judgment attachment and execution if they are "used for commercial activity in the United States." 28 U.S.C. § 1610(a).³³

"[P]roperty is 'used for a commercial activity in the United States' when the property in question is put into action, put into service, availed or employed **for** a commercial activity, not **in connection** with a commercial activity or **in relation** to a commercial activity." *Af-Cap Inc. v. Chevron Overseas (Congo) Ltd.*, 475 F.3d 1080, 1091 (9th Cir. 2007). The FSIA defines a "commercial activity" as "either a regular course of commercial conduct or a particular

³² Section 1610(c) details the procedural requirements for an attachment under § 1610(a) or (b), requiring the Court to first determine that "a reasonable period of time has elapsed following the entry of judgment" and that any required notice is given. It is undisputed that these procedural requirements have been met. (See D.I. 4 Ex. 8) (D.C. Court finding reasonable time elapsed)

³³ "[A] foreign sovereign's property is subject to execution under § 1610(a) only when the sovereign itself uses the property for a commercial activity." *Rubin v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 830 F.3d 470, 479 (7th Cir. 2016); *see also Conn. Bank of Commerce v. Republic of Congo*, 309 F.3d 240, 256 n.5 (5th Cir. 2002) ("[W]hat matters under the statute is how the foreign state uses the property, not how private parties may have used the property in the past."). As PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela, it follows that PDVSA's use of the PDVH assets for commercial activity can be said to be the sovereign's use.

commercial transaction or act. The commercial character of an activity shall be determined by reference to the nature of the course of conduct or particular transaction or act, rather than by reference to its purpose.” 28 U.S.C.A. § 1603(d). “[B]ecause the [Foreign Sovereign Immunity] Act provides that the commercial character of an act is to be determined by reference to its ‘nature’ rather than its ‘purpose,’ the question is not whether the foreign government is acting with a profit motive or instead with the aim of fulfilling uniquely sovereign objectives. Rather, the issue is whether the particular actions that the foreign state performs (whatever the motive behind them) are the type of actions by which a private party engages in ‘trade and traffic or commerce.’” *Weltover, Inc.*, 504 U.S. at 614, 112 S.Ct. 2160 (internal citation omitted).³⁴ In general, if the sovereign state is using property in the same manner as a private citizen could, then it is being used for a commercial purpose. If, alternatively, the property is being used in a manner that only a sovereign state can use it, then it is not being used for a commercial purpose and cannot be attached. *See, e.g., id.* at 614-15, 112 S.Ct. 2160 (“[A] foreign government’s issuance of regulations limiting foreign currency

³⁴ While PDVSA takes issue with Crystalex’s reliance on *Weltover* due to its discussion of “commercial activity” arising in the context of jurisdictional immunity, not execution activity (*see* D.I. 26 at 39 n.14), courts have noted that “in defining ‘commercial activity,’ [the FSIA] does not provide any different definition for § 1605 versus § 1610. Courts have therefore applied decisions concerning immunity under § 1605 to construe the scope of ‘commercial activity’ under § 1610.” *Aurelius Capital Partners, LP v. Republic of Argentina*, 2009 WL 755231, at *13 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 12, 2009), *rev’d and vacated on other grounds*, 584 F.3d 120 (2d Cir. 2009).

exchange is a sovereign activity, because such authoritative control of commerce cannot be exercised by a private party; whereas a contract to buy army boots or even bullets is a ‘commercial’ activity, because private companies can similarly use sales contracts to acquire goods ...”).

In determining whether property is used for a commercial purpose, the Court must “make factual findings concerning how the property was used” and “reach legal conclusions concerning whether that particular use was ‘for commercial purposes.’” *Af-Cap Inc. v. Republic of Congo*, 383 F.3d 361, 368 (5th Cir.), *decision clarified on reh’g*, 389 F.3d 503 (5th Cir. 2004). This requires “a more holistic approach,” requiring the Court to “examine the totality of the circumstances surrounding the property.” *Id.* at 369.

Crystalex contends that PDVSA – and therefore, Venezuela – uses the PDVH shares for commercial activity by “exercising its rights as a shareholder” and using the shares to name directors of PDVH and to approve contracts. (D.I. 52 at 3) Crystalex further contends that PDVSA uses the PDVH shares to conduct commercial business through PDVH’s wholly-owned subsidiary, CITGO, a Delaware corporation. (*Id.* at 4) PDVSA responds that “Crystalex cannot demonstrate that PDVSA uses the PDVH shares for a commercial activity in the United States” (D.I. 26 at 39) and has “presented no evidence concerning PDVSA’s use of the PDVH shares” (D.I. 51 at 4).

The Court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the PDVH shares are being “used for a commercial purpose” by PDVSA and, therefore, may be attached (and executed on) as property of

Venezuela's alter ego.³⁵ The PDVH shares are used for a commercial purpose because, through them, PDVSA manages its ownership of PDVH and, consequently, CITGO,³⁶ in the United States. *See In re 650 Fifth Ave.*, 2014 WL 1516328, at *17 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 18, 2014), *vacated on other grounds and remanded sub nom. Kirschenbaum v. 650 Fifth Ave. & Related Props.*, 830 F.3d 107 (2d Cir. 2016) (stating shares in company "were also used for commercial activity, because they were the mechanism through which the partners owned the Building and determined the distribution of revenue that it produced").

Specifically, Venezuela – through PDVSA – uses the shares to appoint directors, approve contracts, and pledge assets as security for PDVSA's debt. (*See, e.g.*, D.I. 42 Ex. 110 (news article announcing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro appointed Asdrúbal Chávez as new president of Citgo); D.I. 52 Ex. B at 14 (PDVSA's "main operating segments" use shares to conduct "[r]efining, trade and supply activities in the United States of America

³⁵ PDVSA insists that Crystalex has not met its burden to overcome the presumption of immunity from attachment by clear and convincing evidence. (D.I. 51 at 4) For reasons already explained in connection with exceptions to jurisdictional immunity, the Court agrees with Crystalex that its burden of proof is a preponderance of the evidence, and not clear and convincing evidence.

³⁶ As PDVSA acknowledges: "PDVSA owns 100% of the shares of PDVH, a Delaware corporation, which in turn owns 100% of the shares of CITGO Holding, Inc., which in turn owns 100% of the shares of CITGO Petroleum Corp. ("CITGO"), a multi-billion dollar Delaware corporation headquartered in Texas and founded in 1910." (D.I. 26 at 9)

compris[ing] the administration of refineries and gasoline and refined products marketing ... under the CITGO® brand"); D.I. 52 Ex. A at 20 (PDVH may pledge assets, including its CITGO shares, as security for PDVSA's debt)) As Crystallex states, "it is difficult to imagine property with more of a commercial use than shares of a Delaware for-profit corporation that itself owns, through an intermediate holding company, a multi-billion dollar Delaware petroleum corporation." (D.I. 33 at 18; *see also* H.R. Rep. No. 94-1487, at 16, 1976 U.S.C.C.A.N. 6604, at 6615 (1976) ("Activities such as a foreign government's ... investment in a security of an American corporation ... would be among those included within the definition of ['commercial activity']."). In sum, Venezuela is using the shares of PDVH "not as a regulator of a market, but in the manner of a private player within it," rendering its actions "commercial" within the meaning of the FSIA." *Weltover*, 504 U.S. at 614, 112 S.Ct. 2160.

3. Can the PDVH Shares Be Used Now For Commercial Activity?

The property subject to attachment - here the PDVH shares – must also be “used for a commercial activity” at the time the writ of attachment or execution is issued.” *Aurelius Capital Partners, LP v. Republic of Argentina*, 584 F.3d 120, 130 (2d Cir. 2009). It is not sufficient that a foreign state’s property in the United States “will be used” or “could potentially be used” for a commercial activity in the United States. *Id.*; *see also City of Englewood v. Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, 773 F.2d 31, 36, 37 (3d Cir. 1985) (“The determinative issue is whether [the property] is currently being used in a

‘regular course of commercial conduct’ [and not whether] the property was acquired by [the foreign state] in a commercial transaction.”).

PDVSA contends the PDVH shares are “effectively frozen” and cannot be used for a commercial activity (D.I. 51 at 4) because Executive Order 13808, entitled “Imposing Additional Sanctions With Respect to the Situation in Venezuela,” 82 Fed. Reg. 41,155 (Aug. 29, 2017), precludes the issuance of dividends (D.I. 26 at 40; D.I. 54 at 3), while Executive Order 13835, “Prohibiting Certain Additional Transactions With Respect to Venezuela,” 83 Fed. Reg. 24,001 (May 24, 2018), and related OFAC guidance, together prohibit attachment and execution of the PDVH shares (D.I. 63 at 2). (*See* Tr. at 34) (PDVSA arguing, “what the Executive Order says is you cannot purchase equity from Venezuela in the United States” and “[t]here can’t be a buyer in the United States”)

Crystalex responds that “selling these shares so that a judgment of a United States Court could be satisfied is not what these sanctions are trying to prevent.” (Tr. at 76) According to Crystalex, “Executive Order [13808] does not change that PDVH is a commercial enterprise and that PDVSA’s shares are used for commercial activity – the management of its commercial operations in the United States.... PDVSA retains the ability to use the shares to name directors and approve contracts submitted to shareholders for approval.... PDVSA can still pledge its PDVH shares to secure its own short term debt (a commercial use).” (D.I. 52 at 5) Moreover, Crystalex contends that the PDVH shares are equity securities, and OFAC has specifically allowed such dealings in equity, notwithstanding the Executive Order. (*Id.*) (quoting D.I. 34 Ex. 107)

The Court agrees with Crystalex. Once a foreign state has used property in commerce, that property continues to satisfy the commercial use requirement unless that property becomes “cordoned off for use of the [foreign state] in its sovereign capacity.” *Af-Cap*, 383 F.3d at 370. Thus, it is presumed that the use of the property for commercial activity is continuing, in the absence of evidence to the contrary. PDVSA has presented no evidence to the contrary, other than pointing to the Executive Orders, which, for reasons now to be explained, do not preclude the possibility that the PDVH shares are continuing to be “used for a commercial activity.”³⁷

i. Executive Order 13808

Executive Order 13808 provides, in pertinent part:

Section 1. (a) All transactions related to, provision of financing for, and other dealings in the following by a United States person or within the United States are prohibited:

...

(iv) dividend payments or other distributions of profits to the Government of Venezuela from any entity owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the Government of Venezuela.

³⁷ Notably, both Executive Orders expressly define PDVSA as the “Government of Venezuela.” (D.I. 34-1 Ex. 106 at 1-2; D.I. 63 at 2; *see also* Tr. at 71-72 (PDVSA counsel admitting as much)) While this statement does not constitute a finding of fact to which the Court must defer, it appears that the Executive Branch’s view is consistent with the Court’s conclusions.

(b) The purchase, directly or indirectly, by a United States person or within the United States, of securities from the Government of Venezuela, ... is prohibited.

82 Fed. Reg. 41,155 (Aug. 29, 2017); *see also* D.I. 26 at 40.

This Executive Order, directed to dividend payments and purchases of securities, has no impact on PDVSA's ability to carry on the commercial activities based on exercise of shareholder rights (e.g., replacing board members, pledging assets). Section 1(a)(iv) does not render the PDVH shares non-commercial property because it does not prohibit PDVSA from exercising all ownership rights. Section 1(b) also does not render the PDVH shares noncommercial property or otherwise pose a bar to the relief Crystalex seeks. Upon attachment, the PDVH shares would not be paid or distributed to Venezuela but, eventually, to Crystalex. In fact, as Crystalex states, "PDVSA can **and does** continue to engage in a wide array of commercial uses of the shares, such as: naming directors and officers, including, for example, the president of PDVH's indirect subsidiary, CITGO Petroleum, months after sanctions were imposed; running large-scale gas refining and marketing operations in the United States; and directing PDVH (and its subsidiaries) to enter into related-party transactions for PDVSA's benefit, including the sale of PDVSA's (low quality) oil to CITGO Petroleum." (D.I. 53 at 3) (citing evidence)

Moreover, the PDVH shares are equity securities and the OFAC has instructed that "[e]ngaging in

transactions related to, providing financing for, or otherwise dealing in any equity issued by, on behalf of, or for the Government of Venezuela is permissible, if the equity was issued prior to the effective date of [the Executive Order].” (D.I. 34-1 Ex. 107 at 2; *see also id.* (“The term **equity** includes stocks, share issuances, depositary receipts, or any other evidence of title or ownership.”)) The shares of PDVH that Crystalex seeks to attach were issued before the Executive Order was adopted. The Court, thus, concludes that Executive Order 13808 does not pose a bar to the relief it has granted today.³⁸ The Court further notes that nothing about its ruling today is inconsistent with the letter or spirit of the Executive Order, which seems intended to deprive Venezuela of certain assets and opportunities, not to prevent legitimate judgment creditors in United States Courts to be made whole by Venezuela. (*See* Tr. at 25) (Crystalex stating, “the idea is that this was, put bluntly, to punish Venezuela, not to punish people who were owed money by Venezuela”)

ii. Executive Order 13835

PDVSA contends that Executive Order 13835 and OFAC Frequently Asked Question (“FAQ”) No. 596, issued July 19, 2018, “confirm PDVSA’s argument that U.S. sanctions prohibit the attachment and execution of the shares of its wholly-owned Delaware subsidiary, PDVH.” (D.I. 63 at 2; *see also* Aug. Tr. at 24 (PDVSA characterizing FAQ No. 596 as “most on point” of FAQs parties have discussed))

³⁸ It may be that this Executive Order will have some applicability to any transaction Crystalex might seek to undertake with the PDVH shares once they are attached, but it does not, in the Court’s view, prevent the attachment.

Executive Order 13835 states, in part:

Section 1. (a) All transactions related to, provision of financing for, and other dealings in the following by a United States person or within the United States are prohibited:

....

(iii) the sale, transfer, assignment, or pledging as collateral by the Government of Venezuela of any equity interest in any entity in which the Government of Venezuela has a 50 percent or greater ownership interest.

83 Fed. Reg. 24001 (May 21, 2018); *see also* D.I. 63 at 1-2.

FAQ 596 provides:

596. Does E.O. 13835 prohibit me from attaching and executing against assets of the Government of Venezuela, including vessels, properties, or financial assets, if I have a legal judgment against the Government of Venezuela?

No, provided that the attachment does not involve (i) debt owed to the Government of Venezuela (including accounts receivable) that was pledged as collateral after the effective date of E.O. 13835 (per subsection 1(a)(ii) of the E.O.), or (ii) an equity interest in any entity in which the Government of

Venezuela has a 50 percent or greater ownership interest (per subsection 1(a)(iii) of the E.O.). OFAC authorization would likely be required for attachment of equity interest in any entity in which the Government of Venezuela has a 50 percent or greater ownership interest. OFAC would consider license applications seeking to attach and execute against such equity interests on a case-by-case basis.

OFAC FAQs: Other Sanctions Programs, *Venezuela Sanctions*?³⁹

On the same day OFAC issued FAQ 596, it also issued FAQ 595, which states:

595. Why is OFAC issuing General License 5?

Subsection 1(a)(iii) of E.O. 13835 prohibits U.S. persons from being involved in the transfer by the Government of Venezuela (GOV) of any equity interest in any entity owned 50 percent or more by the GOV, as well as related transactions in the United States. Subsequent to the issuance of E.O. 13835, OFAC received inquiries about how and whether subsection 1(a)(iii) of E.O. 13835 could affect the ability to enforce bondholder rights to the CITGO shares serving as collateral for the PdVSA 2020 8.5 percent bond.

³⁹ See https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/faqs/Sanctions/Pages/faq_other.aspx#venezuela.

Subsection 1(a)(iii) of E.O. 13835 hinders the Maduro regime's ability to dispose of interests in entities owned 50 percent or more by the GOV at terms unfavorable to the Venezuelan people. Authorizing bondholders to enforce rights related to the PdVSA 2020 8.5 percent bond prevents the Maduro regime from using the EO to default on its bond obligations without consequence. In order to provide that authorization, OFAC is issuing General License 5, which removes E.O. 13835 as an obstacle to holders of the PdVSA 2020 8.5 percent bond gaining access to their collateral, and keeps sanctions pressure where it belongs – on the Maduro regime.

Id.

According to Crystalex, FAQ 596 specifically allows attachment and execution of Venezuelan assets and while FAQ 595 “addresses a specific class of creditors, the same reasoning applies to other creditors such as Crystalex.” (D.I. 64 at 2) Crystalex further contends that while, in response to FAQ 596, “OFAC did advise – in a non-binding FAQ response – that a license would likely be needed before attachment and execution could be completed, ... that has no impact on the question of whether this Court can or should authorize the relief sought by the Writ Motion in the first instance.” (*Id.*)

The Court agrees with Crystalex. Notwithstanding PDVSA’s assertion, it is not correct that “OFAC’s published views **confirm** PDVSA’s

argument that the U.S. sanctions **prohibit** the attachment and execution of the shares of its wholly-owned Delaware subsidiary, PDVH.” (D.I. 63 at 2) (emphasis added) Instead, the OFAC guidance confirms that attaching the PDVH shares “would likely ... require[]” OFAC authorization, and that, if such authorization were sought, OFAC would evaluate it “on a case-by-case basis.” OFAC FAQs: Other Sanctions Programs, *Venezuela Sanctions*. Accordingly, the Court concludes that Executive Order 13835 does not pose a bar to granting the relief it has granted today.⁴⁰

D. Additional Issues Raised by PDVSA

Although most of PDVSA’s arguments against granting Crystalex’s requested writ have been addressed in the course of resolving the many issues discussed to this point in this Opinion, several additional contentions merit brief discussion. None, however, alters the outcome.

1. Prejudgment Attachment

PDVSA warns that granting the relief sought by Crystalex will amount to a prejudgment attachment, which is precluded by § 1610(d). (*See, e.g.*, D.I. 71 at 3 (“[T]his Court cannot attach or otherwise restrain PDVSA’s shares of PDVH unless and until it enters

⁴⁰ In its letter of July 24, 2018, Crystalex represented that OFAC had issued a license to a previously undisclosed third-party, [Redacted] As Venezuela has not yet made such payments, [Redacted] Crystalex “can and will seek clarification of the current license ... and/or the issuance of an additional license to cover the eventual execution sale of the shares of PDVH once the Writ has issued.” (*Id.* at 3) The Court agrees with PDVSA that [Redacted] But these facts do not alter the Court’s rulings.

judgment against PDVSA"); Tr. at 64) The Court rejects this view and instead agrees with Crystalex that it has a judgment: the confirmed and registered arbitration judgment against Venezuela. (See, e.g., Tr. at 78; Aug. Tr. at 30 ("It's not that we cleverly labeled this as a Rule 69 motion. It is that we cleverly already won our case against the Government of Venezuela and we don't have to file it again and again in every court in the land.")) Crystalex is not seeking to add PDVSA to that judgment. Provided that, as the Court has found, any sovereign immunity that would otherwise protect PDVSA and its specified property has been overcome — by the judgment against Venezuela, the finding that PDVSA is Venezuela's alter ego, and the findings with respect to the "commercial" use of the PDVH shares — then the FSIA is no bar to the relief sought by Crystalex. in this context, it is simply incorrect to call what the Court is doing an improper prejudgment attachment on PDVSA's property.⁴¹

⁴¹ Some of the weight PDVSA's contention might otherwise carry is countered by the Court's finding, as a factual matter based on the present record, that PDVSA is accurately treated as Venezuela's alter ego. Were the Court merely to have resolved PDVSA's facial challenge, and assessed only the sufficiency of Crystalex's allegations as opposed to having also weighed the evidence, the argument that Crystalex is proceeding "prejudgment" would have had more appeal (though nonetheless still lack merit). (See, e.g., D.I. 54 at 2) (PDVSA arguing: "an attachment of a putative alter ego's property *in advance of an adjudication of whether the entity is an alter ego* is effectively a prejudgment attachment and would only pass constitutional muster where the judgment creditor posts a bond") (emphasis added)

2. PDVSA's Non-Involvement with Expropriation of Crystalex's Property

Throughout this litigation, PDVSA has emphasized the lack of allegations and evidence that PDVSA had anything to do with "the facts and circumstances that gave rise to [Crystalex's] claim for expropriation. It is a stranger to the entire dispute." (Tr. at 39; *see also* D.I. 51 at 3 ("[I]t is undisputed that PDVSA was a complete stranger to that transaction.")) PDVSA is correct. The only connection Crystalex even alleges between PDVSA and the harm Crystalex has suffered is that, ultimately, Crystalex's expropriated property was given to PDVSA, which then converted part of it into "billions of dollars." (Aug. Tr. at 40; *see also* Tr. at 73 ("[B]asically we had a contract to develop this mine. [Venezuela] took that contract away from us and they gave the mine without the license to PDVSA which went around and sold ... 40 percent of it for \$2.4 billion."); *see also* D.I. 5-1 Exs. 78-82 (showing PDVSA ended up with rights to gold mines))⁴²

⁴² It is also undisputed that PDVSA was not a party to the arbitration and its name is not mentioned in the arbitration award. (See D.I. 51 at 2-3) Although PDVSA has frequently emphasized this fact, too, it does not impact the pending motions, given the Court's conclusions of law and findings of fact as explained throughout this Opinion. Essentially, it is just another way of arguing that an independent basis of subject matter jurisdiction is required in order to impose primary liability on PDVSA for the arbitration judgment against Venezuela. (See, e.g., Tr. at 48) (PDVSA suggesting Court needs to ask itself "was PDVSA, as the agency or instrumentality, involved in the underlying arbitration to the extent that I, this Court, can say that it should be liable on the award") These are contentions the Court has thoroughly considered and rejected – elsewhere in its analysis.

But these facts do not undermine the Court's conclusions. *Bancec* does not require that the alter ego, whose property is being attached and executed, have been involved in the underlying conduct that harmed the judgment creditor. (See Tr. at 85-86) (Crystalex noting, "there was not remotely any claim that *Bancec* had been involved at all in the expropriation of the Citibank assets") To the contrary, *Bancec* shows that alter ego status is not limited to "state conduct in which the instrumentality had a key role," as there the Cuban bank - which Citibank sought to hold liable for Cuba's seizure of Citibank's assets – played no role whatsoever in Cuba's seizure of those assets. See *Bancec*, 462 U.S. at 619, 103 S.Ct. 2591; see also *Kensington*, 2007 WL 1032269, at *14-16 (finding state oil company liable for nation's default even though company was not involved in underlying loan).⁴³

Although, as already noted, there is "no mechanical formula" for assessing whether the extensive control prong of *Bancec* has been satisfied, the factors that have been developed by courts applying *Bancec* have *not* included a requirement that the purportedly "separate" entity has been involved in the conduct that harmed the creditor. To the contrary, as reiterated earlier this year by the Supreme Court:

Over time, the Courts of Appeals

⁴³ Notably, when the case was before the Court of Appeals, the Second Circuit did hold that instrumentality involvement in the underlying conduct was required. See *Banco Para El Comercio Exterior de Cuba v. First Nat'l City Bank*, 658 F.2d 913, 919-20 (2d Cir. 1981). The Supreme Court's contrary holding shows that it disagreed. (See Aug. Tr. at 39-40)

coalesced around the following five factors (referred to as the *Bancec* factors) to aid in this analysis;

- (1) the level of economic control by the government;
- (2) whether the entity's profits go to the government;
- (3) the degree to which government officials manage the entity or otherwise have a hand in its daily affairs;
- (4) whether the government is the real beneficiary of the entity's conduct; and
- (5) whether adherence to separate identities would entitle the foreign state to benefits in United States courts while avoiding its obligations.

Rubin, 138 S.Ct. at 822-23 (internal quotation marks omitted).⁴⁴ None of these commonly-considered factors⁴⁵ suggests that rebutting the presumption of separateness requires that both entities have been involved in the underlying conduct.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Notably, *Rubin* also reiterated the disjunctive nature of the *Bancec* analysis. See 138 S.Ct. at 822 (noting “liability would be warranted, for example,” where extensive control “or” where fraud or injustice prong is satisfied).

⁴⁵ The commonly-considered factors as described in *Rubin* are consistent with those the Court has considered in its analysis of PDVSA’s facial and factual challenges, although they are stated somewhat differently than the Second Circuit stated them in *EM Ltd. II*.

⁴⁶ The dicta in *BRIDAS*, 447 F.3d at 414-15, on which PDVSA relies (see D.I. 26 at 18-19, 24) cannot establish the contrary proposition.

3. Judicial Estoppel

PDVSA has directed the Court's attention to a separate action Crystalex commenced against PDVSA in the Hague. (*See* D.I. 26 at 21-22) Some of the claims being pressed by Crystalex in the Hague evidently were premised on PDVSA's separateness from the Republic. (*See id.*) PDVSA concludes that "Crystalex should be precluded from pursuing such fundamentally inconsistent positions in different fora." (*Id.* at 22; *see also* Tr. at 69-70)

The Court disagrees. As an initial matter, it is not clear what law governs the Hague proceedings, and the parties have not provided the Court with evidence of (for example) Dutch law on conspiracy. Therefore, the Court does not have a clear understanding of the basis on which the Hague Court dismissed certain of Crystalex's claims. Moreover, Crystalex explains that it was initially pressing multiple theories in the Hague: some of them premised on PDVSA and Venezuela being separate entities, some premised on a different view. (*See* Tr. at 26-28) The Court has no basis to conclude that maintaining alternative theories, particularly at the outset of a case, is improper in the Hague Court. More importantly, doing so is expressly permitted under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. *See* Rule 8. As those rules govern this Court's procedures, it is plain that Crystalex is not judicially estopped from advocating inconsistent theories in this very Court (something it is not even accused of doing). It follows that it is also not (at this point) judicially estopped from taking inconsistent positions in different courts. Finally, as Crystalex observes, estoppel of the type PDVSA urges on the Court does not apply at least until a party is successful in persuading a tribunal of one

position and then seeks to persuade another tribunal of a contradictory position. (*See* Tr. at 80) (citing *New Hampshire v. Maine*, 532 U.S. 742, 121 S.Ct. 1808, 149 L.Ed.2d 968 (2001)) Crystalex has not prevailed on its position in the Hague. (*See id.*)

4. Overbreadth of Crystalex's position

PDVSA also highlights what it portrays as the vast breadth of Crystalex's position: if Crystalex is correct that PDVSA is the alter ego of Venezuela, then both entities are potentially liable for all of each other's liabilities, even where (as PDVSA contends is true here) one entity had absolutely nothing to do with the facts giving rise to the liability imposed on the other. (*See generally* Tr. at 86-87) (Crystalex responding to PDVSA's charge) The Court does not agree that this is the necessary outcome of granting the requested writ. The writ is directed (as it must be) to specifically-identified property, here the shares of PDVH. Were Crystalex (or any other judgment creditor of Venezuela) to wish to attach other property belonging to PDVSA, it would have to prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the sovereign immunity otherwise applicable to that property has been overcome – just as Crystalex has done here. That will not always be possible; for instance, the property might not be currently “used for a commercial activity,” as required by § 1610(a)(6). This is an important distinction between adding PDVSA to Crystalex's judgment against Venezuela – which would allow Crystalex to attach any of PDVSA's property to satisfy the judgment, without additional proceedings, if, for example, the proceeds from the sale of the shares it is attaching are less than the full amount of its judgment – and only attaching specific property, which is the result

being permitted here.

Additionally, the record which has persuaded this Court that PDVSA and Venezuela should be treated as alter egos of one another may not be the same record that is created in some other action. Indeed, even in this case, the record may be supplemented in the next stage of the proceedings (as is further described below), which could potentially lead to different findings. Other factfinders might deem the record before them to justify different findings. Further, the state law and procedures applicable in any other District may well vary from those being applied here, perhaps in material ways. (*See generally* Aug. Tr, at 36) And the collateral estoppel effect of any ruling from this Court will be a matter to be decided by whatever other court is confronted with these issues at a later time. (*See id.*)

Finally, even if PDVSA is right about the implications of the Court's holding today (and Crystalex insists it is not⁴⁷), the Court cannot be deterred from reaching the right conclusion, based on the facts before it and the applicable law, just because it fears the impact of its rulings.

E. Next Steps

By its decision today, the Court is holding that it will, after conferring further with the parties about additional details, direct the Clerk of Court to issue to Crystalex a writ, which Crystalex will then have the opportunity to serve and attach to PDVSA's

⁴⁷ *See, e.g.*, Tr. at 16 (“They’re not being added to the ... judgment, they’re just simply being told that the property they have needs to be turned over to satisfy the underlying judgment.”).

property in Delaware, i.e., its shares in PDVH. Some aspects of the parties' dispute, however, remain unsettled. These include: (i) how quickly should the Court direct the writ to be issued, how quickly should Crystallex be directed to serve it, and how quickly must Crystallex execute on it; (ii) what is the appropriate commercially reasonable procedure by which to effectuate the sale of the PDVH shares, in order to maximize the likelihood of a fair and reasonable recovery, and how involved (if at all) does the Court need to be in that sale process;⁴⁸ (iii) does Crystallex, or alternatively a purchaser of the PDVH shares, wish to (or need to) seek a license from OFAC to permit the sale and, if so, when will it do so; and (iv) will Venezuela, PDVSA, and/or any other entity appear and seek to supplement the factual record already developed in this litigation and, if so, will such an entity attempt to (and, if so, be permitted to) argue that additional evidence materially alters the Court's findings, and thereby seek to quash the writ? *See generally Hibou, Inc. v. Ramsing*, 324 A.2d 777, 783 (Del. Super. Ct. 1974) ("[O]n a motion to quash the order the Court as required by 10 Del. C. § 3506 must look at the *Prima facie* case presented to ascertain whether the plaintiff has 'a good cause of action' against all the defendants whose property has been attached."); D.I. 3-1 at 2 (Crystallex noting, "if any party has a claim to the shares at issue, that party can raise the issue with the Court after the writ is served"); Tr. at 21, 23 (Crystallex recognizing PDVSA, as well as perhaps PDVH and Venezuela,

⁴⁸ The parties appear to agree that Delaware law requires execution of shares of a Delaware corporation to be completed through a "public sale." (See D.I. 71 at 8 (citing 8 Del. C. § 324); *see also* Aug. Tr. at 9, 20-21)

may have right to “come back in and challenge the writ”); D.I. 70 at 2 n.4 (Crystalex noting, “PDVSA may, of course, seek to challenge the writ on non-jurisdictional grounds by a motion to quash brought after the writ has issued and before the Court allows the execution process to commence”).

In a separate Order being issued today, the Court will direct the parties to provide their views as to the timing and nature of the next steps in this proceeding.

CONCLUSION

As PDVSA’s counsel succinctly and correctly stated:

PDVSA is a presumptively separate sovereign instrumentality that is entitled to come to this court, invoke its own sovereign immunity, and is presumptively immune from the court[s] subject matter jurisdiction, presumptively separate from Venezuela, and its property is presumptively immune from attachment and execution.

(Aug. Tr. at 17) However, for reasons the Court has endeavored to explain, at length, throughout this Opinion, Crystalex has met its burden to rebut each of these presumptions. Therefore, the Court will grant Crystalex’s motion for an order authorizing the issuance of a writ of attachment *fieri facias* (D.I. 2) and deny PDVSA’s cross-motion to dismiss (D.I. 25). An appropriate Order follows.

ORDER

At Wilmington this **9th** day of **August, 2018**:

For the reasons set forth in the Opinion issued on this date, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that:

1. Crystalex's motion for an order authorizing the issuance of a writ of attachment *fieri facias*, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1610(c) (D.I. 2), is **GRANTED**.
2. PDVSA's cross-motion to dismiss for lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter (D.I. 25) is **DENIED**.
3. Because the Opinion has been issued under seal, Crystalex and PDVSA shall meet and confer and, no later than **August 10, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.**, submit a proposed redacted version, as well as for their proposed redactions. Should Crystalex and PDVSA meet their burden and timely request redactions, the Court will consider their views before issuing a public version of its Opinion.
4. Crystalex and PDVSA shall meet and confer and, no later than **August 16, 2018**, submit a joint status report providing their position(s) as to how this case should now proceed.
5. The Clerk of Court is directed **not** to issue the writ of attachment until after the Court issues an additional Order following its review of the forthcoming status report.

APPENDIX C

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

Nos. 18-2797 & 18-3124

CRYSTALLEX INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATION

v.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA;
PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA, S.A.

[Filed: November 21, 2019]

Before: SMITH, Chief Judge, McKEE, AMBRO,
CHAGARES, JORDAN, GREENAWAY, Jr.,
SHWARTZ, KRAUSE, RESTREPO, BIBAS, MATEY,
PHIPPS, and SCIRICA* Circuit Judges

SUR PETITION FOR REHEARING

The petitions for rehearing filed by Appellant and Intervenor-Appellant in the above-entitled cases having been submitted to the judges who participated in the decision of this Court and to all the other available circuit judges of the circuit in regular active service, and no judge who concurred in the decision having asked for rehearing and a majority of the judges of the circuit in regular service not having voted for rehearing, the petitions for rehearing by the panel and the Court *en banc* are denied.

By the Court,

s/ Thomas L. Ambro
Circuit Judge

* Senior Judge Scirica is limited to panel rehearing only.

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Dated: November 21, 2019

APPENDIX D

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

Nos. 18-2797 & 18-3124

CRYSTALLEX INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATION

v.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA;
PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA, S.A.

No. 18-2889

In re: PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA, S.A.,

[Filed: July 29, 2019]

Before: AMBRO, GREENAWAY, JR.,
and SCIRICA, Circuit Judges

JUDGMENT

These causes came on to be heard on the record before the United States District Court for the District of Delaware and were argued on April 15, 2019.

On consideration whereof, IT IS ORDERED AND ADJUDGED by this Court that the judgments of the District Court entered August 9, 2018, and August 23, 2018, are hereby affirmed. Appellant's petition for a writ of mandamus is dismissed. Costs taxed against Appellant. All of the above in accordance with the opinion of this Court.

ATTEST:

s/ Patricia S. Dodszuweit
Clerk

140a

Dated: July 29, 2019

[SEAL]

Certified as a true copy and issued in lieu
of a formal mandate on 11/29/19

Teste: s/ Patricia S. Dodszuweit
Clerk, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

APPENDIX E

1. 28 U.S.C. § 1330 provides:

Actions against foreign states

(a) The district courts shall have original jurisdiction without regard to amount in controversy of any nonjury civil action against a foreign state as defined in section 1603(a) of this title as to any claim for relief in personam with respect to which the foreign state is not entitled to immunity either under sections 1605-1607 of this title or under any applicable international agreement.

(b) Personal jurisdiction over a foreign state shall exist as to every claim for relief over which the district courts have jurisdiction under subsection (a) where service has been made under section 1608 of this title.

(c) For purposes of subsection (b), an appearance by a foreign state does not confer personal jurisdiction with respect to any claim for relief not arising out of any transaction or occurrence enumerated in sections 1605-1607 of this title.

2. 28 U.S.C. § 1604 provides:

Immunity of a foreign state from jurisdiction

Subject to existing international agreements to which the United States is a party at the time of enactment of this Act a foreign state shall be immune from the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States and of the States except as provided in sections 1605 to 1607 of this chapter.

3. 28 U.S.C. § 1605 provides, in relevant part:

General exceptions to the jurisdictional immunity of a foreign state

(a) A foreign state shall not be immune from the jurisdiction of courts of the United States or of the States in any case--

(1) in which the foreign state has waived its immunity either explicitly or by implication, notwithstanding any withdrawal of the waiver which the foreign state may purport to effect except in accordance with the terms of the waiver;

(2) in which the action is based upon a commercial activity carried on in the United States by the foreign state; or upon an act performed in the United States in connection with a commercial activity of the foreign state elsewhere; or upon an act outside the territory of the United States in connection with a commercial activity of the foreign state elsewhere and that act causes a direct effect in the United States;

* * * * *

(6) in which the action is brought, either to enforce an agreement made by the foreign state with or for the benefit of a private party to submit to arbitration all or any differences which have arisen or which may arise between the parties with respect to a defined legal relationship, whether contractual or not, concerning a subject matter capable of settlement by arbitration under the laws of the United States, or to confirm an award made pursuant to such an agreement to arbitrate, if (A) the arbitration takes place or is intended to take place in the United States, (B) the agreement or

award is or may be governed by a treaty or other international agreement in force for the United States calling for the recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards, (C) the underlying claim, save for the agreement to arbitrate, could have been brought in a United States court under this section or section 1607, or (D) paragraph (1) of this subsection is otherwise applicable.

* * * * *

4. 28 U.S.C. § 1606 provides:

Extent of liability

As to any claim for relief with respect to which a foreign state is not entitled to immunity under section 1605 or 1607 of this chapter, the foreign state shall be liable in the same manner and to the same extent as a private individual under like circumstances; but a foreign state except for an agency or instrumentality thereof shall not be liable for punitive damages; if, however, in any case wherein death was caused, the law of the place where the action or omission occurred provides, or has been construed to provide, for damages only punitive in nature, the foreign state shall be liable for actual or compensatory damages measured by the pecuniary injuries resulting from such death which were incurred by the persons for whose benefit the action was brought.

5. 28 U.S.C. § 1609 provides:

Immunity from attachment and execution of property of a foreign state

Subject to existing international agreements to which the United States is a party at the time of enactment of this Act the property in the United States of a foreign state shall be immune from attachment arrest and execution except as provided in sections 1610 and 1611 of this chapter.

6. 28 U.S.C. § 1610 provides, in relevant part:

Exceptions to the immunity from attachment or execution

(a) The property in the United States of a foreign state, as defined in section 1603(a) of this chapter, used for a commercial activity in the United States, shall not be immune from attachment in aid of execution, or from execution, upon a judgment entered by a court of the United States or of a State after the effective date of this Act, if--

(1) the foreign state has waived its immunity from attachment in aid of execution or from execution either explicitly or by implication, notwithstanding any withdrawal of the waiver the foreign state may purport to effect except in accordance with the terms of the waiver, or

(2) the property is or was used for the commercial activity upon which the claim is based, or

(3) the execution relates to a judgment establishing rights in property which has been taken in violation of international law or which has been exchanged

for property taken in violation of international law,
or

(4) the execution relates to a judgment establishing
rights in property--

(A) which is acquired by succession or gift, or

(B) which is immovable and situated in the
United States: *Provided*, That such property is
not used for purposes of maintaining a diplomatic
or consular mission or the residence of the Chief
of such mission, or

(5) the property consists of any contractual
obligation or any proceeds from such a contractual
obligation to indemnify or hold harmless the foreign
state or its employees under a policy of automobile
or other liability or casualty insurance covering the
claim which merged into the judgment, or

(6) the judgment is based on an order confirming an
arbitral award rendered against the foreign state,
provided that attachment in aid of execution, or
execution, would not be inconsistent with any
provision in the arbitral agreement, or

(7) the judgment relates to a claim for which the
foreign state is not immune under section 1605A or
section 1605(a)(7) (as such section was in effect on
January 27, 2008), regardless of whether the
property is or was involved with the act upon which
the claim is based.

(b) In addition to subsection (a), any property in the
United States of an agency or instrumentality of a
foreign state engaged in commercial activity in the
United States shall not be immune from attachment
in aid of execution, or from execution, upon a

judgment entered by a court of the United States or of a State after the effective date of this Act, if--

- (1)** the agency or instrumentality has waived its immunity from attachment in aid of execution or from execution either explicitly or implicitly, notwithstanding any withdrawal of the waiver the agency or instrumentality may purport to effect except in accordance with the terms of the waiver, or
- (2)** the judgment relates to a claim for which the agency or instrumentality is not immune by virtue of section 1605(a)(2), (3), or (5) or 1605(b) of this chapter, regardless of whether the property is or was involved in the act upon which the claim is based, or
- (3)** the judgment relates to a claim for which the agency or instrumentality is not immune by virtue of section 1605A of this chapter or section 1605(a)(7) of this chapter (as such section was in effect on January 27, 2008), regardless of whether the property is or was involved in the act upon which the claim is based.
- (c)** No attachment or execution referred to in subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall be permitted until the court has ordered such attachment and execution after having determined that a reasonable period of time has elapsed following the entry of judgment and the giving of any notice required under section 1608(e) of this chapter.
- (d)** The property of a foreign state, as defined in section 1603(a) of this chapter, used for a commercial activity in the United States, shall not be immune from attachment prior to the entry of judgment in

any action brought in a court of the United States or of a State, or prior to the elapse of the period of time provided in subsection (c) of this section, if--

- (1) the foreign state has explicitly waived its immunity from attachment prior to judgment, notwithstanding any withdrawal of the waiver the foreign state may purport to effect except in accordance with the terms of the waiver, and
- (2) the purpose of the attachment is to secure satisfaction of a judgment that has been or may ultimately be entered against the foreign state, and not to obtain jurisdiction.

* * * * *

(g) Property in certain actions.

(1) In general.--Subject to paragraph (3), the property of a foreign state against which a judgment is entered under section 1605A, and the property of an agency or instrumentality of such a state, including property that is a separate juridical entity or is an interest held directly or indirectly in a separate juridical entity, is subject to attachment in aid of execution, and execution, upon that judgment as provided in this section, regardless of--

- (A) the level of economic control over the property by the government of the foreign state;
- (B) whether the profits of the property go to that government;
- (C) the degree to which officials of that government manage the property or otherwise control its daily affairs;
- (D) whether that government is the sole

beneficiary in interest of the property; or

(E) whether establishing the property as a separate entity would entitle the foreign state to benefits in United States courts while avoiding its obligations.

(2) United States sovereign immunity inapplicable. Any property of a foreign state, or agency or instrumentality of a foreign state, to which paragraph (1) applies shall not be immune from attachment in aid of execution, or execution, upon a judgment entered under section 1605A because the property is regulated by the United States Government by reason of action taken against that foreign state under the Trading With the Enemy Act or the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

(3) Third-party joint property holders. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to supersede the authority of a court to prevent appropriately the impairment of an interest held by a person who is not liable in the action giving rise to a judgment in property subject to attachment in aid of execution, or execution, upon such judgment.

7. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 69 provides:

Execution

(a) In General.

(1) ***Money Judgment; Applicable Procedure.*** A money judgment is enforced by a writ of execution, unless the court directs otherwise. The procedure on execution--and in proceedings supplementary to and in aid of judgment or execution--must accord

with the procedure of the state where the court is located, but a federal statute governs to the extent it applies.

(2) *Obtaining Discovery.* In aid of the judgment or execution, the judgment creditor or a successor in interest whose interest appears of record may obtain discovery from any person--including the judgment debtor--as provided in these rules or by the procedure of the state where the court is located.

(b) *Against Certain Public Officers.* When a judgment has been entered against a revenue officer in the circumstances stated in 28 U.S.C. § 2006, or against an officer of Congress in the circumstances stated in 2 U.S.C. § 118,¹ the judgment must be satisfied as those statutes provide.

¹ Now editorially reclassified 2 U.S.C. § 5503.