

Obama shakes Hands with Hugo Chavez

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I watched Obama address the press following the Conference of the Americas. Overall, from a public relations point of view, Obama did well in the manner in which he presented the US position. Subsequently, I heard the commentaries on CNN about Obama having shook Chavez's hand. I then came to the conclusions, "sense" for Obama and "nonsense" coming from the mainstream US media.

It seems to me that the American public is being dumbed down by the quality – sorry – lack thereof – with regard to what passes as serious US journalism. If anyone in the so-called “US quality media” weighed a few facts, then so much arrant nonsense passing as serious US journalistic commentaries would not be continually fed to the unsuspecting US public and the very suspicious wider world. The real main issues are, and still remain, human survival in the Americas, the threat of the increase of WMDs in the Americas and the approach of any nation in the Americas that insists on increasing production of same, and the economic conditions giving rise to global warming.

Consider, by reference to the first point of concern – Russia is not today exactly America's closest friend. Russia, for argument's sake, has nuclear weapons that can blow the US up five times over and the US has weapons that can blow Russia up ten times over. Neither country can use those weapons and survive, not even one nuclear weapon is useable against the other, but the US still refuses to sign certain international treaties to ensure reduction and/or an end to future production of these useless weapons (i.e. “useless” in the sense that Mutually Assured Destruction is the result if the weapons are ever deployed in force). But, let's put that observation aside for the moment. Given the global nuclear status quo, we, not long ago, found President Bush with bionic vision looking into the heart of Vladimir Putin. When Bush focused he assured us that when he looked into Putin, and let me not misquote this important optic operation, and let surgeon Bush speak of his results: “I looked into his heart. He is a good man.” But, Bush never stopped there, he needed post-operative continued assessment of the patient, went further, and continued entertaining Putin at the Bush Ranch.

Now, Venezuela has about one-six hundredth of the military arsenal that the US has and is no military threat to the US, except for Chavez consistently saying that US post-war policies have served significantly to make Latin American and Caribbean nations economically dependent and impoverished (which is the truth). For speaking the truth Chavez then becomes a national security threat in the hemisphere. Even a greater threat, shock and horror, when Obama sensibly and diplomatically shakes Chavez's hand to try and cool political frictions. Contrast – Russia still has the nuclear weapons as does the US. There was not so long ago a hot-war fought in Georgia, when the US sought to install weapons on Russia's doorstep. Now, viewed in light of the broader mix of global realities – is Obama's

hand shake -or - even hand shakes with Chavez, such a big deal in the wider scheme of things?

Would it make some sense to canvass in the Americas the idea of a nuclear weapons free zone along the lines of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty? Could the Americas set a precedent that then invites the world to extend this agreement to the Arctic and Baltic Seas? But, as we know, big powers need big weapons, and if the big mistake is made in the Americas by way of the biggest power holding the biggest weapons ever using them - then, we are assured of big disaster. Thus, sensibly, should our leaders not all be talking in a timely way about these types of issues which impinge on human existence and survival on the planet?

But, sorry, all of this is off the CNN screen, is not part of any mainstream script or commentary, and is not likely to be weighed as a part of any "serious" reflection that is likely in any sustained way to feature on CNN, NBC, ABC or in any other "serious" media. Days of media reel and script will be taken up on the big question - should Obama have shaken Chavez's hand? Ah! well, what it is to blog in "stupid bliss" and not be a part of the "serious media" commentaries and discussions. David Gergen, CNN's senior political analyst had his say and did say, "Obama's handling of Chavez was a no no." Hmmm, how profound.

But David, is it really such a bad thing that Barack cooled the heat a bit in the hemisphere with a hand shake and Hugo, being Hugo, shared a copy of the book: "Open veins of Latin America" by Eduardo Galeano?

Sorry, shouldn't have asked that question, and promise in future to keep the debate on your level David, a "serious" level.

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