

# Solidarity Street Demonstrations To Demand US Keep Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba

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Maybe it's just a coincidence that just days before an international expression of solidarity demanding the US keep its hands off Venezuela and Cuba, Rep. Dan Burton (a right wing Republican in good standing) introduced an anti-Venezuelan resolution in the US House of Representatives. His resolution on May 11 was just another step along the way in the Bush administration's fourth attempt to oust President Hugo Chavez as the democratically elected leader of the Venezuelan people. The resolution shows at least two things: that the US government's stated commitment to democracy is farcical and empty on its face and that any resemblance in it between the truth about the Chavez government's achievements in combatting drug trafficking and money laundering (and all else for that matter) and the malicious inaccuracies and misstatements of facts in the Burton resolution is in writing for all to see.

Of course, the whole notion of the US making a determined effort to eliminate so-called illicit drugs is even more absurd as I've explained several times before in other writing. Dan Burton and his Republican cohorts know quite well that doing that would be counter to the real US policy of protecting the illicit trade to guarantee the huge profits from it flow unobstructed into the US economy. The so-called "war on drugs" is really a war to keep the stuff flowing freely.

On May 20 the People Will Have Their Say

So in glorious and committed counterpoint to the shameless Burton resolution, large demonstrations will take place on the streets of Washington, DC and Los Angeles on May 20 demanding "US Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba." A broad coalition of progressive organizations and noted individuals have organized them including: Venezuela, Cuba and Latin America - oriented solidarity groups and other groups supporting and fighting for the rights of blacks, Latinos, women, immigrants and the civil rights of all people. In addition, prominent activist figures will also participate including Noam Chomsky, Cindy Sheehan and Danny Glover.

And on the same day, there will be similar international solidarity actions in Venezuela, Cuba, Columbia, Australia, Canada and other countries. These demonstrations around the world are historic as they reflect a growing movement to combat US imperial aims in Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean. It was in those regions that offshore US imperialism first took flight once it left the incubator of the lands it stole from its original native inhabitants whose only offense was having lived on them for the past 20 - 30,000 years. Poor Mexico paid the price first for its geographical sin (in the words of its former dictator Porfirio Diaz) of being "so far from God (and) so close to the US." That poor choice

of its country's borders resulted in their ending up enclosing half their former territory. I guess the Mexicans never really wanted California and the rest it lost anyway.

On May 20, the voices of people yearning to be free from the yoke of a global criminal enterprise otherwise known as the United States of America will take to the streets in an expression of their commitment. These voices will resonate in solidarity against clear US aggressive and hostile intentions against Venezuela and Cuba aiming to crush their revolutions and the burgeoning one in Bolivia to keep them from spreading throughout the region. The stakes are very high on both sides. Call it a war between the rights of free people determined to remain so against a powerful and predatory neighbor that has other ideas and will ruthlessly pursue all means to achieve them. On May 20, the voices in the streets will have their say, . and the sound heard will be: no mas – no more, and they're willing to fight for it. It also happens to be the day the Bush administration intends to release its so-called "Commission for Assistance for a Free Cuba" report.

A little translation is in order. By assistance, Washington means new policy sanctions against the Castro government (the longest standing thorn in its side) and its commitment to be the sole authority to decide what economic, social and political priorities are best for that country. It doesn't matter what the Cuban people want. After all, they only live there, which in Washington – think means nothing.

It doesn't matter what the Venezuelan people want either, unless they're willing to forego all the benefits they now have and allow them to be replaced by the poverty and human misery they had before Hugo Chavez came into office and changed everything. Don't bank any time soon on that happening as the overwhelming majority of the Venezuelan people twice democratically elected Hugo Chavez as their president and want to keep him as their leader. And why wouldn't they. Before him, they were repressed and desperate, and now they're the beneficiary of his wonderful economic, political and social policies that have transformed their lives for the better. They're not about to give that up without a fight. But Washington policy makers may not understand that, and even if they do, are likely to take that fight to the people and try to prevail by any means possible, regardless of the consequences.

### The One Threat Above All Others Washington Fears

Washington also fears another threat: the one it fears most above all others – a good example that may spread and become unstoppable, so it must be crushed and not allowed to advance further. It follows that it now views any collaboration between Venezuela and Cuba (and now a likely tripartite alliance with Bolivia) as unacceptable as the benefits from it to their people will only encourage a further spread of them to other nations that may want the same things. Any why not? When governments improve the lives of their people, why would they ever want or be willing to give up what they gained.

So the battle lines are now drawn, and the importance of what's at stake will play out in the streets around the world on May 20. Those demonstrations mark a significant first step beginning and hopefully a turning point that will lead to a mass movement of millions of working people inside the US and around the world unwilling any longer to accept being subjugated by US imperial rule. Hopefully they will follow on and build from the historic US nationwide street demonstrations fighting for the rights of immigrant workers demanding equity and justice and being willing to accept nothing less. It may be one new civil rights movement growing from another and mushrooming into a giant national and worldwide

expression of the people here, throughout the region, and spreading everywhere fighting for the rights they deserve. An epochal struggle may have begun, and the path ahead for it is fraught with danger. It's the people against a powerful giant predator willing to accept nothing less than total global domination with no "outliers" going their own way allowed. Stay tuned. The people may have other ideas.

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