

The Venezuela Referendum

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Pro-Constitutional Reform Closes Campaign with Massive Rally in Venezuela

December 1st 2007, by Kiraz Janicke – [Venezuelanalysis.com](#)



Rally in support of President Chavez's constitutional reform (ABN)

Caracas, December 1, 2007 ([venezuelanalysis.com](#)) – In a hard-hitting speech Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez told over 500,000 supporters at the final campaign rally in favor of the proposed constitutional reform on Friday, "If the 'yes' vote wins on Sunday and the Venezuelan oligarchy, playing the [U.S.] empire's game, comes with their little stories of fraud," he will suspend all oil shipments to the U.S immediately. "The U.S. will not receive one drop of oil," he declared. Chavez also warned private media against promoting violence and destabilization after the referendum.

Beginning in the early hours of the morning, a sea of red filled Avenida Bolivar, the capital's principal boulevard and overflowed into Avenidas Mexico, Lecuna, San Martin, and Universidad, dwarfing an opposition rally of around 200,000 the day before, as Chavez supporters wearing T-shirts emblazoned with 'Yes to the reforms' danced and sang as they waited for Chavez who spoke at 5 in the afternoon.

Perusing the crowd through a pair of binoculars, Chavez announced, "The avenida Bolivar is full, overflowing on the north and south, over there avenida Lecuna and avenida Universidad are full. The Bolivarian people are here saying 'Yes.'"

Chavez told his supporters that the reforms which would reduce the work week to 36 hours, allow for presidential reelection, recognize new forms of property, and give more power to grass roots communal councils, will "open the path to socialism."

He also emphasized that the vote on Sunday represents more than simply a vote on the reforms. "To vote 'yes', is a vote for Chavez and the revolution, to vote 'No' is a vote for Bush," he said.

"We are not simply confronting the pawns of imperialism, those that play the dirty game of imperialism here," he said referring to the opposition, "Our true enemy is US imperialism."

"This Sunday we will give another knockout to George W. Bush." he added.

However, Chavez said, "No-one should be surprised if the anti-Chavistas refused to recognize the result," after a video released by Communications Minister Jesse Chacon on

Thursday showed opposition leaders calling supporters to reject the results of the referendum on Sunday and create “pockets of protest” all around the country to generate a political crisis for the government.

“I hope this does not happen, but if it does, the revolutionary government will respond like it should, like a revolutionary government, together with the people,” Chavez said and called on his supporters to stay mobilized in the streets after the referendum in order to prevent opposition inspired disturbances.

“They say they will only recognize the results if they win ... and they will take to the streets,” Chavez told the rally. “Fine. We’ll see you in the streets then, we are not afraid.”

Amidst fears that Venezuela could descend into violence if the vote is close, including warnings of a potential civil war from Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, Chavez said, “My life belongs to the Venezuelan people. I am a soldier, and if I have to pick up a rifle to defend Venezuela, then I will.”

Recalling the 2002 oil industry shutdown by the opposition, which caused an estimated \$10 billion loss to the Venezuelan economy, Chavez said he had also ordered the military to secure oil fields and other installations on Sunday night to prevent any acts of sabotage.

He also spoke of the destabilization and misrepresentation of Venezuela by the international corporate media and threatened, “If any international channel comes here to take part in an operation by imperialism against Venezuela your reporters will be thrown out of the country, they will not be able to work here,” Chavez said. “People at CNN, listen carefully: This is just a warning.”

If the opposition private TV channel Globovision, “takes part in the game of imperialism” and if they violate Venezuelan law by publishing premature or false election results before polls close, they will be taken off air immediately, Chavez said as the crowd responded, chanting, “That is how one governs.”

Dr Graciela Angarita, an orthopedic surgeon who attended the rally also criticized the international media portrayal of Venezuela and told Venezuelanalysis.com, “The truth is the majority of people support the president and the reforms.”

“The government has done a lot for the people,” she said and pointed to the social missions, which provide free education and healthcare. She explained that under previous governments there was a lot of repression and the poor were excluded.

“This is a revolution that is going to spread across all of Latin America,” she added.

After the rally Chavez supporters took over Plaza Altamira in the upper middle-class, predominantly opposition suburb of Chacao in a street party that lasted late into the night.

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