

Top U.S. Defense Officials Increase Hostility Towards Venezuela

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During an appearance today at the National Press Club in Washington, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld compared Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez to Hitler, declaring, "We've got Chavez in Venezuela with a lot of oil money. He's a person who was elected legally, just as Adolf Hitler was elected legally, and then consolidated power, and now is of course working closely with [Cuban leader] Fidel Castro and Mr. Morales [Bolivian President Evo Morales] and others. It concerns me."

Concurrently, in testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence of the U.S. Congress, John Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence, which oversees the 15 intelligence bodies of the U.S. Government, claimed, "In Venezuela, President Chavez, if he wins reelection later this year, appears ready to use his control of the legislature and other institutions to continue to stifle the opposition, reduce press freedom, and entrench himself through measures that are technically legal, but which nonetheless constrict democracy. We expect Chavez to deepen his relationship with Castro (Venezuela provides roughly two-thirds of that island's oil needs on preferential credit terms). He also is seeking closer economic, military, and diplomatic ties with Iran and North Korea. Chavez has scaled back counter-narcotics cooperation with the US. Increased oil revenues have allowed Chavez to embark on an activist foreign policy in Latin America that includes providing oil at favorable repayment rates to gain allies, using newly created media outlets to generate support for his Bolivarian goals, and meddling in the internal affairs of his neighbors by backing particular candidates for elective office."

Apart from the dangerous misrepresentation of the reality of Venezuelan social and political life and the absurd comparison to Hitler, with whom the U.S. went to world war, these declarations evidence a scary escalation of aggression towards the Venezuelan government and people by the Bush Administration. Rumsfeld and Negroponte represent the two entities in the United States that wage war: Defense and Intelligence. Their positions go beyond the State Department's diplomatic rhetoric that has characterized relations between Venezuela and the United States during the past few years and up the ante to an increasing possibility of war between the two nations. As the U.S. prepares to take actions against Iran in the very near future, publicly declaring a link between Venezuela and Iran, as well as North Korea, provides justification for an inclusion of Venezuela on the list of nations targeted by the Bush Administration for military intervention.

During the past few days, the Venezuelan government has made public concrete evidence

of an espionage case that has resulted in the expulsion of a U.S. military attaché, Navy Capitan John Correa, from this South American nation. Capitan Correa had been recruiting Venezuelan naval officials over a period of more than twelve months, with the aim of obtaining inside information of military and political strategies of the Venezuelan government and pressuring officials to turn against President Hugo Chávez. Although the U.S. Embassy in Caracas and its Ambassador, William Brownfield, have denied knowledge of any wrongdoing on the part of U.S. diplomatic officials, evidence of illegal penetration of Venezuelan armed forces by U.S. military attachés has been provided to this author.

An excerpt of testimony from a Venezuelan soldier recruited by the U.S. Embassy and working as a “double-agent” for the Venezuelan government, to be published in entirety in my next book, the follow-up to *The Chávez Code: Cracking U.S. Intervention in Venezuela*, follows:

“I am an enlisted soldier pertaining to the action command group. I am testifying about the activities of officials from the United States Embassy [in Caracas]. They seek information and analysis about certain activities of members of our Armed Forces and have contacts with officials that work with the Minister of Defense and they provide them with activities about our Armed Forces. My job is to try and find certain information and to monitor different political organizations, such as the Tupamaros, Bolivarian Circles, the people who work with Lina Ron, as well as information about the acquisition of arms in the Armed Forces. I note herein that I am working as an infiltrator in these groups, an undercover agent, I do not share the anti-American views of these groups, I am just trying to obtain the best information possible for my superiors, for the defense of our nation.”

“What do they give you in return?”

“Money, political contacts and the possibility of work...”

“What is the best they have given you up until now?”

“A ten-year visa to enter the United States, whenever I want, and according to them, in the future I can attend a course in their intelligence agency in the United States and once I prove my loyalty to them and they see I truly have guts, I can possibly do an intelligence course with the CIA, that’s what the military attaché at the Embassy, [name removed], told me himself.”

Today’s statements by Rumsfeld and Negroponte merely confirm the diehard intentions of the U.S. government to continue its efforts to remove President Chávez from power and impede the development of the Bolivarian Revolution. Over the past few years, the Bush Administration has funneled millions upon millions of dollars into building up an opposition movement to the Chávez administration in Venezuela, utilizing U.S. tax payer dollars filtered through the National Endowment for Democracy and the U.S. Agency for International Development, and has backed a failed coup d’état against President Chávez and oil industry sabotage that caused billions of dollars in damages to the nation yet failed to oust the government from power. For the year 2006, the U.S. Congress has allocated more than \$9 million dollars to opposition groups in Venezuela (again, U.S. taxpayer dollars) and has launched a psychological operations campaign coordinated from the Pentagon’s Special Operations Command in Tampa, Florida. In a document published by the U.S. Army in October 2005 entitled “Doctrine for Asymmetric War Against Venezuela,” President Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution were labeled as the “largest threat since the Soviet Union and

communism.”

Clearly, the Bush Administration has decided Venezuela and President Chávez represent a “severe threat” to U.S. domination in the region and U.S. control over energy resources in the hemisphere. Venezuela may very well be next on the list for a “preemptory war” in the style of Iraq. Citizens of the United States need to be aware of these dangerous steps taken by their government against a nation exercising its democratic and sovereign right to decide the type of socio-political system it desires. Venezuela’s democracy, participatory in nature, is supported by more than 70% of its populace. Recent polls place President Chávez’s popularity at 77%.

Citizens from around the world had the opportunity to witness Venezuela’s thriving democratic revolution firsthand during the VI World Social Forum that just ended in Caracas. Hundreds of thousands of diverse voices from around the world, along with millions of Venezuelans, can attest to the fact that no dictatorship or threat to democracy exists in Venezuela. The only threat Venezuela presents to the United States is that of a good example.

Eva Golinger is a Venezuelan-American attorney and author of *The Chávez Code: Cracking U.S. Intervention in Venezuela*, available in English and Spanish through her website, www.venezuelafoia.info/codigo.html

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