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by Jerry Brewer

HUGO CHAVEZ'S ABUSE OF POWER AND CORRUPTION

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A freedom loving Venezuelan populace is determined to take back their country in the 2012 elections and restore a “true democracy.” The true and relevant question is whether or not this dream is possible under the Leftist dictatorial-like Presidency of Hugo Chavez. Corruption has dominated the Chávez government as never before in Venezuela’s history.

After leaving prison after two years for leading an unsuccessful *coup d'état* against the government in 1992, Chavez founded a social democratic political party- the “ Fifth Republic Movement,” and was elected president of Venezuela in 1998. He subsequently introduced a new constitution which increased rights for marginalized groups and altered the structure of Venezuelan government as a self-professed leader and guardian of the poor. He was re-elected in 2000.

Chavez rode to victory on an electoral promise to eliminate corruption in government. This promise was no doubt the one that was most decisive in his victory brought forward by a deceived and gullible electorate.

His second presidential term showed much early increases and evidence of mismanagement, deceit, and corruption for the future years of a once proud Venezuelan homeland. He introduced a system of Bolivarian Missions, Communal Councils and worker-managed cooperatives, as well as a program of land reform, and nationalized various important industries.

Chavez openly proclaimed in 2005 his adherence to socialism and was again elected into power in 2006. His true colors and previously much-hidden agenda began to graphically emerge as a radical voice of anti-imperialism and critic of capitalism and neoliberalism. On a regular world stage he performed a regular buffoonish routine of spewing hatred, insults, and related verbal attacks on the U.S.; the U.S. Presidency, and many U.S. Cabinet members.

As a devout worshipper and follower of his hero and mentor Fidel Castro, he took up the banner of Cuba’s failed revolution of atrocities, human rights abuses, and Cuba’s shameful misery; and essentially claimed the dubious honor of leading the blind- through corruptive influences, hidden motives and opportunities, and much impunity of action.

He quickly enlisted a cadre of a few that also craved the power that a strong-armed style of oppressive regimes can achieve. Evo Morales of Bolivia, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, became his “Axis of Pink Tide” revolutionaries.



Evo Morales, Manuel Zelaya, Daniel Ortega, Hugo Chavez, Rafael Correa

The vast amounts of oil revenue being received by the Venezuelan government, along with the lack of critical and necessary controls, became a strong incentive for the Chavez regime’s corruption.

To the detriment of the Venezuelan homeland that has brought hunger, housing and infrastructure ruin, rolling blackouts of electricity and a record setting violent crime rate, Venezuela’s massive oil wealth became a scarce life boat for the people.

“According to the Venezuelan Central Bank, about \$22.5 billion had been transferred to accounts abroad by the Chávez government since 2004. About \$12 billion of that amount remained unaccounted for. Former Venezuelan Central Bank officer José Guerra stated that some of that money had been used by the Chávez government ‘to buy political loyalties in the region in order to consolidate his political project and some has been donated to Cuba and Bolivia, among other countries.’ He added that a more detailed analysis, if made, might indicate that the amounts transferred abroad are far greater, since accounts receivable from oil sales to politically friendly countries also remained unaccounted for.”

Reports by the group “Militares Democráticos,” a group of former or retired army officers, claimed that the government of Hugo Chávez ordered the transport of a substantial amount of the country’s gold reserves from the Central Bank to “Fuerte Tiuna-13” the military garrison that had become Chávez’s stronghold. One report quoted General Jorge Luis García Carneiro alleging that the gold was transferred “under the direct orders of Hugo Chávez.”

Last Friday a shipment of gold bars arrived home in Venezuela after Chavez ordered almost all the country’s foreign bullion reserves back to Venezuela. Eventually more than 160 tons of gold bars worth more than \$11bn will be returned as reported. Nelson Merentes, the president of the central bank, would not say how much gold was brought back in Friday’s shipment. Officials cannot give the exact dates when the sequestered bars of gold will arrive.

Over Chavez’s ruling tenure he has been on a billions of dollars shopping spree for weapons in Russia, and other countries and disbursing significant amounts of money to Latin American countries in

exchange for promises of political loyalty and support for obtaining a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations.

A noticeable faux pas that occurred under the Chávez regime was the seizure of what it defined as “excess reserves,” that allowed about \$5 billion transferred from the Venezuelan Central Bank to be used for government programs outside normal budgetary channels. The lack of financial controls and the diversion of international monetary reserves for ordinary public spending have greatly spurred Venezuela’s inflation.

Much of Chavez’s lack of transparency and deceit through smoke and mirrors and not so clever oratory rhetoric are promulgated through laws that are drafted in terms so general in nature, that they do not reveal their intended objectives, which are left to “regulation,” with many bureaucratic decisions laced with discretionary mandates with far too little scrutiny.

As elections near for 2012, the Leftist regime of Hugo Chavez Frias will continue to go into full election regalia, spewing yet more promises to a suffering Venezuelan homeland that remains on its knees for the truth via ACTION.

On Friday Chavez announced a massive subsidy for poor families that will cost the country US\$2.3 billion next year- as he seeks re-election for a third six-year term with Venezuela’s own money. How is that for ACTION?

Chavez stood tall and benevolent as he said, “I started looking at statistics again, at all the numbers,” promising a “great mission” to fight extreme poverty, “which at times is close to misery.” He truly knows that misery, for he has seen it every day of his Presidential tenure. He couldn’t resist yet another swipe at the United States- “Do you think a mission like this would happen in a capitalist society? It would not be possible.”

Chavez said, “This revolution is armed and it is here to stay,” thus letting voters in a professed democracy to wonder if this “arming” might be an issue on Election Day. He also threatened to nationalize any businesses that do not obey his government’s new law for regulating goods and services, especially retailers he claimed were “hoarding” basic foods to drive up prices. “I will be leading the people and we are going to come in and occupy these businesses’ plants, and we will nationalize whatever we have to, but they are not going to get away with it.”



Let it be clear that corruption permeates virtually all levels of Venezuelan society; from Bureaucratically-controlled bidding regulations, to citizens forced to pay bribes to accomplish necessary

transactions, while continuing to suffer an abundance of neglect of basic government services with “In-your-face impunity” for hand-outs at election time. Hopefully and mercifully, a world audience will scrutinize and monitor the election process from now through election in 2012. The proud but suffering Venezuelans need change and must demand accountability and transparency from the Chavez regime.

Viva la revolucion...

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