

Expect Bolivarian Election Victory in Venezuela

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October 7 is the moment of truth. Venezuelans get to choose between populism and neoliberal harshness.

They're not stupid. They won't tolerate reinventing the bad old days. Expect Bolivarianism to triumph. Too bad it can't everywhere when it's most needed.

James Petras is a longtime distinguished Latin American expert. His [article](#) titled "Venezuelan Elections: a Choice and Not an Echo" expertly explains what's at stake.

Hugo Chavez and corporatist Henrique Capriles Radonski are mirror opposites. At issue is social democracy v. the worst of exploitive capitalism.

Chavez wants greater "public ownership of the means of production and consumption...."

He's for increased social spending, "greater popular participation in local decision-making, an independent foreign policy based on greater Latin American integration, increases in progressive taxation, the defense of free public health and educational programs and the defense of public ownership of oil production."

Capriles urges privatize, privatize, privatize. Transform social Venezuela into a "free market" paradise. Abolish free education, healthcare, subsidized food and housing, as well as other basic rights and services mattering most.

Open Venezuela's economy to plunder. Give domestic and foreign corporations free access. Cut taxes for business and super-rich elites already with too much. Institutionalize corruption, rigged elections, and police state harshness for nonbelievers.

Let popular needs go begging. Shift wealth entirely to Venezuela's 1%. To hell with those most in need. Tolerate no resistance. Shut down independent media so no public information tells them how bad things are and what's planned.

Support American imperialism. Perhaps give Washington basing rights. Back the worst of Israeli crimes. Turn social Venezuela into dystopian hell.

Guess what Venezuelans prefer. Guess how they'll vote on Sunday. On October 5, over three million flooded Caracas streets. They came to support Chavez. He urged them to come, saying:

"On Thursday, everybody should be in Caracas so the city overflows with the Bolivarian avalanche." Despite heavy rain they came.

Turnout perhaps was the highest in Venezuela's history. Nothing anywhere matched it in

America. Estimates of up to 500,000 came for Martin Luther King's historic August 28, 1963 "I have a dream" speech.

Rarely anywhere do a 100,000 turn out except for football. Chavistas came en masse because it matters. Americans stay home or go shopping.

The October rally culminated a three-month long campaign. Capriles held his own. Numbers paled by comparison. Venezuelans showed which way they'll go.

Chavez rallied his faithful, saying:

"Within the next 6 years we should be in first place in the world for education, health, housing, nutrition and employment."

"In our hands the life of our homeland will not be lost, of that I am sure."

Chavistas chanted "Chavez isn't going." Media scoundrels claimed people were forced to come or got paid. One supporter spoke for others saying: "My presence here comes from the heart."

A Bolivarian University student said: "Caracas was totally bursting." Capriles supporters called it "a show." They claim people "were paid."

"(T)he reality is that our homeland calls upon us to be there. Long live our leader." Twenty years ago people were poor and hungry, he added. Bolivarianism changed things. Today there's "love, peace, harmony, equality and independence."

Is Venezuela paradise? Of course not. Lots of problems exist. They're being addressed. The difference with America and other neoliberal societies is stark. People needs go begging because governments don't care.

Chavez does. Venezuelans know it. Expect strong support on Sunday. People won't tolerate the bad old days reinvented. They know a good thing and want it sustained.

Seven candidates are contesting. Only two matter. Chavez represents populism. Capriles stands for the worst of corporatism writ large.

October 7 is Venezuela's 15th national election since Chavez's took office in February 1999. According to the Carter Center and other independent observers, all were scrupulously open, free and fair.

Jimmy Carter calls Venezuela's electoral process "the best in the world" for good reason.

When Chavez or other Bolivarian candidates win, it's fair and square. In contrast, US elections have no credibility whatever. Money power runs things. People have no say.

Half opt out because it doesn't matter. Others are lawlessly excluded. All Venezuelans are enfranchised at birth. It's constitutionally mandated. Americans are systematically cheated.

On Sunday, around 200 international observers will monitor voting. Representatives from the Union of South American Nations are coming. Other countries are sending their own.

For 2006 presidential elections, turnout was about 75%. Record numbers are registered to vote. Poling station access is greater than ever. In the past decade, locations increased from 8,000 to 14,000. Doing so helps poor communities where most people live.

Venezuela's advanced electronic voting system is the most reliable anywhere. Results are 100% auditable. Machines activate only by voter fingerprint. Doing so prevents fraud and identity theft.

Voters get paper printouts for verification. Full manual tabulations are easily made. In August 2012, Carter Center director Jennifer McCoy also called Venezuela's system "the most comprehensive (she's) seen in the world."

Post-election audits conducted showed no "significant discrepancy between the paper receipts and the electronic votes."

Polls show Chavez comfortably ahead. Petras expects about a 55 - 45% victory. Based on latest poll numbers, he's ahead on average by 12%. Many polls give him an approval rating of 60% or higher.

Despite little evidence suggesting Capriles winning, fears exist that right-wing opponents won't accept final results. Some Chavistas expect opposition forces declaring victory before official tallies are announced.

At issue is discrediting them and claiming fraud. Corporatists stop at nothing. They're always up to no good. We'll soon know what they have in mind. Don't expect congratulations extended when Chavez wins convincingly. They've spent years trying to oust him and won't quit now.

Rejecting legitimacy fits the way they operate. They'll do anything to regain power. In 2002, their two-day coup d'etat failed. Popular demonstrations helped overturn it. Their 2003 64-day oil industry lockout also failed.

In 2004, they called recall referendum totals fraudulent despite Chavez winning 58 - 42%. In 2005, they boycotted the parliamentary elections because they had no chance to win.

Throughout Chavez's tenure, they unsuccessfully sought to oust him and subvert Venezuela's democratic process. Expect more of the same Sunday. Expect mud in their face again. Popular sentiment has final say.

Venezuela's democracy is real. America's is fraudulent by design. It's entirely rigged to assure money power has divine rights. Ordinary people are on their own out of luck.

Petras said prior to Chavez's 1998 election, "Venezuela's economy and society was in a tailspin, rife with corruption, record inflation, declining growth, rising debt, crime, poverty and unemployment."

"Mass protests in the late 1980's early 1990's led to the massacre of thousands of slum dwellers, a failed coup and mass disillusion with the dual bi-party political system. The petrol industry was privatized; oil wealth nurtured a business elite..."

"Venezuela was a bastion of US power projections toward the Caribbean, Central and South America. Venezuela was socially polarized but political power was monopolized by two or

three parties who competed for the support of competing factions of the ruling elite and the US Embassy.”

“Economic pillage, social regression, political authoritarianism and corruption led to an electoral victory for Hugo Chavez in 1998....”

From then to today, Venezuelans never looked back except to recall what they won't tolerate now. Why should they when they have a good thing? Why go back to the bad old days?

Why reject a leader who supports them? Why back one who wants everything mattering most abolished? Why accept neoliberal harshness when populism serves them? Why do the wrong thing when doing it right is simple?

Six more years! Expect those chants heard throughout Caracas and elsewhere Sunday night or early Monday morning when final or near-final results are announced. Watch out then for fireworks some expect.

A Final Comment

Since Chavez first took office, media scoundrels relentlessly attacked him. It's especially vicious around election time.

The New York Times is no exception. “All the News That's Fit to Print” excludes vital truths mattering most. Articles, editorials, and commentaries mostly go one way.

Contributors who should be excluded get featured. Francisco Toro is one. On October 5, he got top positioned op-ed space. He [headlined](#) “How Hugo Chavez Became Irrelevant.”

His commentary didn't rise to the level of bad fiction. Yellow journalism best describes it. Dictionaries call it irresponsible and sensationalist. It distorts, exaggerates or misstates truths. It suppresses what's most important to reveal.

Toro is a notorious media scoundrel. Read his op-ed and see why. In 2003, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting ([FAIR](#)) exposed him, saying:

“Toro is a fierce partisan in Venezuela's heated political environment, a participant in anti-government protests who posts name-calling attacks on President Hugo Chavez on his website.”

“He describes himself as a ‘Venezuelan journalist opposed to Hugo Chavez,’ and has written frankly about what he perceives as his own inability to impartially report the news from Venezuela.”

“While all journalists have political opinions, Toro described himself as unable to put aside his strong feelings about Chavez and cover the Venezuelan controversy without prejudice.”

After a (New York) Times editor indicated that his anti-government weblog was unacceptable, Toro responded: ‘I've decided I can't continue reporting for the New York Times....I realize it would take much more than just pulling down my blog to address your conflict-of-interests concerns.’

'Too much of my lifestyle is bound up with opposition activism at the moment, from participating in several NGOs, to organizing events and attending protest marches.'

'But even if I gave all of that up, I don't think I could muster the level of emotional detachment from the story that the New York Times demands....My country's democracy is in peril now, and I can't possibly be neutral about that.'

Apparently all is forgiven. The NYT top featured his scurrilous piece. He claims Chavez "struggles to hang on to his job."

"Radical revolutionary regimes in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua joined Cuba, the granddaddy of the far left, in a bloc determined to confront the capitalist world, even if that meant increasingly authoritarian government."

"As Fidel Castro's favorite son, Mr. Chávez has always been the leader of the radical wing....Mr. Chavez's autocratic excesses (are) inexcusable to Venezuelans."

"It isn't just democratic institutions that have suffered from Mr. Chávez's radicalism; it's the economy, too."

"Mr. Chávez is facing a tight re-election race against Henrique Capriles Radonski, a 40-year-old progressive state governor. (He's) an ambitious but pragmatic social reformer committed to ending the Chávez era's authoritarian excesses."

Yellow journalism best describes these comments.

They're irresponsible, sensationalist, distorted, and mirror opposite of the truth. Times editors shamed themselves. They featured unprincipled trash.

They lowered themselves to the level of Fox News. They'll do anything to vilify leaders honest journalism would support. They discredited themselves further in the process. They gave readers another reason to walk away.

Perhaps one day they all will. They better because they won't find real news and information on Times' pages. It's verboten and excluded.

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