

## Hugo Chavez Holds Commanding Lead Eight Days Before Election

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Hugo Chavez holds an insurmountable lead in two late November polls – one by Ipsos Venezuela/the AP-Ipsos Poll and the other by Zogby International-University of Miami. Both were released on November 24 and are the most current and reliable data available and are consistent with most independent poll results for months. This is in stark contrast to several fraudulent US National Endowment of Democracy (NED)-financed oligarch-run ones published to create a false perception of public sentiment in preparation for cries of fraud once the election results are in.

This is now standard US operating practice in all developing countries when Washington fears an unacceptable electoral outcome, so it tries to subvert the democratic process by engineering one in its favor. That's how it's playing out in Venezuela now where things are in place to create the myth of what's impossible to achieve in fact to help Washington pull off its scheme to remove the main "threat" to its hegemony in the hemisphere. It's not likely to work any better now than in the failed 2002 coup attempt, but there will be mass-staged street protests that may get violent before it's over proving it.

Here's what's now going on. The Washington-based and NED-funded Penn, Schoen & Berland polling organization is part of the scheme to depose Chavez and has set up camp in Venezuela working with the opposition to do what they're expert at – putting out phony polling data currently showing main opposition candidate Manuel Rosales closing the gap and almost pulling even with Hugo Chavez as the December 3 election date approaches. Baloney, but that doesn't stop the Venezuelan corporate media from reporting it saying "The momentum is clearly with Rosales," and it looks like he can win.

If past Penn, Schoen & Berland tactics are prologue, expect their pre-election poll number-rigging to be supplemented with equally fraudulent exit polls on election day showing the same kind of cooked results. More baloney, smell included. That will be following by blasting them all over the Venezuelan corporate media airwaves and front pages to convey the false impression Rosales may have won to shape public perception in preparation for whatever Washington-concocted scheme is planned likely beginning on December 4.

Rosales has no chance whatever of even coming close to winning on December 3, and the Venezuelan people know it. They'll never tolerate a result made in Washington that's contrary to the way they'll vote that's pretty obvious from some "real" polling data. Here's what the oligarchs, corporate media and Washington suppress – and for good reason because it's so lopsided in favor of Hugo Chavez.

The latest Ipsos/AP poll shows Chavez getting overwhelming support from 59% of likely

voters with Rosales trailing far behind at 27%. The margin of error is from 2.2 - 2.9%. Zogby International confirms this showing Chavez at 60% and Rosales at 31%. It's margin of error is 3.5%. Both polls thus show Chavez with an insurmountable 2 - 1 lead with eight days to go before the election. Moreover, these polls are consistent with nearly all independently-run pre-election surveys showing Washington-selected Rosales has no chance to win (something he knows), and Hugo Chavez will be reelected for another six year term as president with an impressive margin of victory - because the great majority of Venezuelans love him and won't allow anyone else to serve as their president as long as he wants the job.

Here's the rub. That's not what the Bush administration wants, virtually guaranteeing post-election cries of fraud followed by staged street protests with likely violence and a fourth Washington-directed attempt to oust Chavez to prevent him from continuing as president. The people of Venezuela won't tolerate this kind of interference, and that sets the stage for a turbulent period just ahead - the many millions of Venezuelans vs. George Bush and his failed administration visibly consumed in the burning sands of Iraq. If some variety of that template is the way to defeat a hegemon, it bodes well for democracy in Venezuela but not without a struggle to achieve it. History shows even superpowers are no match for mass people-action when it's determined enough to prevail. We'll soon know if it proves so Venezuelan-style again.

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