

US Backed Overthrow of Democracy: What Does it Mean - “Chavez Vive, la Lucha Sigue!”

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In Canada where early March brings no good news, Prime Minister Harper has used the Venezuelan leader's death for ideological propaganda favouring his own brand of economics. At Venezuela's first shock into mourning the Prime Minister responded - "At this key juncture, I hope the people of Venezuela can now build for themselves a better, brighter future based on the principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights."

The Ottawa Citizen headlined an article by Terry Glavin, "Hugo Chavez: Venezuela's incompetent fake socialist." The *Canadian Broadcasting Company's* initial reporting took pains to present the opposition's challenges to the succession of interim President Nicolás Maduro, and *Human Rights Watch* objections to the Chávez human rights record.

As the West's media opened a one-note program sustaining the importance of corporate profit and inefficiency of any socialism which includes people, faces of newscasters morph into the perfection of Venezuela's elite with perfect teeth and coiffes, the select malls of designer dresses, falsely clean banks, the privilege of not understanding, the outrage at challenges to previous advantage.

It's impossible to respect the casual contempt of the Canadian Prime Minister's response to the death of a world leader who both took care of the poor and by embracing his own multi-racial ancestry challenged the psychological trap of colonialism's caste system and its stigmatization of 'mixed' blood.

The effects of Hugo Chávez the teacher are in motion beyond Venezuela. It is Chávez before the U.N. General Assembly who compares George W. Bush to the Devil whose sulphurous fumes still linger in the room. Who forges a military tie with the radical left and unions, which eventually bring him to power. Who raises millions of Venezuelans out of poverty and supplies heating oil to the poor of New England and the South Bronx.

Who brings Simon Bolívar back to the Americas. Who earns the love of the world's poor by championing them at home. Who is at ease with himself. Who likes the colour red. Who acts out liberation theology before a retrograde Church. Who understands the need for South American and African leaders to ally. Who sings to his people. Who builds a socialist government of aware workers understanding from the start their enemy. Chávez, who conveys to people everywhere, it's all right just to be people.

By March 8th two million Venezuelans filed by their President's casket, some saluting, others with genuflection, some in physical silence, some in tears. Among others, Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad kissed the coffin.

Among mourners who went to pay their respects in Venezuela were the head of State of Brazil and its former president, of Cuba, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Peru, Bolivia, Belarus, Equatorial Guinea, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Suriname, Aruba, Curacao, Mexico, Guatemala, Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, the Foreign Minister of Russia, Spain's Prince Felipe de Borbon, but officially to represent Canada – a Parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bob Dechert.

India sent its Minister of corporate Affairs. The U.S. sent a Congressman and former Congressman. China sent the chief of its National Development and Reform Commission. Of African countries which generally praised and mourned Chávez, despite the global media accounts stating the attendance of African heads of State, none seem to have appeared at the funeral, suggesting a fear of NATO's ugly stick. Unofficially, Jean Chretien of Canada was there. The American, Jesse Jackson, shared a prayer. After the funeral Nicolás Maduro was installed as interim President, until the elections, currently called for April 14th.

The opposition candidate, Henrique Capriles Radonski, refused to attend the interim swearing-in ceremony, calling it a fraud and furthering the tactic of questioning the succession's legitimacy. Capriles is widely quoted as saying "Nicolás, no one elected you president. The people didn't vote for you, boy." Yet Chávez chose as his successor, his Vice President Nicolás Maduro. The Venezuelan Constitution's order of Presidential succession notes the Speaker of the National Assembly as successor, but when a President can't be sworn in. Maduro could be and was, with approval of the Speaker of the Assembly who administered the oath of office, as well as of Venezuela's Supreme Court.

While the opposition, representing the elites, continues to object to the swearing-in of Maduro as interim President, claiming a Constitutional violation, as extensively covered in the media, one is reminded of the 2009 Honduran coup d'état. The Honduran elite (with heavy U.S. support and investment for its military electronics command in Honduras) removed democratically elected President Zelaya on the pretext that the President betrayed his Constitution.

The pattern of a U.S. backed military kidnapping and removal was previously established with the removal of Haiti's democratically elected President Aristide. Essentially the same pattern of removal was attempted in the 2004 coup against Chávez which failed. Venezuelans, have worked through questions about Presidential succession quite thoroughly: awaiting Chávez's return to the *Presidential Palace* after the coup, the Speaker of the National Assembly assumed unofficial authority until the Vice-President was sworn in as temporary President. So the most likely reason for the opposition candidate to confuse the order of succession, is to appeal outside the Venezuelan process, to gain a victory he has no chance of winning by popular vote.

The overthrows of democracy which Americans take casually sadden everyone but corporate financiers. As a people the U.S. still hasn't recovered from the assassinations of the Kennedys. It is possibly, a practice to murder the people's leaders: Arbenz, Lumumba, the Kennedys, King, Malcolm X, René Schneider, Allende, etc.. There was no reciprocation. The leaders who betrayed their people into illegal wars survived untouched. As International Monetary Fund austerity programs disenfranchise the people of democracies, national leaders feed their populations into economic gas chambers of a false necessity. In healthy societies oppressive leaders would be removed by their people's consensus, so the health of our societies is removed.

Interim President of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro has assured a scientific enquiry into the causes of Chávez's death. In January Maduro reported an assassination attempt against himself and another Chávez ally. In 2009 Frederic Laurent Bouquet , admitted he was a French secret service agent, trained in Israel, and engaged in an attempt to assassinate Chávez. Arrested in Venezuela with three citizens of the Dominican Republic, *plastique* explosives, and a small arsenal of guns, Bouquet was sentenced to 4 years in prison and in 2012 deported back to France.

There are reasonable allegations that in 2004 Venezuela's State Prosecutor was killed by a right wing Colombian death squad with F.B.I. and C.I.A. assistance. CIA past involvement in the deaths and attempted assassinations of leaders serving the people of their nations is a matter of historical record. With 21st Century electromagnetic, laser, radar and microwave weapons, biological and chemical technology, historically familiar methods of assassination seem intended for psychological effect or distraction. Current U.S. policy openly subverts the laws of war claiming the legality of assassinating foreign leaders, suspected terrorists, as well as Americans. The assassination of Yassar Arafat, ordered by the Israeli Cabinet was approved by the U.S. government. When exhumed the Palestinian leader's body revealed abnormally large amounts of radioactive material.

Chávez loved Venezuela's poor. He loved the people of America and Canada, where the increasing numbers of poor find their lives are of no value to political leaders. Chávez provides hope for broken societies to heal. That's part of what it means when you hear *Chavez vive, la lucha sigue!*

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