

HUGO CHÁVEZ' ADDRESS

An unusual meeting took place at the United States Capital Building between a group of US legislators from the fascist right and Latin American leaders from the rightwing oligarchy and coup promoters to discuss the overthrow of the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua.

The meeting took place a few days before the gathering of Defense ministers from the western hemisphere in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where, on November 22, President Evo Morales delivered an energetic denunciation.

The meeting was not to discuss a slanderous media campaign, a common strategy seen in the imperialist policy, but rather to discuss a conspiracy that, without doubt, would lead to inevitable bloodshed in Venezuela. The experience I have gathered over many years leaves me with no doubts over what would happen in Venezuela if Chavez were assassinated. There would be no need to devise a plan against the president; a mentally disturbed individual, a drug addict, or the violence associated with drug trafficking would be enough to generate an extremely serious situation in Venezuela. Analyzing the situation from a political perspective, the activities and practices of the reactionary oligarchy that owns the powerful media outlets and are encouraged and financed by the United States would inevitably lead to bloody confrontations in the streets of Venezuela. These are the obvious intentions of the Venezuelan opposition, which openly sows hate and violence.

Guillermo Zuloaga —the owner of one of the television channels that is in opposition to the Bolivarian Revolution and a fugitive of Venezuelan law— is one of the conspirators who participated in the meeting of US congresspersons called by Connie Mack and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Ros-Lehtinen is of Cuban origin and is known for her affiliation with the Batista dictatorship. She is called the “ferocious wolf” by our people because of her repulsive conduct during the kidnapping of Elián Gonzalez and her refusal to hand over the boy to his father. The republican congresswoman is a symbol of hate and resentment towards Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and the rest of the ALBA countries; in addition, she recently defended the coup d’état government in Honduras that was condemned by the majority of countries in the Americas. She will almost certainly be elected as the president of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Bolivarian Government of Venezuela faced a serious and provocative challenge. It was a very delicate issue. I wondered what Chavez’ reaction would be. The first energetic response was from Evo Morales in his brilliant and heartfelt address that was broadcast in Cuba. Two days ago, on November 23, it was announced that Chavez would address the issue in the National Assembly.

The act was convened for 5 p.m. and began precisely at the scheduled time. The addresses that were delivered were energetic. The activities concluded barely two hours after they began. Venezuelans had taken the issue very seriously.

Chavez began by mentioning the names of numerous people present and after joking with the new world champion in Katá and about the game between two professional teams, Chavez went to the matter at hand:

“...I am, really, really, truly, going to be brief. It has been said, well, the document that has just been read by representative Roy, thank you Roy, Roy Daza, for reading the document, not only in defense of Venezuela, as has been said here, as Eva said. No, we are going out to defend the human patrimony; one can even say to defend the future of humanity.

“I have brought some books [...] This was the same copy, it’s a bit worn, that I held up in the United

Nations: Chomsky, Hegemony or Survival: —I continue to recommend this book— The American Empire Project, Noam Chomsky. Eva mentioned it and we are reminded of this great of critical thinking, of creative thinking, of philosophy, of the struggle for humanity.

"I have the continuation of this book, Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy. In this book, Chomsky sets out the thesis that the first failed state in the world is the United States, a failed state, a real threat against the entire planet, the whole world, and the human species.

"Here is a part of the interview, of the conversations, where Chomsky reflects on Latin America and Venezuela, in a very brave, objective and generous way, defending our revolutionary process, defending our people, defending the right we have and that we are exercising to follow our own path, as all the peoples of the world have; a right that the Yankee empire has ignored and will try to continue to ignore.

"Right in the federal Capitol (I think it is called), right in Washington, they held a terrorist summit: a summit, a mob (as Argentines and Venezuelans would say), a genuine gang of criminals, cons, terrorists, thieves, delinquents, who met and, backed by 'prestigious' figures from the establishment, not only from the ultra republican right, but also from the Democrat Party, openly launched —as has been commented on here, Eva said it, Roy expressed it in the brilliant document he read, a State document, a national document— a threat against Venezuela, against the countries and peoples of the Bolivarian Alliance.

"From here we send greetings to Evo Morales, a brave colleague and comrade, and to the people of Bolivia.

"From here we send greetings to Rafael Correa, a brave colleague and comrade, and to the people of Ecuador.

"From here we send greetings to Daniel Ortega, the comandante president, a brave colleague and comrade, and to the people of Nicaragua.

"From here we send greetings to Fidel Castro and Raul Castro, and to the courageous Cuban people.

"From here we send greetings to the Caribbean people, to Roosevelt Skerit and the people of Dominica, brave leaders; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Ralph Gonsalves, Spencer, to the ALBA peoples, to the peoples of the Bolivarian Alliance, to their governments, to our governments, and, of course, from here, greetings to the fierce people of Venezuela, our commitment and our call to unity to continue fighting for the future of our homeland, for our independence, whose original constitution —our president, Cilia, already mentioned this— dates back 200 years.

"We are entering into 2011 and we will prepare from all perspectives —spiritual, political, moral— to commemorate 200 years from that first Congress, from that first Constitution, the first in Latin America, the birth of the First Republic, the birth of the Venezuelan homeland, much more than just July 5, it is all of 2011, and the beginning of the revolutionary war of independence led first by Miranda, then Bolivar and the great men and women who gave us our homeland.

"The document read by Roy Daza begins with a quote from Bolivar from a letter to Irving, a US agent that came here to demand the return of those ships that Bolivar and his troops had seized in the Orinoco because the United States were sending him arms and supplies.

"That is nothing new, Eva, all that you have denounced about sending millions of dollars, logistical support, none of it is new. No. From way back then, the United States government was already sending arms and military supplies to the Spanish imperialist troops. It is well known. Part of this history is retold by that good Cuban writer, Francisco Pividal, in another book I never stop recommending, Bolívar, pensamiento precursor del antimperialismo. The book can be read in one sitting. And it contains an extraordinary set of quotes. You already mentioned one of them.

"But in one of those letters that Bolivar sent to Irving, I think it was the last one he sent him, when Irving had begun to threaten him with the use of force, Bolivar writes: I will not be provoked, not even by the use of that language. I only wish to express to you, Mr. Irving, —It is written there, I am paraphrasing, because it is the idea, the dignity of our father Bolivar that permeates, that is important in this hall full of magic, symbols, homeland, dreams, hope and dignity. Bolivar tells him: You should know, Mr. Irving, that more than half or half —this was in 1819, after almost a decade of war to the death— or almost half of Venezuelans have died in the fight against the Spanish empire, us, the other half that is still here, we are eager to follow this same path even if Venezuela has to take on the whole world to gain its independence, its dignity.

"That was, that is, Bolivar, and here we are, his sons and daughters, Maria, prepared to do exactly the same. The whole world should know that we are ready to do exactly the same. If the Yankee empire, with all its might, which is no laughing matter, no, it is very serious —as Eva rightly advises—, if they decide to attack, continue to attack and openly attack Venezuela in an attempt to stop this revolution, we are here waiting ready, you should be aware Mr. Empire and your numerous embodiments that we are prepared to do exactly the same: to die, all of us, for our homeland and dignity!

"It would be interesting to ask, in that terrorist summit that was held in Washington, with the participation of a few Venezuelans, Bolivians and people who have practiced genocide —as a good journalist did ask yesterday during an interview—, it would be good to know what passport these delinquents are using, where did they enter, if any of them are part of Interpol's code red. They arrived without any problems; they arrived and travelled through the streets of Washington, where their presence was celebrated. This is why Noam Chomsky is right. I repeat with Noam Chomsky: the United States is a failed state that acts outside of international laws, that respects absolutely nothing and that, furthermore, feels it has a right to do so, it doesn't answer to anyone. It represents a threat not only to Venezuela and the peoples of the world, but to their own people, a people that is permanently attacked by this anti-democratic state.

"For example, and this is barely a summary. You've heard of Wikileaks, right?

"What will that woman representative, that fascist who calls us, Evo, Correa and me, outlaws? She is the outlaw, a fugitive that the Venezuelan courts could easily file for extradition for committing crimes and conspiring, and many other things, against our nation's sovereignty. She is an outlaw. It is time to expose her to the world along with the other outlaws.

"What will these outlaws say about this, for example?

"I read:

"What will the United States Parliament say about these reports, about those secret documents that have now been published on WikiLeaks? What impact will WikiLeaks have? The same as Chavez Candanga.

"On March 15, 2010, Wiki Candanga published a United States Defense Department report on several leaks broken by this Webpage that had to do with US interest and the report proposed several ways to marginalize it: a video of journalists being assassinated.' I have here some of the documents, they are public. We will have to see if some authority in the United States takes some sort of initiative to address these crimes, or these alleged crimes, correct? I am not a judge to rule on it, on these alleged serious crimes committed by citizens, civilians, soldiers, and the government of this country.

"I read: 'On April 5, 2010, WikiLeaks published a video showing US troops killing a Reuters' reporter, Namir Noor-Eldeen, his assistant and nine others. It is clear that none of these made threats to attack the Apache helicopter from which they were shot. Although the Reuters news agency requested the video on numerous occasions, it was denied until WikiLeaks got this unpublished video, and put the US

military machine in check.”

“Well, put in check so to speak, at least morally.”

“Once again, what will the United Nations say? What if that had happened in an ALBA country? What would happen? What would the OAS, the UN Security Council, or the Human Rights Council say? What would the infamous International Human Rights Court say? We can see the double standard that is measured here for human rights, respect for life, terrorism and all these phenomena.

“War diaries from Afghanistan, July 25, 2010, were also published. Records of the Iraq war. Look at this sentence from a few days ago: ‘October 22, 2010’—a few days ago— ‘WikiLeaks made public on its website a summary called Document of the war in Iraq, containing 391,831 leaked documents from the Pentagon, on the Iraq war and its occupation, between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2009, in which they reveal, among other things, the systematic use of torture, the figure of 109,032 dead in Iraq, of whom 61,081 were civilians, 63%, 23,984 ‘enemies labeled as insurgents’, 15,196 said to be from the host country.’ What a way to visit a country! ‘And 3,771 dead coalition force ‘friends’. The documents reveal that on average 31 civilians died each day over a period of six years. ”

“Who investigates this? Who is responsible for this? No, it’s the Empire, the US failed state. I’ll read this sentence: ‘These documents are arranged chronologically and by categories describing lethal military actions that affect the US Army, including the number of people killed, injured or detained as a result of these actions, as well as the precise geographic location of each event, it also details the military units involved and the weapons used.’ Sufficient details for an investigation.

“What will the United States Congress say about this? Our ambassador is in Washington. Are you still working there as an ambassador? Yes, you are the ambassador. To our knowledge nothing has been said, right?

“Here it says: ‘Most journal entries were written by soldiers and members of the Intelligence, who listened to the reports transmitted by radio from the front line.

“‘Civilian casualties caused by coalition forces. At the same time’, it says here, ‘it has come to light that a large number of attacks and deaths were a result of the troops shooting unarmed motorists, fearing that these were suicide bombers.’

“‘A report details how a child was killed and another injured when the car they were traveling in was shot at by troops. In compensation for this attack their families were paid 100,000 Afghanis for the dead child, 1,600 euros.’ Capitalism paid 20,000 Afghanis, 335 euros for the injury and 10,000 Afghanis, 167 euros for the vehicle. And all this is in the reports, which calls them, ‘little tragedies’, ‘little tragedies’. This is the great threat, the greatest threat in the world.

“The Yankee empire has clearly entered a phase of political, economic and, above all, ethical decline; but who can deny its great military power, which, combining these factors, make it, the most powerful empire in the history of the world, a much greater threat to our peoples. What can we do? It has already been said: unity, unity and more unity.

“Will the US Congress be, starting on January 1, an ultra-rightwing Congress? Well, the Venezuelan Parliament from January 5 must then be ultra-leftwing.

“And I am calling on the deputies elected by the people, by popular movements, social movements, and parties of the revolution, to have a strong commitment from January 5.

“Indeed it is unprecedented, and Eva reminds us. How is it that here, it is still allowed that we, having this Constitution —which cost us so much, so many years of battle, so much sweat, so much blood, so much effort; here it is very clearly stated, it is also there in the first Constitution, the first act of

independence and our first Constitution, we are a sovereign country—, at the risk of being called 'the silly homeland or stupid revolution' again, or if you want to be more vulgar the 'dumbass revolution,' how is that we are going to allow political parties, NGOs, important members of the counter revolution to continue to be financed with millions and millions of dollars from the US Empire and to continue to go around making use of the full freedom to abuse and violate our Constitution and to attempt to destabilize the country? I implore you to introduce a very severe law to prevent this. This should be how we respond to imperial aggression, the imperial threat, by radicalizing our positions, not loosening anything, adjusting positions, picking up the pace, consolidating the revolutionary unity. Not just a parliament that leans much more to the Left, much more radically to the Left, we need a government much more radically to the Left, an armed forces, General Rangel —General in Chief, who will take over Saturday, November 27, Air Forces Day—, that is much more radically revolutionary, together with the people.

"There should be no place in our civilians or military ranks for half-measures. Not a single column: radicalize the revolution! And that disgusting stateless bourgeoisie should really feel this. The Venezuelan bourgeoisie, without shame and without a country, should feel this, should know it's unwarranted for one of its most distinguished representatives go to the Congress of the empire itself, to lash out against Venezuela and to continue having a television channel here. And so on, and so forth! The Venezuelan bourgeoisie should know that their aggression against the people is going to cost them dearly, and that they should not be hanging about over there.

"I remember —there's José Vicente Rangel, Maduro and a colleague, thank you for joining us— during Betancourt's government, deputies from the leftist parties were detained without trial or previous notice, without any evidence they were led off to prison, stripped of their parliamentary immunity.

"In a few weeks, a group of deputies from the extreme Right will enter this room. Well, you just have to remind them that here there is a constitution. Just as, at one time, the Communist Party of Venezuela, and many other parties, was outlawed here, and the parliamentary immunity of many colleagues was lifted, without proof, some went to the mountains like the great Fabricio Ojeda, who resigned his seat and went to the mountains to give his blood for the revolution and the people. I imagine that this worthy Parliament, having a majority representation from the popular forces, will not accept the rightwing forces coming here trying to subvert the constitutional order.

I suppose that the state... I am sure the State will activate all the mechanisms to defend the Constitution and the law against the attacks, giving them no hope.

"In short, the threat ... What did they call the terrorist event? 'The threat in the Andes', no?, Nicolás: Danger in the Andes; It's like the title of a movie, Danger in the Andes; danger in the world, we must raise the alert or rather warn, the danger is global.

"At the moment there is a situation, right now, in the Korean peninsula. When I was on my way here the news was still confusing, as confusing as was the sinking of that vessel from South Korea, the Cheonan, but later evidence emerged that the ship was sunk by the US. Now on a small island in that invaded peninsula, ravaged for years and divided by the Yankee Empire, there is a tense situation, some bombs, some dead and some wounded.

"A few months ago, Fidel Castro warned about the serious risks of nuclear war. I was there recently, once again, and he explained to me, he put his thoughts together —we know plenty already, of course, but there is nothing better than talking— and he said to me, 'Chavez, the slightest little gunshot in that area, full of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, could escalate into a war that could be, at first, conventional ... ', but he is convinced that it will go directly into a nuclear war that could mark the end of the human species. So the danger is not in the Andes, you dirty scoundrels in Washington, the danger is global.

"Here in Venezuela, as Eva said, a light has been turned on, and another in Latin America, and another,

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and they're turning on others. Today we can say —not that Venezuela alone, no— that Latin America is a continent of hope and the Yankee Empire can not close the doors of hope.

"We, Venezuelans, we've always been, for some reason or another, at the forefront of these struggles, for centuries.

"I see over the portraits of Miranda, Bolivar, over there Martín Tovar y Tovar, Carabobo, and all the stuff that Roy read and said with such passion: It is right here, in our genes, in our blood. He paraphrased Mao, the Great Helmsman.

"That empire, that failed state that is the United States, despite its immense power and its threats, will end up being a gigantic paper tiger and we are forced to become true tigers of steel, small steel tigers, invincible, indomitable.

"Madam President, I promised to be brief, and as I said at the beginning, and I repeat: I believe that all that had to be said has been said by that brave woman Eva Golinger and by that brave deputy Roy Daza, which is contained in this document, which I now understand will circulate to the four corners of Venezuela, and beyond, throughout Latin America.

"I appreciate the invitation to this event, I appreciate the gesture, and as just one more person, I join this huge battalion, so to speak, in defense of Venezuela, in defense of the Venezuelan homeland.

"Looking at this painting, more than a painting, the monumental work of Tovar y Tovar, one sees the infantry there, and the cavalry over there. We will draw our inspiration from there: Infantry draw bayonets, quick march! Cavalry, at gallop, in defense of the Bolivarian homeland, of the Bolivarian Alliance of our People!

"Down with the Yankee empire!" he exclaimed at the end, "Long live ALBA, the Homeland and the Revolution!"

There is absolutely no doubt that Chavez, a career military man, but much more committed to dialogue and persuasion rather than force, will not hesitate to prevent the pro-imperialist and anti-patriotic rightwing from trying to deceive Venezuelans into turning against the public police force to spill blood in the streets of Venezuela.

In Bolivia and Venezuela, the imperialist mafia has received a response more clear and forceful than they could have ever imagined.

Fidel Castro Ruz
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