

Hands Off Venezuela!

In recent weeks, the campaign of provocation and pressure from US imperialism against the revolutionary process in Venezuela has intensified. Imperialism and the local ruling elite cannot allow things to go on any longer. They cannot tolerate a government that increases investment in health and education, refuses to privatize publicly-owned companies and utilities, opposes the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement, reasserts the nationalized character of the oil industry, etc. Above all they cannot tolerate the process of mass organization and politicization that has taken place in the country. Faced with increasing US imperialist intervention and the threat of a new counter-revolutionary offensive, the Venezuelan Revolution must advance towards socialism in order to defeat reaction!

George Bush, who declared a "War against Terrorism", and has needlessly taken the world to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, has conveniently forgotten to look in his brother's own backyard in fighting it. Recently in Jeb Bush's Florida, Cuban paramilitary leader Rodolfo Frometa of the right-wing terrorist group "F-4 Commandos" openly admitted helping and training Venezuelan paramilitaries associated with Luis Garcia Morales, a former National Guard captain who fled Venezuela after fomenting a military coup against the government of President Chavez. The Miami area has been a hotbed for terrorist groups for decades - the largest CIA center outside the Washington D.C. area is at the University of Miami. Many members of the Death Squads from the Wars in Central and South America of the 60s, 70s, and 80s now reside in Miami. Also, two former members of the Venezuelan National Guard, wanted for terrorist attacks on the Spanish embassy in Caracas are currently being held at the Krome Detention Center - but efforts to extradite them for prosecution in Venezuela and / or Spain are being stalled by the US government. It's clear that for the US imperialists, "terrorists" aren't so bad when they're pro-US.

At a recent Anti-Chavez rally in Miami, where less than 200 demonstrators attended, leaflets were handed out with a picture of Frometa and Morales dressed in military clothing and brandishing guns, along with a statement calling on Venezuelans to rise in insurrection and encouraging them to wage a war against President Chavez if the opposition fails to oust him by a recall referendum. Rodolfo Frometa, who is well-known as a terrorist to the United States government, having been imprisoned for 3 years for illegal weapons purchases, said: "Our camps are open to any Venezuelan who understands that there can be no dealings with Communists". In a speech at the rally, fugitive CTV boss Carlos Ortega called for the assassination of Chavez and subversion against the Venezuelan government.

Since both Republican George W. Bush and Democrat John Kerry are vying for the Cuban right-wing community support in the upcoming election for President, they are trying to out-do one another to garner their votes. Bush has turned a blind eye to the homegrown terrorism of the "F-4 Commandos" in Miami, and covertly funds groups trying to undermine the Bolivarian Revolutionary process in Venezuela. The Democrats' Jimmy Carter demands that the recall referendum process continue even if fraud has been committed; and John Kerry who also concurred with Carter, has

unscrupulously attacked President Chavez; calling him a dictator, ranting about how President Chavez will turn Venezuela into a Cuban-style government and comparing him to Cuba's Fidel Castro. These are nothing but red scare tactics and code words designed to whip up mass support for a counter-revolution both here and abroad.

Need we remind John Kerry and his supporters that at the very least President Chavez has been democratically elected; the Bolivarian Revolution has been affirmed by the people of Venezuela on 7 different occasions; and that he has mass support for himself and his social programs. That's more than can be said of George Bush, whose election is still in question; has less popular support than Chavez; has broken treaty after treaty; fought illegal predatory wars; turned back 70 years of progressive legislation for workers and the poor; and whose economic policies have benefitted only the capitalist class, bringing disaster and misery for everyone else.

Those who say the upcoming US Presidential elections are nothing but a choice between Cancer and the Plague, and that neither party offers a way out of the worldwide economic crisis or a meaningful shift in policy for the masses of Venezuela or anywhere else are indeed right. It's crystal clear that the so-called "war on terror" is really a war on working people at home and abroad. Now more than ever, solidarity action with the Bolivarian Revolution and a strengthening of the process towards socialism is necessary to safeguard it.

The revolutionary Venezuelan masses have again and again shown their willingness to fight reaction. But the revolutionary structures are still small, divided and dispersed. They need to be united on the basis of revolutionary assemblies and revolutionary defense committees in all working class neighborhoods, factories, schools, and villages, where all revolutionary political tendencies are free to put forward their views to be democratically discussed. These committees need to be linked up at the local, state and national level on the basis of democratically elected representatives with the right of recall. Only through democratic debate can the revolutionary movement achieve the necessary unity. These measures, if implemented, would amount to the beginning of a movement towards socialism. This is the only way in which the future of the revolutionary process can be assured.

***No to US intervention in Venezuela!**

***Defend the Venezuelan Revolution!**

***Forward to Socialism!**

For more information, or to add your name to the list of supporters of the Hands Off Venezuela campaign, please write us at: venezuela@socialistappeal.org



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