



Hands Off Venezuela Statement on Venezuela's Presidential Election Step up the activities of the solidarity movement

The presidential elections in Venezuela in December will mark an important turning point for the Bolivarian Revolution. What is at stake is not only who will be the next president of Venezuela, but the future of the revolutionary process itself. The Bolivarian Revolution has already delivered massive social gains for the Venezuelan people, particularly in the field of education (including the eradication of illiteracy), the provision of health care to the poor, and the beginning of land reform. This has strengthened mass support for the Bolivarian movement.

These policies have aroused the rage of the US government and their Venezuelan allies in the local oligarchy, which see the social gains as a threat. Venezuela has not only opposed the policies that Washington is imposing on the whole of the continent, but has then also resisted and defeated a military coup, the bosses' lockout and sabotage of the economy, and the recall referendum. This has inspired and encouraged the masses of the whole of the continent in their struggle against imperialist domination, poverty and exploitation.

The Venezuelan opposition (which really represents the interests of Washington) has been defeated on a number of occasions. In the short term they cannot organize a military coup against the Bolivarian Revolution. But that does not make them less dangerous. As proven in December 2005, when they withdrew from the National Assembly elections, they do not believe they can defeat Chavez and the revolution through peaceful parliamentary means.

Their candidate for the December 3 presidential elections, Zulia state governor, Manuel Rosales, participated in the coup of April 11, 2002 and signed the infamous Carmona decree which disbanded all democratic institutions in the country. One of his first actions after being chosen as the joint opposition candidate was to pay a visit to Miami. It is unlikely that he will win a clean race against Chavez. The opposition will probably withdraw and try to make the elections appear illegitimate. This will go hand in hand with an international campaign in the media to give credence to this allegation. This campaign has already started and includes all sorts of outrageous accusations (from Venezuela's lack of cooperation in the war on drugs, to the alleged links between the Venezuelan government and Islamic terrorism, etc)

The US has already announced the creation of a new CIA Mission dealing with Cuba and Venezuela. Knowing the CIA's past record in relation to Cuba we can understand the dangers this implies. Hugo Chávez has already warned publicly of the possibility of attempts on his life.

For all these reasons, it is now more important than ever to step up the activities of the movement in solidarity with the Venezuelan revolution. We pledge ourselves to counter the campaign of media lies and misinformation, to disseminate truthful information about the achievements of the Bolivarian movement and to defend the revolution against internal and external threats.

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