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## Venezuela Today – Great Achievements, Grave Threats (Part 2)

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Carolus recently completed a tour of Australia as guest of the Communist Party of Australia. In Adelaide he spoke with Bob Briton from The Guardian about the great changes taking place in his country and the many challenges ahead.

The following is the second part of this interview (slightly abridged). He begins with the subject of the threats to the Bolivarian Revolution from inside and outside the country if, as is expected, Hugo Chávez wins the presidential elections due to be held next month.

Carolus Wimmer: On October 7 there is a revolutionary candidate with Hugo Chávez and a candidate of the counter-revolution and the bourgeoisie. We fear there is a possibility that the opposition will not recognise the victory of President Chávez. That plan would get the immediate support of the imperialist mass media. It could get support of international imperialist institutions, organisations and of governments.

We can say there are very few options available to the opposition to win. All the polls give a lead of 10 to 20 percent to Chávez. Most of them are conducted by the opposition but there are such great differences that it's impossible to hide. For that reason it's been very difficult to promote the opposition candidate.

[Henrique] Capriles comes directly from the high bourgeoisie of Venezuela. They present him as a young man, as a new man but we must point out that in his youth he was a member of the international fascist movement Tradición, Familia y Propiedad [Tradition, Family and Property]. He was then a member of the Christian Democratic Party, a conservative party. In the 1990s he was president of the Venezuelan parliament. In that role he has guilt for all the privatisations carried out in those days and it is an indication that he is not new.

He is older than Chávez. He was in power before Chávez, and represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. It appears to our Party that those forces will not accept defeat. For example, President Chávez signed an official commitment in the National Electoral Council to accept the result of the election, to accept the will of the people. The candidate of the right refused to sign it. It's a message. So what is the plan?

BB: Are there others dangers facing the Bolivarian Revolution? Does it have support internationally?

CW: The dangers for the Bolivarian Revolution continue inside and outside. Of course, for the US on the one hand will

continue with its efforts to recover its "backyard" in Latin America. They have lost influence in the region but they will do everything possible to regain that influence. There's an economic blockade against Venezuela, especially in the scientific and technology sector. Countries and companies are forbidden from selling high technologies to Venezuela.

They can create more military bases. At the moment we can count 47 bases from the US in the region. In Colombia it is well known they are building seven military bases. Now the US is building 11 military bases in Panama – six on the Pacific side and five on the Caribbean side. There are NATO bases in front of Venezuela in Aruba and Curaçao controlled by The Netherlands. For those reasons there continues great dangers for the revolution but there exists a high political consciousness among the Venezuelan working class, among the people to continue fighting for national independence and sovereignty, for more and more integration of Latin America.

The proof of the dangers posed to Latin America can be seen in what happened in Honduras and Paraguay. Against great illusions in Latin America that President Obama would represent change we now know that he is carrying on with the same imperialist policies that the US used to carry on in our countries. They don't accept the results of democratic elections if they are against the interests of the US.

They intervene militarily or with military support as in Honduras. They interfered directly through the US embassy in Paraguay against elected President Lugo and we have to be very cautious that what has happened in some countries in Europe they now do in Latin America. There you see presidents who are not elected by the people in Greece and Italy and now in Honduras and Paraguay we have two presidents who came to office without elections.

We have to underscore this because normally the US government is very vigilant about democracy in other countries. But we can see they don't respect it if the presidents or the government don't express the politics of the US – they are not willing to accept the democratic will of the people.

There are the highest relations between Cuba and Venezuela. We say that in general in Latin America we are dealing with a new concept of international relationships not based on competition but on solidarity, cooperation and complementation. A very good example is Cuba and Venezuela. Another example is the ALBA countries [Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas] where there is a great relationship of solidarity and cooperation. In Venezuela we support socialist Cuba and its great solidarity, especially in the areas of education and healthcare that we receive from Cuba.

We are continuing to advance Latin American integration. It's another reason the US is very angry with us. There are different types of integration. On the one hand there is UNASUR [Union of South American Nations] of the countries of South America. There are the ALBA countries, which have the highest level of consciousness of the aspect of solidarity and cooperation.

Last year the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries [CELAC] was created. This is the integration of 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries without the US and Canada. It's very interesting that, despite the very well known political and ideological differences among the countries of Latin America, there is the will for integration because even the right-wing governments of the region are being pressured and excluded by imperialism. It is also an expression of the higher consciousness of the people and the working class who push their governments to fight and work for further integration in Latin America.

Of course, one of the responsibilities of the Communist Party is to work for the integration of Latin America. We must underline that the struggles and experiences of the different Communist parties are very important; that all the parties of the different governments, such as in Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia receive the solidarity of the Communist parties. In Venezuela, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party work together. In Bolivia, MAS [the Movement Towards Socialism] and the Communist Party work together.

In Ecuador, Alianza PAIS [Proud and Sovereign Fatherland Alliance] and the Communist Party of Ecuador work together. It is a wonderful step forward that the Communist parties support progressive governments but at the same time maintain their independence as parties of the working class. In this way the Communist Parties in general participate in the deepening of this process.

Our Party, the PCV, sees the great dangers globally. There's more and more confrontation by the imperialist countries against the independent countries. We in Latin America remember that there are many peoples who are not independent. We remember Puerto Rico and that part of Cuba – Guantánamo – are under the imperialist control of the US. Martinique, Guadalupe and French Guyana are still colonies of France. Britain still controls some islands in the Caribbean and the Malvinas Argentinas [the Falkland Islands]. The Netherlands control some Caribbean islands, for example Aruba and Curaçao.

For this reason the people in Australia must understand why the struggle for national independence is so important for us. It may not be part of the reality for many people here but we need solidarity. We also thank the Australian working class, the unions and progressive parties, especially the Communist Party of Australia, for their solidarity with the struggle of our people.

Of course, we have a very optimistic view of this struggle for the future. We are sure the international working class will win this struggle but we also recognise they could be very hard struggles because imperialism and worldwide capitalism will not surrender without this hard class struggle as in the examples of Syria, Afghanistan, the Middle East – Iraq, Iran and Libya. The imperialist, criminal actions could also take place against Latin America, not only because they don't agree with the politics of some government or other.

Normally they say that the national interests of the US are threatened, that their national interests are in danger when there is a progressive government in Argentina or in Uruguay or in Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua or in Venezuela or when there's success in building socialism as in Cuba.

Because of this great crisis of capitalism in the northern countries they need to gain control quickly of natural resources – energy resources, mineral resources, water resources. If you look at a map of the world you will notice that these resources are mostly to be found in the south.

For that reason we are thinking not only about integration of the Latin American countries. We are working towards the integration of the south which includes southern Africa and also the southern part of Asia.

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