

VENEZUELA - Hugo Chávez Address to the United Nations (by Hugo Chávez, Common Dreams News Center)

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Representatives of the governments of the world, good morning to all of you. First of all, I would like to invite you, very respectfully, to those who have not read this book, to read it.

Noam Chomsky, one of the most prestigious American and world intellectuals, Noam Chomsky, and this is one of his most recent books, *Hegemony or Survival: The Imperialist Strategy of the United States*. [Holds up book, waves it in front of General Assembly.] It's an excellent book to help us understand what has been happening in the world throughout the 20th century, and what's happening now, and the greatest threat looming over our planet.

The hegemonic pretensions of the American empire are placing at risk the very survival of the human species. We continue to warn you about this danger and we appeal to the people of the United States and the world to halt this threat, which is like a sword hanging over our heads. I had considered reading from this book, but, for the sake of time, [flips through the pages, which are numerous] I will just leave it as a recommendation.

It reads easily, it is a very good book, I'm sure Madame [President] you are familiar with it. It appears in English, in Russian, in Arabic, in German. I think that the first people who should read this book are our brothers and sisters in the United States, because their threat is right in their own house.

The devil is right at home. The devil, the devil himself, is right in the house.

And the devil came here yesterday. Yesterday the devil came here. Right here. [crosses himself] And it smells of sulfur still today.

Yesterday, ladies and gentlemen, from this rostrum, the president of the United States, the gentleman to whom I refer as the devil, came here, talking as if he owned the world. Truly. As the owner of the world.

I think we could call a psychiatrist to analyze yesterday's statement made by the president of the United States. As the spokesman of imperialism, he came to share his nostrums, to try to preserve the current pattern of domination, exploitation and pillage of the peoples of the world.

An Alfred Hitchcock movie could use it as a scenario. I would even propose a title: "The Devil's Recipe."

As Chomsky says here, clearly and in depth, the American empire is doing all it can to consolidate its system of domination. And we cannot allow them to do that. We cannot allow world dictatorship to be consolidated.

The world parent's statement - cynical, hypocritical, full of this imperial hypocrisy from the need they have to control everything.

They say they want to impose a democratic model. But that's their democratic model. It's the false democracy of elites, and, I would say, a very original democracy that's imposed by weapons and bombs and firing weapons.

What a strange democracy. Aristotle might not recognize it or others who are at the root of democracy.

What type of democracy do you impose with marines and bombs?

The president of the United States, yesterday, said to us, right here, in this room, and I'm quoting, "Anywhere you look, you hear extremists telling you can escape from poverty and recover your dignity through violence, terror and martyrdom."

Wherever he looks, he sees extremists. And you, my brother - he looks at your color, and he says, oh, there's an extremist. Evo Morales, the worthy president of Bolivia, looks like an extremist to him.

The imperialists see extremists everywhere. It's not that we are extremists. It's that the world is waking up. It's waking up all over. And people are standing up.

I have the feeling, dear world dictator, that you are going to live the rest of your days as a nightmare because the rest of us are standing up, all those who are rising up against American imperialism, who are shouting for equality, for respect, for the sovereignty of nations.

Yes, you can call us extremists, but we are rising up against the empire, against the model of domination.

The president then - and this he said himself, he said: "I have come to speak directly to the populations in the Middle East, to tell them that my country wants peace."

That's true. If we walk in the streets of the Bronx, if we walk around New York, Washington, San Diego, in any city, San Antonio, San Francisco, and we ask individuals, the citizens of the United States, what does this country want? Does it want peace? They'll say yes.

But the government doesn't want peace. The government of the United States doesn't want peace. It wants to exploit its system of exploitation, of pillage, of hegemony through war.

It wants peace. But what's happening in Iraq? What happened in Lebanon? In Palestine? What's happening? What's happened over the last 100 years in Latin America and in the world? And now threatening Venezuela - new threats against Venezuela, against Iran?

He spoke to the people of Lebanon. Many of you, he said, have seen how your homes and communities were caught in the crossfire. How cynical can you get? What a capacity to lie shamefacedly. The bombs in Beirut with millimetric precision?

This is crossfire? He's thinking of a western, when people would shoot from the hip and somebody would be caught in the crossfire.

This is imperialist, fascist, assassin, genocidal, the empire and Israel firing on the people of Palestine and Lebanon. That is what happened. And now we hear, "We're suffering because we see homes destroyed.'

The president of the United States came to talk to the peoples - to the peoples of the world. He came to say - I brought some documents with me, because this morning I was reading some statements, and I see that he talked to the people of Afghanistan, the people of Lebanon, the people of Iran. And he addressed all these peoples directly.

And you can wonder, just as the president of the United States addresses those peoples of the world, what would those peoples of the world tell him if they were given the floor? What would they have to say?

And I think I have some inkling of what the peoples of the south, the oppressed people think. They would say, "Yankee imperialist, go home." I think that is what those people would say if they were given the microphone and if they could speak with one voice to the American imperialists.

And that is why, Madam President, my colleagues, my friends, last year we came here to this same hall as

we have been doing for the past eight years, and we said something that has now been confirmed - fully, fully confirmed.

I don't think anybody in this room could defend the system. Let's accept - let's be honest. The U.N. system, born after the Second World War, collapsed. It's worthless.

Oh, yes, it's good to bring us together once a year, see each other, make statements and prepare all kinds of long documents, and listen to good speeches, like Abel's yesterday, or President Mullah's. Yes, it's good for that.

And there are a lot of speeches, and we've heard lots from the president of Sri Lanka, for instance, and the president of Chile.

But we, the assembly, have been turned into a merely deliberative organ. We have no power, no power to make any impact on the terrible situation in the world. And that is why Venezuela once again proposes, here, today, 20 September, that we re-establish the United Nations.

Last year, Madam, we made four modest proposals that we felt to be crucially important. We have to assume the responsibility our heads of state, our ambassadors, our representatives, and we have to discuss it.

The first is expansion, and Mullah talked about this yesterday right here. The Security Council, both as it has permanent and non-permanent categories, (inaudible) developing countries and LDCs must be given access as new permanent members. That's step one.

Second, effective methods to address and resolve world conflicts, transparent decisions.

Point three, the immediate suppression - and that is something everyone's calling for - of the anti-democratic mechanism known as the veto, the veto on decisions of the Security Council.

Let me give you a recent example. The immoral veto of the United States allowed the Israelis, with impunity, to destroy Lebanon. Right in front of all of us as we stood there watching, a resolution in the council was prevented.

Fourthly, we have to strengthen, as we've always said, the role and the powers of the secretary general of the United Nations.

Yesterday, the secretary general practically gave us his speech of farewell. And he recognized that over the last 10 years, things have just gotten more complicated; hunger, poverty, violence, human rights violations have just worsened. That is the tremendous consequence of the collapse of the United Nations system and American hegemonistic pretensions.

Madam, Venezuela a few years ago decided to wage this battle within the United Nations by recognizing the United Nations, as members of it that we are, and lending it our voice, our thinking.

Our voice is an independent voice to represent the dignity and the search for peace and the reformulation of the international system; to denounce persecution and aggression of hegemonistic forces on the planet.

This is how Venezuela has presented itself. Bolivar's home has sought a nonpermanent seat on the Security Council.

Let's see. Well, there's been an open attack by the U.S. government, an immoral attack, to try and prevent Venezuela from being freely elected to a post in the Security Council.

The imperium is afraid of truth, is afraid of independent voices. It calls us extremists, but they are the extremists.

And I would like to thank all the countries that have kindly announced their support for Venezuela, even though the ballot is a secret one and there's no need to announce things.

But since the imperium has attacked, openly, they strengthened the convictions of many countries. And their support strengthens us.

Mercosur, as a bloc, has expressed its support, our brothers in Mercosur. Venezuela, with Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, is a full member of Mercosur.

And many other Latin American countries, CARICOM, Bolivia have expressed their support for Venezuela. The Arab League, the full Arab League has voiced its support. And I am immensely grateful to the Arab world, to our Arab brothers, our Caribbean brothers, the African Union. Almost all of Africa has expressed its support for Venezuela and countries such as Russia or China and many others.

I thank you all warmly on behalf of Venezuela, on behalf of our people, and on behalf of the truth, because Venezuela, with a seat on the Security Council, will be expressing not only Venezuela's thoughts, but it will also be the voice of all the peoples of the world, and we will defend dignity and truth.

Over and above all of this, Madam President, I think there are reasons to be optimistic. A poet would have said "helplessly optimistic," because over and above the wars and the bombs and the aggressive and the preventive war and the destruction of entire peoples, one can see that a new era is dawning.

As Silvio Rodriguez says, the era is giving birth to a heart. There are alternative ways of thinking. There are young people who think differently. And this has already been seen within the space of a mere decade. It was shown that the end of history was a totally false assumption, and the same was shown about Pax Americana and the establishment of the capitalist neo-liberal world. It has been shown, this system, to generate mere poverty. Who believes in it now?

What we now have to do is define the future of the world. Dawn is breaking out all over. You can see it in Africa and Europe and Latin America and Oceania. I want to emphasize that optimistic vision.

We have to strengthen ourselves, our will to do battle, our awareness. We have to build a new and better world.

Venezuela joins that struggle, and that's why we are threatened. The U.S. has already planned, financed and set in motion a coup in Venezuela, and it continues to support coup attempts in Venezuela and elsewhere.

President Michelle Bachelet reminded us just a moment ago of the horrendous assassination of the former foreign minister, Orlando Letelier.

And I would just add one thing: Those who perpetrated this crime are free. And that other event where an American citizen also died were American themselves. They were CIA killers, terrorists.

And we must recall in this room that in just a few days there will be another anniversary. Thirty years will have passed from this other horrendous terrorist attack on the Cuban plane, where 73 innocents died, a Cubana de Aviacion airliner.

And where is the biggest terrorist of this continent who took the responsibility for blowing up the plane? He spent a few years in jail in Venezuela. Thanks to CIA and then government officials, he was allowed to escape, and he lives here in this country, protected by the government.

And he was convicted. He has confessed to his crime. But the U.S. government has double standards. It protects terrorism when it wants to.

And this is to say that Venezuela is fully committed to combating terrorism and violence. And we are one of the people who are fighting for peace.

Luis Posada Carriles is the name of that terrorist who is protected here. And other tremendously corrupt people who escaped from Venezuela are also living here under protection: a group that bombed various embassies, that assassinated people during the coup. They kidnapped me and they were going to kill me, but I think God reached down and our people came out into the streets and the army was too, and so I'm here today.

But these people who led that coup are here today in this country protected by the American government. And I accuse the American government of protecting terrorists and of having a completely cynical discourse.

We mentioned Cuba. Yes, we were just there a few days ago. We just came from there happily.

And there you see another era born. The Summit of the 15, the Summit of the Nonaligned, adopted a historic resolution. This is the outcome document. Don't worry, I'm not going to read it.

But you have a whole set of resolutions here that were adopted after open debate in a transparent matter - more than 50 heads of state. Havana was the capital of the south for a few weeks, and we have now launched, once again, the group of the nonaligned with new momentum.

And if there is anything I could ask all of you here, my companions, my brothers and sisters, it is to please lend your good will to lend momentum to the Nonaligned Movement for the birth of the new era, to prevent hegemony and prevent further advances of imperialism.

And as you know, Fidel Castro is the president of the nonaligned for the next three years, and we can trust him to lead the charge very efficiently.

Unfortunately they thought, "Oh, Fidel was going to die." But they're going to be disappointed because he didn't. And he's not only alive, he's back in his green fatigues, and he's now presiding the nonaligned.

So, my dear colleagues, Madam President, a new, strong movement has been born, a movement of the south. We are men and women of the south.

With this document, with these ideas, with these criticisms, I'm now closing my file. I'm taking the book with me. And, don't forget, I'm recommending it very warmly and very humbly to all of you.

We want ideas to save our planet, to save the planet from the imperialist threat. And hopefully in this very century, in not too long a time, we will see this, we will see this new era, and for our children and our grandchildren a world of peace based on the fundamental principles of the United Nations, but a renewed United Nations.

And maybe we have to change location. Maybe we have to put the United Nations somewhere else; maybe a city of the south. We've proposed Venezuela.

You know that my personal doctor had to stay in the plane. The chief of security had to be left in a locked plane. Neither of these gentlemen was allowed to arrive and attend the U.N. meeting. This is another abuse and another abuse of power on the part of the Devil. It smells of sulfur here, but God is with us and I embrace you all.

May God bless us all. Good day to you.