

Marxist Hugo Chavez Jails Prominent Political Opponent

By Cliff Kincaid

In another outrageous case of the abuse of human rights, the Hugo Chavez regime in Venezuela has arrested anti-communist activist Alejandro Peña Esclusa on trumped-up charges of being a terrorist. The president of UnoAmerica, an anti-communist alliance, and the author of *The Foro de São Paulo: A Threat to Freedom in Latin America*, Peña Esclusa is a former Venezuelan presidential candidate who has opposed efforts by the Chavez regime to spread Marxist revolution in Venezuela and throughout the region.

Olavo de Carvalho, a Brazilian writer and friend of Peña Esclusa, says the Venezuelan opposition leader was taken away by the political police of Hugo Chávez on July 12, having been arrested on ridiculous, false, and absurd charges based on testimony allegedly given by a supposed Salvadoran terrorist now in Cuba. The Chavez regime, which functions under the direction and supervision of the Cuban secret police, apparently planted explosives as part of the frame-up.



Alejandro Peña Esclusa

Carvalho appealed to members of the U.S. Congress and the public to send immediate notes of protest to the Venezuelan government over this incident, which is more evidence of Chávez's "utter contempt for the fundamental rights of his political opponents."

Carvalho said, "The Geneva Conventions guarantee to every prisoner the right to be visited by a minister belonging to the prisoner's religious denomination, or by members of the Red Cross. I appeal to the Catholic Church in Venezuela to send a priest to meet with Peña Esclusa in prison immediately, in order to ensure that the excess of humanitarianism of the Chávez government will not lead the prisoner to death from emotional exhaustion or from unknown or unthinkable causes."

“The goal of the farce set up against Peña is to create an appearance of connection between him and ‘violent right-wing organizations,’ which, in the current Latin American scene, stand out especially because of their spectacular non-existence,” Carvalho added.

The official Chavez news agency has declared that, “Alejandro Pena Esclusa is a dark character of the Venezuelan opposition linked to fascist sectors and with a thick file of conspiratorial activities against the government of President Hugo Chavez.”

All of this means that he has been effective in organizing opposition to the would-be dictator, who is the subject of a laudatory amateurish propaganda film by Oliver Stone, “South of the Border,” now playing to small audiences in a few U.S. theaters.

The fact is, however, that Chavez has been systematically destroying freedom in Venezuela, including and most notably freedom of the press. There is only one major independent television station left in Venezuela, Globovisión, but its owner Guillermo Zuloaga has fled the country and is in hiding after an arrest order was issued against him on trumped up charges. Both the Washington Post and Wall Street Journal have covered these ominous developments, as the major media in the U.S. are starting to pay more attention to the destruction of freedom in Venezuela and Chavez’s ties to terrorist groups and regimes.

In a March 1, 2009, column published by Accuracy in Media, Peña Esclusa had predicted that Chavez would end up in so much trouble, because of popular opposition and discontent, that he would choose to rely on foreign powers such as Iran for protection and provide a base of operations in Venezuela for foreign terrorist groups. “Chavez is providing the Venezuelan territory to Middle Eastern terrorist groups, not only to help him defend his revolution inside the country, but as a powerful deterrent against his international adversaries,” he said.

This is precisely what is happening. As we have recently documented, the situation in Venezuela is now so bad that even the Socialist International has condemned the human rights and economic record of the regime, raising concern as well about its involvement in Middle Eastern affairs.

We published an interview with Peña Esclusa when he became a prominent global advocate of saving freedom and democracy in Honduras when a Chavez puppet was planning to seize total power and was evicted from the country. Although the Obama Administration sided with Chavez in this case, international opposition forced the Marxist forces to eventually abandon their campaign to take control of the Honduran government and destroy democracy there. As a result, Honduras has maintained its democratic and anti-communist form of government.

In the interview, however, Peña Esclusa was pessimistic about Venezuela, saying:

“There is very little room left for freedom and democracy in Venezuela. This is a ‘third generation’ dictatorship; not so cruel and obvious as Fidel Castro’s, but just as evil. There are elections, but rigged. There is certain freedom of press, but the media is threatened with closure if it ‘crosses the line.’ Not all Chavez’s adversaries are persecuted, just some, but enough to spread fear among the rest. All three branches of power are controlled by Chavez. The Constitution has been rewritten to allow Chavez to stay in power indefinitely. Venezuelan petrodollars are used to export his Marxist revolution throughout Latin America. And the government is closely related with Colombian narco-terrorists and Islamic fundamentalists.”

In the case of his detention in Venezuela, Carvalho said the alleged Salvadoran terrorist, who supposedly served as Peña Esclusa’s “contact” in Venezuela, was “interrogated and then sent to Cuba, where no independent investigator can contact him to verify whether his testimony really exists and whether it is true.” The Venezuelan regime claims that the Salvadoran, Chávez Abarca, is the right-hand man of Luís Posada Carriles, who was accused of bombing a Cuban plane.

“So far, however, the most compromising piece of information that has been found against Chávez Abarca is that he was arrested for car theft and smuggling,” Carvalho said. “The justice system of El Salvador set him free in 2007.”

He added, “If there is no evidence that Chávez Abarca is a terrorist, much less is there any proof against Alejandro Peña. The Venezuelan police said they found explosives in his apartment, which is laughable, to say the least. Peña, who has never shown any sign of mental unbalance, would have to be completely insane to plot bomb attacks against a government which he has filed suit against in the International Court of Justice.

At this point, “Nobody knows where Alejandro Peña is, nor what his health condition is after some hours of fondling by the hands of Hugo Chávez’s political police, widely known by their matchless tenderness,” Carvalho said.

The American public and members of Congress need to be heard in this case because President Obama cannot be counted on to do anything to free Peña Esclusa or any other political prisoners in Venezuela.

Tom Hayden, the anti-Vietnam War protester and former official of the Marxist Students for a Democratic Society who became a leader of “Progressives for Obama,” has claimed there is a “gradual rapprochement” and a friendly “dialogue” between Obama and Chavez, while Oliver Stone’s new movie asserts that Chavez has been assured by Obama that the U.S. will not do anything to “destabilize” his dictatorial regime. In the Marxist lexicon, “destabilize” means supporting the forces of freedom.

The Foro de São Paulo by Alejandro Peña Esclusa

Summary of Main Points (posted May 27, 2009).

By Clifford Kincaid*

Prologue

With the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the adoption of some private enterprise principles in China, it was believed by many that communism was on the wane.

However, with Castro isolated and surrounded in Cuba, he reached out to Luiz Inácio Lula de Silva of the Worker's Party of Brazil. (Lula de Silva would later become President of Brazil).

An event was hosted in São Paulo, Brazil in 1990, the seat of Lula's power, bringing together the communist and leftist parties and guerilla movements of the continent, which came to be known as the São Paulo Forum (FSP).

One of those guerrilla movements, the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), had contacts with Brazilian government officials.

Introduction

On the first of March 2008, Operation Phoenix was launched by Colombian special security forces just inside the Ecuadorian border. Raúl Reyes, second in command of the FARC, was killed.

Far from the Colombian government being congratulated, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Nicaragua all severed diplomatic relations with Colombia, claiming the reason as the breaching of the territorial integrity of Ecuador. In reality, this showed the ideological affinity between the FARC and these three governments.

“What is the São Paulo Forum?”

Having no known headquarters, it is held approximately once every year in different cities, including such locations as Mañagua, Nicaragua (1992), San Salvador, El Salvador (1996), and Havana, Cuba (2001).

It brings together many different leftist groups and individuals including but nowhere near limited to: the FARC, the Socialist Party of Chile, the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua, the Worker's Party of Brazil, Raul Castro,

Hugo Chávez, Rafael Correa (president of Ecuador), and all of the communist parties in the region.

The FSP officially opposes terrorism, violence, and drug trafficking. However, active members of the group, like FARC, engage in all of these practices.

“Expansion of the São Paulo Forum”

Venezuela under Hugo Chávez has been instrumental in not only propping up communist governments but also in bringing them to power.

This meddling of Chávez in the affairs of other Latin American countries includes accusations made by the National Action Party of Mexico that Chávez provided support to presidential candidate Obrador, Chavez’s financial support to Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, who tried to buy votes in the 2006 presidential election, and Chavez’s role in destabilizing Peru in 2007.

The petrodollars of Venezuela, which rightfully belong to the people of Venezuela, are instead being used to illegally support leftist political candidates all over Latin America.

“Methods Used to Seize Power”

Although the members of the São Paulo Forum do not believe in democracy, they disguise themselves as Democratic forces in order to further their goals, as armed struggle has not been successful.

Petrodollars, border “conflicts,” and strategic partnerships between so-called moderate and radical leftist governments have all encouraged the spread of leftist governments in Latin America.

“Demolishing Democracy from Within”

Working through the system, Chávez has been able to slowly dismantle democratic institutions. Using oil revenues, he “buys consciences and loyalties in Venezuela and abroad.”

When political options were closed to the Venezuelans opposed to Chávez, they took to the streets, but with pro-government paramilitary groups created for intimidation, even this avenue is now somewhat restricted.

Others in Latin America, most prominently Chávez’s three closest allies, Evo Morales (president of Bolivia), Rafael Correa (president of Ecuador), and Daniel Ortega (president of Nicaragua) are in the process of trying to do the same in their respective countries.

“Destroying Iberian America’s Identity”

Esclusa states that the São Paulo Forum is dedicated to changing Iberian values “based on the dignity of human life, freedom, justice, tolerance and the search for the common good. These are all Christian-Western values that restrain totalitarianism.”

The defamation of the Catholic Church is also a tool utilized by the São Paulo Forum, as “a materialistic and atheistic culture” is more consistent with communism than is a religious one.

“Replacing Multilateral Organizations”

The members of The Foro de São Paulo have been successful in pretending to represent and exploiting “the will of the people” to destroy the system from within.

With the recent gains of leftists, they have been able to take control of powerful organizations like the Organization of American States. Through this, they were able to have President Uribe of Colombia denounced for his government’s attack on FARC senior members.

“The Sao Paulo Forum and Transverse Empires”

The concept of a transverse empire is an empire which is not confined to a certain country, but rather is continental, even international in nature. This is the international communist movement today, as represented by the FSP.

To survive, it uses the communicative resources of the globalized world to spread its political, ideological, and economic message.

The Foro de São Paulo is an excellent example of a transverse empire, with its FARC members traveling as far away as Europe to spread its message.

“Lula: The Power Behind the Throne”

Lula, president of Brazil, is generally viewed as a moderate, while Chávez has been viewed as a radical socialist. In looking at recent history, however, their views are very much aligned, with the political situation in Brazil preventing more extreme measures on the part of Lula.

Numerous examples show the close political ties the two have, including the push by Lula to have Venezuela join Mercosur, an alternative trade organization, and numerous public displays of support for Chavez by Lula.

“Free America and the Purloined Letter”

“Everything the [São Paulo Forum] does is out in the open; therefore, no one seems to notice the criminal organization behind it.”

Members of the editorial board of the Forum’s magazine America Libre, include and have included commanders of FARC, and a secretary of the ELN. Articles in the magazine have attempted to justify the crimes of the Cuban regime and even terrorism.

This use of free speech in this manner is another example of how opponents of democracy use democratic means to destroy it.

“The Revolution is a Farce”

Many outside Venezuela believe Chávez has the support of the Venezuelans and is a champion of the poor. In reality, he has committed electoral fraud, uses repression to intimidate people, and uses petrodollars to buy loyalty.

During his presidency, the Bolivar, the national currency, has devalued exponentially, oil production has declined, imports have quadrupled, and poverty levels have remained constant.

In trying to explain the failures of his government, he points to the North American “Empire” as the agent to blame.

“An attempt to Prevent Tragedy”

Esclusa, the author, is a Venezuelan who now lives in Colombia for fear of retribution from Chávez, and has traveled across Central and South America giving speeches and making appearances to warn against the dangers arrayed against Latin America.

Founding Fuerza Solidaria with friends, Esclusa has led the organization to put together demonstrations in Venezuela and a website in order to warn people of the dangers that face them.

“Why is Chávez Still in Power?”

In the 1950’s and 1960’s, military dictatorships were in power in Latin America. Therefore, many see a military government as a historical enemy, even though the chances of a military dictatorship taking over any country in Latin America are virtually non-existent.

Because many still fear the “ghost” of the Right, they are more likely not to object to Chávez for fear of something worse, despite the fact that this alternative is nothing more than a “ghost.”

What Can Be Expected of the Sao Paulo Forum?

The FSP has many methods which can be utilized to exert pressure, including punitive economic sanctions against democratic countries, fabricated border disputes, and strategic terror attacks.

The immediate attention of the FSP revolves around overthrowing Colombian President Uribe or forcing him to back down in his defense of Colombia and campaign against the FARC.

“It is Urgent to Create a Counterpart to the São Paulo Forum”

The danger of the FSP lies in the fact that it is a coalition, and so an attack against one member means the other members will rush to its aid.

It is necessary to create a counterpart to the FSP, first by holding a “founding” summit to bring together the democratic leaders and groups of the region, and second by creating an intelligence archive of the many radical and violent efforts of the FSP. UnoAmerica is the federation that opposes the FSP. Its website is <http://www.unoamerica.org/unoPAG/principal.php>

Also, it is necessary to put together a team of professionals, including professors, lawyers, and journalists, to refute the tenets of the FSP.

“Conclusion: Crisis as an Opportunity”

Marxism was allowed to enter Latin America by way of people’s weariness with the poverty and social ills that plague those societies. However, it is clear that the policies promoted by the FPS do nothing to alleviate those problems and in fact worsen them.

There now arises an historic opportunity to defeat this Marxism through a rediscovery of the values of the Christian-Western civilization of which the people of Latin America are a part, and to initiate a new quest for development and growth in Latin America.

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