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Chavez Calls Bush 'The Devil' in UN Address, Predicts Fall of 'U.S. Empire' and Calls For Major UN Reforms

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At the United Nations, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez slammed the United States for its military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as its support for Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Chavez described President Bush as the 'devil' and predicted the 'U.S. empire' would fall. He also called for major reforms at the United Nations.

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JUAN GONZALEZ : At the United Nations on Wednesday, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez slammed U.S. foreign policy and described President Bush as the devil.

PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ : And the devil came here yesterday. Yesterday, the devil came here. Right here. Right here. And it smells of sulfur still today.

JUAN GONZALEZ : Chavez was standing at the lectern where President Bush had delivered his speech the day before. The Venezuelan president went on to criticize U.S. foreign policies and renewed his calls for major reforms at the United Nations to reduce U.S. influence on the other permanent members of the Security Council. At the beginning of his speech, Chavez held up a copy of the book *Hegemony or Survival* by MIT Professor Noam Chomsky, and he addressed the packed chamber.

PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ : As Chomsky says here clearly and in depth, the American empire is doing all it can to consolidate its hegemonic system of domination, and we cannot allow them to do that. We cannot allow world dictatorship to be consolidated. The world tyrant'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 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. [...]

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 will 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 ? Palestine ? What's happening ? What's happened over the last hundred 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 a imperialist fire, 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 the 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.

AMY GOODMAN : Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez addressing the United Nations General Assembly Wednesday. His address was greeted with warm applause by many diplomats in the chamber.

[...]

JUAN GONZALEZ [...]Venezuela is committing 25 million gallons just in New York City to all the boroughs " well, four of the five, the four biggest boroughs of New York City. And they're offering it to homeowners, poor homeowners, as well as co-op owners, and the only groups that they're not offering it to are privately held condos or private landlords. But basically they're trying to ramp up " I think as many as 70,000 apartments could be heated if the full 25 million gallons were used this winter, at 40% off the wholesale market price.