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## Venezuela

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# British promote Chávez for Presidency

by David Ramonet

Ever since the current election campaign in Venezuela began, British Ambassador in Caracas Richard Wilkinson has been up to his ears in it, promoting the Presidential candidacy of former Army Lt. Col. Hugo Chávez Frías, who is backed by a coalition of leftist parties linked to the narco-terrorist São Paulo Forum. That coalition is known as “Polo Patriótico,” and includes Chávez’s Fifth Republic Movement (MVR), the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), Patria Para Todos, the Venezuelan Communist Party, and other minor parties. This coalition came out ahead in the Nov. 8 regional and Congressional elections, capturing one-third of the vote and thereby becoming “the largest minority party” in the weeks leading into the December Presidential elections. It is now expected that this will prove sufficient to give Chávez the victory, because in Venezuela, it is usually the largest minority party which wins the Presidential election.

The candidates of “Polo Patriótico” won eight out of 22 state governorships, but took only one-third of Congress, both in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. In the Congress, the Acción Democrática (AD) party still reigns as the main Congressional bloc. In the November election, AD also captured eight state governorships, although in this case, it was a decline from the 12 it had held before the election. The ruling Convergencia party held onto the governorship of Yaracuy state, the home state of President Rafael Caldera, while the party Proyecto Venezuela, which is fielding Henrique Salas Romer for the Presidency, held onto Carabobo, where Salas’s son is governor.

In sum, of the 13 Presidential candidates who registered four months ago, only three remain in the running: Chávez, Salas Romer, and the veteran Luis Alfaro Uceró, head of the AD party. Alfaro can count on a solid 25% of the vote, but Chávez, with the support of the coalition, is expected to draw 35%, which would be sufficient to win the Presidency. Salas, with the additional backing of some governors from the Copei party, could probably draw 25%.

And here is where the drama of Venezuela’s political class enters: The only possibility for defeating Chávez lies with the joining of forces of Alfaro and Salas Romer. How-

ever, Alfaro has already declared that he will not release his votes to Salas Romer, while the latter does not have sufficient political control over his followers to turn them over to Alfaro.

Given this situation and barring some dramatic change, the probable next President of Venezuela—to London’s delight—will be the narco-terrorist São Paulo Forum’s man in Caracas, Hugo Chávez.

### Her Majesty’s candidate

For at least the past four years, the ambassadors of the British royal family have surrounded Chávez, with the intention of turning him into an instrument of the British monarchy in their plans to balkanize the continent. When Washington refused to give Chávez a visa to enter the United States earlier this year, the British flew him to Britain to meet the City of London’s captains of finance.

British Ambassador Wilkinson is running his own personal campaign for Chávez. According to pro-Chávez journalist José Vicente Rangel, Wilkinson has declared in discussions that “it is nearly a certainty that Chávez will be the next President” of Venezuela, and that “as President, he will be able to pleasantly surprise the markets,” since in his “personal experience,” Chávez is “a man with whom one can hold an intelligent conversation.”

Wilkinson suggests that “once in power, [Chávez] could turn out to be a Menem or a Fujimori”—that is, could end up imposing neo-liberal measures—and that “his popularity and his legitimacy” would help the globalization process, given that these are “indispensable conditions for the hard measures that the next President will have to order.”

Wilkinson confessed in a letter to the newspaper *El Universal*, that he had no reason to offer explanations for what he had said, and admitted that he had made these comments not recently, but two months ago.

According to various Venezuelan press sources, several U.S. officials and former officials known for their marked pro-British tendencies, have also been preparing for recognition of Chávez’s victory. Among these are Howard Glickén, a professional influence-trafficker linked to U.S. Vice President Al Gore. Glickén was accused of laundering drug-money three years ago, according to the Oct. 25 *Sonoma County Independent*, a California newspaper.

Glickén has organized meetings with U.S. Ambassador to Caracas John Maisto, a veteran of the Philippines and Panama, for the purpose of trying to modify Chávez’s radical image. Glickén has already received an offer from the Washington, D.C.-based Inter-American Dialogue to put Chávez on tour in the United States—once he obtains a visa, that is. The Dialogue is one of the organizations linked to the permanent bureaucracy of the U.S. State Department, which specializes in promoting “peace dialogues” as a pretext for interfering in conflicts around the continent, with the intent of reducing the role of the nation-state.