

The First Socialist International of the 21st Century

Thursday 6 May 2010, by [CHAVEZ Jenina Joy](#), [FUENTES Federico](#), [JANICKE Kiraz](#) (Date first published: 28 April 2010).

During the recently concluded five-month extraordinary congress of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, Kiraz Janicke & Federico Fuentes had the opportunity to discuss President Hugo Chavez's proposal to form a Fifth Socialist International, with Julio Chavez, a delegate to the PSUV congress and a member of the congress's international committee, which is charged with drafting a specific plan of action to form a new socialist international.

Kiraz Janicke & Federico Fuentes - The proposal that President Hugo Chavez made regarding the formation of a Fifth Socialist International has attracted a lot of attention at a global level. I'm interested in your point of view, as a delegate and member of the International Committee of the Congress of the PSUV, why propose a 5th International and what is the importance of this proposal?

Julio Chavez - I believe that the proposal launched by the President Hugo Chávez, to raise at this time a global debate on historical relevance of the need to call on all parties, movements and leftist and anti-imperialist currents of the world to have a full discussion, is based on the characterization and in-depth analysis of the crisis of global capitalism. This leads unquestionably to the conclusion that the only way to overcome the cyclical crisis of world capitalism is, in fact, by proposing a model or a path that is completely different from the neo-liberal model, the predatory model, of capitalism. There is no other alternative than the path of transition to socialism.

We believe that discussion of a transitional program, a great debate, should be happen this year in Caracas due to the role that Venezuela is playing as the epicentre of the great transformations that have occurred since the beginning of this century, which have motivated and enthused the peoples of our America, and also for the leading role that Venezuela and President Hugo Chavez are playing at the global level. We think it is necessary for all these features and for all the situations that have been presented in terms of the aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism against Venezuela, installing military bases, reactivating the Fourth Fleet and generating a media campaign of attacks and insults, both against the revolutionary process and against the leader of this process. For all these reasons, we believe it is appropriate to the call for an organization, which should have Caracas as the epicentre of a great global debate about the need to advance on a proposal to overcome the contradiction between capital and labour, where the only option, the only alternative we see as viable, feasible as a historical project of life, is precisely the path towards socialism.

We believe therefore, that drawing on the experiences and balances generated by the four previous internationals, which had Europe as their epicentre precisely because of the industrial revolution and the great contradictions that were expressed in the context of rapidly growing capitalism that

led to its highest stage, imperialism, that all these contradictions have been transferred to Latin America, and have created in Venezuela the conditions, the features, to make a call of this nature. I repeat, it must become an organization that is permanent in nature, that is able to summon all the parties of the Left, social movements, prominent individuals and historical currents of thought, and not just specifically those raising the historical project of socialism, but that anti-imperialism should be the common element that brings us all together.

Of course we don't just want one more event, one more conference. We're not just making this call to open a discussion, a debate, to produce a document, but to actually set minimum agreements, a minimum transition program, a policy of developing in all the five continents, based on the analysis of the current situation, a characterization of each particular region, to consider expeditiously the transition towards a model that overcomes the contradictions of capital and labour.

Why is anti-imperialism being proposed as the common element and not just socialism?

We say that this call has to have a broad character, and it is possible that in some countries, such as in the Middle East, there are organizations and movements fighting against some expressions of imperialism and international Zionism as such, but that are not socialist in essence, in the programmatic sense. But, undoubtedly, they are fighting imperialism. That's why we say that it could be that in some Islamic countries that do not have socialism as an ideological element, for example the case of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which is anti-imperialist, that this element will be an element that will convoke as many parties, organizations, movements of the world to raise the battle, the confrontation with imperialism. As well as all those who defend a model based on the worldview of indigenous people, and also the principles and approaches of scientific socialism, elements of regional and Bolivarian thought, the ideas of Mariategui, of Marti, the tree of the three roots in Venezuela [1], and all those who are part of a historical, philosophical current that defends the claims accumulated through many years of struggle by the peoples of this part of the world.

From this perspective of an anti-imperialist character, from the vision that has been nurtured by the experience of the historical struggles of indigenous peoples, it is possible to call as many parties, movements, and currents in the world, let us repeat, for a wide-ranging debate, that is full of discussion, in order to agree on a plan, a minimum transition program, to move concretely towards a socialist project at a world level. An anti-imperialist project is the only way at this juncture, faced with the cyclical crisis of capitalism, in which capitalism is not going to collapse by itself, but is in a process of readjustment, of realignment, of looking for the possibility of a second wind; we believe that at this juncture is possible to consider an alternative, but that it must be global and anti-imperialist.

There is a core document that we have been discussing within the Congress, in the international committee of the party congress. A document in which we have assessed and taken stock of what the four previous socialist internationals signified, the context in which they were called, of the proposals, the achievements that they made, and in view of the historical relevance and the a policy of aggression against the Bolivarian revolution and the processes of transformation that have been raised in other countries, we believe that it is possible to produce a document that contains all those elements.

We have even talked about the definition of the historical subject, those who are making the call and who are the social movements, currents and parties in different continents and different countries and who are engaged in a common struggle with us, which is the struggle against imperialism.

Therefore, we believe that through this approach and, of course, discussing what the objectives of this call for a 5th International are - or as we also call it, the First Socialist International of the 21st

Century, because there are some discussions with the Communist Party comrades who do not recognize the Fourth International, but we say it is not a question of numbers, but in any case, it would be the first Socialist International of this century – and under these assumptions, by seeking to broaden the programmatic base, the doctrinal principles, with an agenda of topics to discuss, a program to develop, it will be possible to go beyond simply producing a document, but rather to produce an agreement that is expressed in very concrete policies, recognizing the reality of each continent, of each country, and where this effort should lead to the articulation of a powerful global movement to allow us to move forward.

We can move forward on a debate, a discussion about what things we can agree on, opening the possibility that within the meeting there will also be a debate on the whole mechanism of coordination, of integration, beyond governments, because this is not a government event, we are talking about parties, movements, to develop an international policy which has internationalism as a spearhead of counter-hegemonic confrontation.

I think it is possible to discuss all these aspects in Venezuela, and we can then come out of it with a minimum program, a minimum plan of work, again, respecting differences, allowing us to develop a policy around different continents that would have a permanent basis, so that we have the possibility of regular meetings at a continental or regional level, to evaluate the progress of things, but it should also be binding for all organizations, movements and parties that make this call.

Here you touched on a subject that historically has always been complicated, that is, the difference between diplomatic relations of governments and the relations of parties, particularly when some of these parties are also in government, like the PSUV, which was created following the call made by a head of state. This issue has been raised, for example, about other governments with which Venezuela maintains good diplomatic relations but that are far from being a socialist, where one understands that the State should have diplomatic relations, but where left-wing forces who may be interested in participating [in the 5th International] are part of the opposition to these governments.

I think that right now we are having a very interesting debate in the ideological congress of the party. Remember that, three years ago, we had a founding congress and this is the first ideological congress. Coincidentally, we are right now finishing the discussion and debate about the programmatic basis for a party which is conceived for the transition to socialism. We are discussing the values, principles, statutes, and clearly we have been discussing and distinguishing that one thing is the government's foreign policy and another thing is the international politics of PSUV.

I think we're making a clear conceptualization of these two positions where, undoubtedly, there are levels of convergence because we believe that the PSUV should be a space, a scenario where policy is discussed to be executed precisely at the level of government, in this case in ministries to which international issues apply, of course with the participation, the approval of President Chavez, who is leading the State's foreign policy and is at the same time, the party president.

There are things the government and our embassies cannot say, but the PSUV is more likely to express positions from an ideological point of view and this has been a large part of the discussion that has occurred in the national Congress.

So I think we're making good progress in differentiating the foreign policy of the government and the party, understanding the peculiarity that in this case the president is the president of the nation and at the same time, the party president.

We have been careful not to get involved in discussions within other countries, to not take positions

on issues which correspond to the peoples of those countries and their governments to take.

But in any case, the PSUV is proposing to design, to elaborate a policy, an offensive that allows us to establish contacts at the global level with those organizations and social movements that have been doing solidarity work with Venezuela, which have been supportive of the efforts and initiatives taken by the Bolivarian revolution, with the achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution, and this is giving us a chance to come together and network with many movements with many parties and organizations in the world that share the historical project of socialism, the historical project to overcome the contradiction between capital and labour.

We believe we have made great strides in this need to differentiate what is the government's foreign policy and what is the party's international politics. Internationalism is enshrined in the statutes in the values and principles, because this is not a party that is thinking only about the transition that is happening in Venezuela. We are talking about a party that has to assume internationalism, solidarity and to develop the necessary initiatives in terms of confronting imperialism and strengthening policy coordination with those parties, movements and organizations that defend anti-imperialist struggle.

I think we have made significant progress there. We do not believe that at this moment, just as we are finishing the first ideological congress of the party, that we have the party that we want, but undoubtedly, we have advanced, we have taken very strong steps towards building this powerful instrument within which we can discuss and debate the major issues, major policies, major decisions to advance the transition to socialism.

Has the document drafted by the commission been approved already or is it still under discussion?

The international commission was charged with the responsibility of drawing up a document. The document is circulating internally at the party; it is in the hands of the national leadership and, of course, has been raised for the consideration of the president of the party.

The document is circulating and there have been some comments, and when the president authorizes it, that is the basic document that will be released to encourage and motivate the discussion on the historical relevance and the need to convene all the parties and movements across the world that struggle against imperialism and for the construction of a socialist project.

Obviously, in a revolutionary situation, things cannot simply be determined by a calendar, particularly in the context of the offensive that imperialism has launched in recent months, but is there an idea, at least, of when the founding of the 5th International will be?

Indeed there is a whole plan of different phases that has been submitted for consideration, where it has been proposed to convoke meetings at a regional or continental level, to create promotional teams, with a strategy for disseminating information so that it can be built from the bottom up. It is anticipated that all these elements, the creation of an information system, making all the communicational elements that the revolution has been using, all these tools, all these resources, available to the revolution and parties worldwide, will be part of this plan by phases.

There is also the idea of holding various meetings, where there is even the possibility that our delegations will travel to other continents, other countries to discuss, to motivate, to create the conditions for starting to debate the issue.

**By Julio Chavez and Kiraz Janicke
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P.S.

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and ZNet:

<http://www.zcommunications.org/the-first-socialist-international-of-the-21st-century-by-julio-chavez>