

The World Remembered

President Hugo Chavez



Exactly one year ago on Wednesday the world was shocked by the news: after a brave but unsuccessful battle against cancer, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez had died in Caracas.

Hundreds of millions of people mourned a man full of generosity and love for mankind.

A man who had instilled in them the hope of freedom.

A man who was also a fast friend of Cuba.

Chavez, the charismatic freedom fighter, while following the thoughts and example of the Liberator Simon Bolivar, instilled a new dimension into the lives of the hundreds of millions of Venezuelans and Latin Americans. People who were the victims of endless government neglect and outright poverty.

Led by Hugo Chavez, the Bolivarian Revolution bestowed education, food and health services on the neglected sectors of the Venezuelan population. These, in turn, became active, proud citizens of the new Venezuela.

In Chavez' "social missions", he fought so-called endemic poverty head on, not the least in the vast countryside, where all Venezuelans now enjoy free education and health. Venezuela became, after Cuba, the second Latin American nation to proclaim victory over widespread illiteracy and to offer free health care.

But Chavez's spirit is not only present in Venezuela. It is today alive in the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, where he realized the dreams of those earlier liberators - Simon Bolivar and Jose Marti.

Chavez launched successful integrationist movements, including both the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America ALBA and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States CELAC.

These noble ideals are today defended by all honest Venezuelans in face of the desperate attacks by a rightwing oligarchy, bent on sinking the nation into chaos and institutional disorder in a hopeless quest to recover lost privileges. Through violence and destruction, those fascist elements would, if only they could, erase the permanent changes brought about in Venezuela by a man who, even when struck by a deadly disease, never forgot the wellbeing of his people.

On the first anniversary of his death, tens of millions of Venezuelans, Cubans and Latin Americans remembered Chavez.

As President Raul Castro, of Cuba has declared, the peoples of Latin America remember Hugo Chavez as a man who has entered, victoriously, into world history.

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