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Venezuela 12- 19- 2002

Chavez has not been able to break the national strike or the national will. The supply of fuel is becoming critical. The ports are paralyzed. The oil and the basic industries are paralyzed. Chavez is being driven to take extreme measures and this just incites the people to offer ever more resistance.

Events are now moving fast.

On Saturday, December 14, we had the largest concentration of people ever recorded in Venezuela. An estimated one and a half million people walked to the meeting place in the Autopista Francisco Fajardo asking Chavez to resign.

foxnews.com reported the event.

On Sunday, December 15, during his usual radio and TV program. Aló Presidente, Chavez asked the military to disregard any judicial order that went against his wishes saying that judges were not a higher authority. This was clearly a break with the democratic and constitutional norms that call for the separation of powers as the basic safeguard against tyranny. As of that moment, the opposition started calling Chavez a dictator and suggested that the opposition movement should become even more active.

On Monday, December 16, a very curious thing happened that sets the tone for the unwinding of the crisis. The opposition blocked streets and freeways in an act of civil disobedience. Chavez supporters tried to disrupt one of the opposition roadblocks and this is where the curious thing happened. Two ladies, one from each side, recognizing each other, met, shook hands, embraced and then went back to their respective sides. Fortunately, the TV caught the moment and has been transmitting the scene to the rest of Venezuela.

On Tuesday, December 17, the 172 anniversary of Simon Bolivar's demise, for the first time the Chavez government called itself "**The Revolutionary Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.**" This has gravely offended many citizens because we elected a democratic government to

represent us, not a Cuban-Communist revolutionary government to represent Castro. Freedom is at the heart of the protest against Chavez and his Cuban-Communist dictatorship. To make matters worse, the Cuban-Communist Chavez gangs did not allow the opposition march to reach the Panteón Nacional to give tribute to our Liberator. Since the opposition was not allowed to deposit the flowers that each one of them was carrying to the Panteón, they were given to government backers that they met along the way back to their homes.

On Wednesday, December 18, three very important events took place:

1.- The Supreme Court (Tribunal Supremo de Justicia) reaffirmed that the Metropolitan Police is under the authority of the principal civilian authority of Caracas (Alcalde Mayor), that the military had to return all the assets belonging to the police and that the military had to leave the police stations and return to their barracks. [TSJ devuelve la PM a Peña](#)

2.- General Baduel, one of the main Chavez backers in the military and the one who I believe controls the most firepower, publicly declared that military officers were under the obligation to respect constitutional norms and that they had to recognize the authority of the courts. Recall that on the previous Sunday Chavez had instructed the military to disobey the courts. This is, clearly, another break in the Chavez ranks.

3.- Once again the opposition marches blocked roads and streets all over Venezuela and once again pro Chavez groups met them. **But when a football appeared, a game sprung up between opposition and pro Chavez forces in the middle of the road!**

There is every indication that Venezuelans don't want a civil war. There is every indication that Venezuelans don't want class warfare. We may disagree on many topics but we don't have the desire to kill each other over our differences. We are willing to talk them out.

During his four years in power, Chavez has sown discord and class hatred. He has offended just about everybody who is not his boot licker. He has tried to import Castro-Communist ideas to Venezuela. He has tried to destroy the democratic institutions that go against his wishes. He is trying to use the military as his praetorian guard.

I believe that Chavez is reaching the end of his road. Most of the world thinks of Latin America as a monolithic Hispanic block. Nothing could be further from the truth. Latin America is made up of over 20 countries and they are quite different from each other. From my travels in Latin America and from my meetings with people from many of our countries I have discovered what distinguishes Venezuela from the rest of Latin America and that is the way people treat each other. People here respect each other and they expect to be respected. We have various economic classes, rich and poor. We have people from many parts of the world, of many colors, of many religions. But these differences are not dividers for us. Venezuela is the ultimate melting pot.

To gain ascendancy, Chavez has tried to create division and discord. He appeared at a time of political turmoil but instead of trying to heal the wounds he tried to deepen the trauma. He will not succeed because discord goes against the grain of the Venezuelan national character. Venezuela has not been at war for over 100 years. When the Libyan dictator, Colonel Gadafi, tried to influence Venezuelan politics in the 80s he was promptly told to go mind his own business. When Che Guevara tried to invade Venezuela we promptly got the OAS to expel Cuba. When a group of Chilean dissidents hijacked an airplane and then took refuge in the Venezuelan Embassy in Lima, Peru, they were told that we support their cause but they were returned to the authorities in Chile as common criminals. When the Argentinean military invaded the Falkland Islands, we expressed solidarity but did not send weapons. During the Arab oil boycott we continued to supply the world with oil.

We like our country and we like to mind our own business. We don't want to be Cubans. We don't want to be Chinese. We don't want to be anything but Venezuelans. Because we want to be Venezuelans we will continue to defend our country.

Denny Schlesinger

Caracas - Venezuela

denny@softwaretimes.com