

January 20, 2003

What should the US do in Venezuela, if anything?

Mishedlo Wants to Know.

Mish:

Would the average Venezuela citizen welcome US military intervention in Venezuela? Would you?

No, not unless the situation became extreme which it is not. We believe we are adult enough to solve our own problems.

Do you think there is any chance of that and if so under what circumstances?

I don't think so. The American Ambassador has clearly stated that Venezuelans need to solve their own mess.

Is the US govt supporting the wrong person or persons and how is that perceived?

I would say that the US is quite neutral these days. The days of supporting "our" SOBs seem to be over.

What do you think the US should do in Venezuela, if anything?

Directly, nothing. On the other hand I believe that indirectly the US is doing quite a bit. It is backing the OAS which no longer openly favors Chavez as it did back in April 2002. I believe they told the Colombian government not to ship gasoline to Venezuela. Apparently they told Mexico not to lend us any oil tankers. Recently a ship from Venezuela sailing under Panamanian flag was detained accused of having drugs on board (I wonder if it was true). The US Embassy is no longer issuing visas saying that they are understaffed. This is one way to pressure Chavez as it increases popular discontent with the government -- people here want to visit Mickey!

I really don't know about Argentina and Brazil but here is an interesting bit

related to Venezuela. Lula, the new leftist president of Brazil openly supports Chavez. But the Brazilian labor unions told Lula that they would not be strike breakers against their brothers in Venezuela and that they would not load any ships with destination Venezuela.

How do you think the average Venezuela citizen would feel if asked the same question?

I don't think they would be happy with an American armed intervention but they would not mind any other type of help. Quite a few people here think the US should be more proactive against Chavez.

Any prediction on the outcome and how long it takes.

Chavez is getting more radical and confrontational by the hour. See the links I posted at <http://softwaretimes.com> We are waiting for the referendum that is supposed to happen on February 2. I don't believe that the opposition can take any additional radical measures until then. The oil industry is practically paralyzed. The banks are working only a few hours a day. Many schools are closed and many parents are not sending their children to school in any case. Most industry is closed down. The shopping malls are all closed. There is very little money flowing to the government and they will soon have a very difficult time paying their debts, government worker salaries. I think that Chavez will likely be broken by financial means just as Al Capone was done in by the IRS.

I don't dare make any predictions but February 2 is an important date. Chavez is scared stiff of the referendum because he will lose it. You can take that to the bank.

Many people here think that this will get quite bloody before it is over. Many of us don't understand why the military has not stopped Chavez. Some say that the military has been purged of anti Chavez officers. Others feel that the general officers back Chavez but lower ranking officers do not. Of course, it is the general ranking officers that command the troops. I believe the military are the key to the situation but, so far, they have not acted against Chavez. Should a civil war break out, blood is thicker than ideology and I believe that Chavez would lose out in an all out confrontation. Apparently he know this as well so he is keeping his Bolivarian thugs on a fairly short leash.

The upside of all this is that the Venezuelans have finally woken up to the fact that they either take care of their country or they lose it to tyrants like Chavez. I think the political awakening of the Venezuelan population is very healthy. Something similar happened in Grenada after Bishop.

The one thing that I'm very unhappy about is the shortsighted self interest that the Caricom countries are showing. Chavez has offered not only to Cuba but to many Caricom countries cheap oil and this is the reason they are defending him in the OAS. On the other hand, the people of Suriname are saying that they should follow the Venezuelan example and start a real protest against their government.

I thought the third millennium would see a world at peace. Was I ever mistaken!

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