

What Fidel and Chávez Did Not Accomplish Remains to Be Done. Let's do it!

Tribute paid to Chávez and Fidel in Havana on the Day of Latin American and Caribbean Dignity

“Chávez accomplished what few men achieve in life: to defeat death and transcend in time. He settled forever in the heart of his people and of the entire America”, stated the vice president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) Fernando González Llort, in the event in tribute to the leader of the Bolivarian Revolution on his fourth death anniversary, and on the Day of Latin American and Caribbean Dignity celebrated on Friday, March 3.

The tribute, paid at the venue of ICAP with attendance of Cuban political, social and mass organizations, the International Committee Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples, and the embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Havana, is one of the numerous events celebrated in the island to honor Hugo Chávez, the best friend the Cuban Revolution ever had.

“Bolívar and Chávez shared the same integrationist idea of political, social, cultural and economic link of Latin America and the Caribbean; they left us the legacy to practice solidarity, loyalty, and true love to our fellowmen to consolidate the unity of the revolutionary forces, added González, also a Hero of the Republic of Cuba and one of the five Cuban fighters who were imprisoned in the United States because of their anti-terrorist activities.

González Llort recalled the deep friendship that joined Chávez with the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution – “the most fruitful of two leaders of our America in the present century”. “Both military chiefs intertwined like never before the formidable history that unites Venezuela and Cuba since the times of Bolívar and Martí, and made a decisive contribution to the union and profound changes occurred in America in the last 15 years”, he added.

He likewise indicated that Chávez was a visionary, founder of a new age for the region, since he decided to face the empire and struggle for the construction of the great Latin American fatherland.

“His political ideas”, considered the Hero, “went beyond the Venezuelan borders and should be upheld as banner of struggle of the peoples that continue fighting for their freedom.”

“A Bolivarian, a *Chavista*, Never Surrenders”

The brotherhood between the top leaders of Venezuela and Cuba made the commemoration extend also to Fidel, deceased last November 25.

“(The imperialists) thought that Chávez’ and Fidel’s death closed a cycle”, and strengthened the offensive against the revolutionary peoples, stated deputy Héctor Rodríguez Puig, president of the Fatherland’s Block at the National Assembly of Venezuela, in his greeting to the audience.

Rodríguez Puig, also vice president of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV, the Spanish acronym) underlined that these four years have been difficult for his country, in addition to the blow of Chávez’ death. In a quick chronology he mentioned that 2014 was characterized by counterrevolutionary revolts and violence; 2015 by the fall of oil’s price almost to production cost, main export product of that nation; and 2016 by the loss of the revolutionary majority in the National Assembly, preventing the impulse to the social transformations of the Bolivarian Revolution.

He also mentioned, as part of the imperialist attack, the parliamentary coup d’État in Brazil, the persecution against Kirchner’s followers and the cancellation of social achievements in Argentina, and the offensive against the governments of Ecuador and Bolivia.

“Perhaps they ignored that a people like the Venezuelan never surrender. A Bolivarian, a *Chavista* never surrenders”, he summarized.

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Headed by chancellor Bruno Rodríguez Parrila, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC); José Ramón Balaguer

Cabrera, member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PCC and head of its International Relations Department, and Kenia Serrano Puig, president of ICAP, the meeting also included the Venezuelan ambassador to Cuba, doctor Alí Rodríguez Araque, among the speakers.

The diplomat made a historical review of the recent decades in his country, starting from the luxurious coming into office of Carlos Andrés Pérez and the *Caracazo* in 1989, which originated the revolutionary and anti-neoliberal situation and the emergence of Chávez as leader, who was to transform society with his arrival to the presidency through elections in 1998 and the subsequent change of the Constitution for a more inclusive and democratic one.

Rodríguez Araque highlighted that Chávez took up again the integrationist and anti-imperialist ideas of Simón Bolívar, who, like José Martí years later, dreamt of a united Latin America.

It was Chávez, he recalled, who initiated the integrationist process and together with Fidel created ALBA in 2004 and PetroCaribe in 2005. UNASUR (2008) and CELAC (2010) were born later. But the forces of imperialism are still acting against the peoples, warned the head of the Bolivarian diplomacy in Cuba.

“As expressed by Martí referring to Bolívar, we could say that what Fidel and Chávez did not accomplish remains to be done. There is much to do. Then, let’s do it!”

And we could say like José Félix Ribas in his harangue before the Battle of La Victoria: “We cannot choose between winning or dying; it is necessary to win”, he concluded.

The voices of outstanding Cuban and Venezuelan troubadours were heard during the tribute --Raúl Torres, Luna Manzanares, Reinier Valdés, Amaranta Pérez, Sandino Primera and Alí Primera-- who through the language of music recalled the commanders friends, today and forever deeply rooted in the heart of the peoples.

(Press Department of the Embassy of Venezuela in Cuba, 6/3/2017)