OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Hugo Chávez Writes on "The Battle of Copenhagen"

By **HUGO CHÁVEZ FRÍAS, PRESIDENT OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA**,
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TAGS

- ALBA (/tag/alba)
- Climate Change (/tag/climate-change)

Copenhagen was the scene of a historic battle in the framework of the 15th Conference of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP15). Better said, in the beautiful, snowy capital of Denmark, a battle began that did not end on Friday, December 18, 2009. I reiterate: Copenhagen was only the beginning of a decisive battle for the salvation of the planet. It was a battle in the realm of ideas and in praxis.

Brazilian Leonardo Boff, a great liberation theologian and one of the most authoritative voices on environmental issues, in a key article, entitled *What is at stake in Copenhagen?*, wrote these words full of insight and courage: What can we expect from Copenhagen? At least this simple confession: We cannot continue like this. And a simple proposition: Let's change course.

And for that reason, precisely, we went to Copenhagen to battle for a change of course on behalf of Venezuela, on behalf of the Bolivarian Alliance (ALBA), and moreover, in defence of the cause of humanity and to speak, with President Evo Morales, in defence of the rights of *Pachamama*, of Mother Earth.

Evo, who together with yours truly, had the responsibility to be a spokesperson for the Bolivarian Alliance, wisely said: What this debate is about, is whether we are going to live or we are going to die.

All eyes of the world were concentrated on Copenhagen: the 15th Conference on Climate Change allowed us to gauge the fibre we are made of, where hope lies and what can we do to establish what the Liberator Simón Bolívar defined as the equilibrium of the universe, an equilibrium that can never be achieved within the capitalist world system.

II

Before our arrival in Copenhagen, the African bloc, backed by the Group of 77, denounced that rich countries were ignoring the Kyoto Protocol, that is, the only existing international instrument to fight global warming, the only thing that penalises the industrialised states and protects the developing countries.

It is necessary to recognise that the battle had already begun in the streets of Copenhagen, with the youth at the forefront protesting and proposing: I could see and feel, since my arrival in the Danish capital on December 16, the historic power of another world that for the youth is not only possible but absolutely necessary.

III

In Copenhagen, from the beginning, the cards were on the table for all to see. On the one hand, the cards of brutal meanness and stupidity of capitalism which did not budge in defence of its logic: the logic of capital, which leaves only death and destruction in its wake at an increasingly rapid pace.

On the other hand, the cards of the peoples demanding human dignity, the salvation of the planet and for a radical change, not of the climate, but of a world system that has brought us to the brink of unprecedented ecological and social catastrophe.

On one side, the victors of a mercantile and utilitarian civilisation, that is, the "civilised ones" who for a long time now have forgotten about human beings, and opted blindly for increasingly insatiable desires.

On the other hand, the “barbarians” who remain committed in believing and in fighting for radically changing the logic, that you can maximise human welfare, minimising environmental and ecological impacts. Those who sustain the impossibility of defending human rights if we don’t also defend the rights of Mother Earth, as raised by the comrade Evo Morales, those who act with determination to leave a planet and future for our descendants.

I will not tire of repeating to the four winds: the only possible and viable alternative is socialism. I said it in each of my speeches to all the world representatives gathered in Copenhagen, the world's most important event in the last two hundred years: there is no other way if we want to stop this heartless and debased competition that promises only total annihilation.

Why are the “civilised ones” so afraid of a project that aspires to build shared happiness? They are afraid, let’s be honest, because shared happiness does not generate profit. Hence the crystal clarity of that great slogan of the Copenhagen street protest that today speaks for millions: “If the climate was a bank, they would have saved it already.”

The “civilised ones” do not take the necessary measures, simply because of this, it would oblige them to reverse their voracious pattern of life, marked by selfish comfort and that does not touch their cold hearts, which beat only to the rythm of money.

That’s why the [US] Empire arrived late on December 18, to offer crumbs via blackmail, and through this, wash away the guilt marked on its face. In front of this strategy of buying support, you could hear throughout Denmark the clear and courageous voice of Vandana Shiva, the Indian thinker saying a great truth: “I think it is time for US to stop seeing itself as a donor and begin to recognise itself as polluter: a polluter must pay compensation for damages and must it pay its ecological debt. It is not charity. This is justice.”

I must say: in Copenhagen the Obama illusion was definitively destroyed. He was confirmed in his position as head of the empire and winner of the Nobel War Prize. The enigma of the two Obamas has been resolved.

Friday the 18th came to an end without a democratically agreed accord: Obama mounted the platform separately, in a further violation of UN procedures, for which we feel obliged to challenge any decision that does not respect for the validity of the Protocol Kyoto. To respect and enhance Kyoto is our motto.

An accord was not possible in Copenhagen due to the lack of political will of the rich countries: the powerful of this world, the hyper-developed, they do not want to change their patterns of production and consumption which are as senseless as suicide. “The world can go to hell if it dares to threaten my privilege and my lifestyle”, is what they appear to be saying with their conduct: that is the hard truth that they do not want to hear from those who act under the historical and categorical imperative to change course.

Copenhagen is not the end, I repeat, but a beginning: the doors have been opened for a universal debate on how to save the planet, life on the planet. The battle continues.

IV

We commemorated the 179th anniversary of the physical disappearance of our Liberator Simón Bolívar in an act of deep revolutionary content; I refer to the meeting of the Bolivarian Alliance with social movements in Denmark on December 17. There I felt, once again that Bolivar is not only a banner of Venezuela and Our America, but is increasingly a universal leader.

It is his living and combative legacy, now embodied in the Bolivarian Alliance, which is becoming a world heritage, that we took to Copenhagen to do battle for the *Patria Grande*, which is at the same time, to do battle for the sake of humanity .

Really and truly: Bolivar lives! In Copenhagen it was confirmed that his legacy is more alive than ever.
And now he will overcome.
Now we shall overcome!

Hugo Chavez Frias

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See also:

- 21/12/2009: Copenhagen Summit: Undemocratic and Exclusive Says Venezuela (/news/5019)
- 17/12/2009: Venezuelan President's Speech on Climate Change in Copenhagen (/analysis/5013)
- 16/12/2009: Chavez Slams Rich Nations at Copenhagen, Calls for Systemic Change to Save Planet (/news/5012)

Comments

Beyond Copenhagen (/analysis/5023#comment-879)

Submitted by canadaguy on Tue, 22/12/2009 - 19:37.

It is certainly true that Copenhagen was an epic failure, and third world countries were ignored and completely sidelined. Is is also true that a new approach is needed, as the UN has shown its impotence. Obviously we cannot expect leadership from the US, only obstruction and interference.

The way forward is through the leadership and vision of third world nations. They have the most at stake, and it is they who will suffer the most if we do not solve this problem. All third world countries need to maintain, and build upon, the unity that started with Copenhagen. Whether they be Socialist, Capitalist, Islamic or Monarchic, they share a common cause and they must stand together. With a united front, it is possible for them to exert real pressure on Western countries to force us to reduce emissions and stop destroying the environment.

If third world nations deny resources to the West, especially energy resources such as oil, coal and natural gas, as well as uranium and other rare metals, we will feel the impact. Any one nation trying this would be quickly isolated, or bought off. But if dozens of countries stand as one and say "NO" to the West, what can they do? The US cannot invade the world, especially when they are massively committed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the West, we need to support such efforts and do whatever we can to prevent the US and other Western powers from attempting any military retaliation. This is, after all, a non-violent, but extremely powerful, method of resistance. Without resources, the US will be forced to conserve. As much as they might not like this, it is also in the best interests of Americans, or at least their children and grandchildren. The third world must lead, and we must support them.

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