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## Venezuela and revolutionary internationalism



*This is an edited transcript of remarks by Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes at a “Build Global Solidarity With Venezuela” forum Jan. 31 in New York City.*

I want to say a little bit about Venezuela in the historical context of the struggle for revolutionary internationalism. We believe that it is a necessary and current discussion not just because of the U.S. attack on Venezuela but because of the entire global situation.

Ten years ago Hugo Chávez and those closest to him tried to organize a meeting they hoped might usher in a fifth socialist international. They called this in Caracas in late 2009, with representatives from 30 countries and 50 parties, most of those probably from Latin America, but with representation from around the world.

The maximum goal of an international was not achieved for complex reasons, but it was a hell of an achievement for Chávez. The meeting was called on the heels of the 2008 crash of the financial markets — that near-death experience for capitalism — and highlighted both the fact that the system was going downhill and the need to ramp up the struggle against capitalism.

Chávez was one of the very few leaders who had the credibility and the stature to make such a call. And it was the first time a serious call for building a socialist international came from someone and someplace outside of Europe. That was historic in and of itself.

But there was a practical and immediate motive. Hugo Chávez knew — just as Maduro knows, just as anyone who is in revolutionary leadership or ranks knows — that at any time their revolutionary project may face an imperialist war of one type or another, whether it's economic, sanctions, starvation, military attack or covert sabotage.

No one can direct the struggle in someone else's country from the outside. But what responsibility do we have to Venezuela, from thousands of miles away? A lot! That's internationalism!

### **Role of Venezuela in global struggle**

Ten years after Chávez advanced the idea of a new international, the need for internationalism is more urgent today.

It is so clear that all our struggles are both separate and interdependent in the smaller world. What does globalization mean? It means that capitalism on a global basis is far more integrated than it has ever been in its entire existence. That also means that our struggles are far more interdependent than they have ever been in the history of the struggle for liberation, the class struggle, the struggle for socialism and revolution.

The imperialists are globalists. We have to be thinking as revolutionary globalists. Now is the time to understand, concretely, practically, how interdependent our struggles are all over the world.

There is a worldwide struggle against capitalism, which has never been more unpopular. There is a struggle against the rich with the Yellow Vests in France, the education workers rising up in the U.S., and the fact that Democratic presidential candidates have to even suggest taxing the 1%. There is a growing global revolt against the rich.

This bodes well for our solidarity with Venezuela. If there was ever a time for the slogan, “There are no borders in the workers’ struggle,” now is the time. But it has to become more than a slogan. We have to find a way to make this practical and decisive.

The struggle to defend the Bolivarian Revolution is the defining struggle at this moment. For one thing, it is a 20-year rebellion against the rich which imperialists would like to crush.

This is the defining struggle, not just for the Venezuelans but on a global basis. If you really want to fight for socialism — if you want to get an idea of what a real revolutionary struggle is, with high stakes, where you are fighting imperialism and possible military intervention — get involved in this struggle.

### **Revolutionary potential in defending Venezuela**

This struggle is a reminder that every time oppressed people try to take control of their destiny, it’s akin to a slave revolt. And those who think they are rulers forever of this world cannot allow that. They will do anything to crush it.

They are still wringing their hands and criticizing each other in the Pentagon and on Wall Street for allowing Cuba to live. In the wake of that, they decided that no other revolution will survive in what they consider to be their own “backyard.” But they can’t get away with it.

February 23 will mark the one-month anniversary of this attempted U.S. coup. We are part of a coalition that feels this is a good day to come out everywhere — in the U.S. and globally — to defend the Bolivarian Revolution.

Defending Venezuela means making a material difference in the rebellion against the rich. In the call for Feb. 23 is a demand that Wall Street make reparations for all their crimes against the Venezuelan people, oppressed people, the liberation movements and the working class of the world.

This is a new year and a new international crisis. Let’s make Feb. 23 a revolutionary example of how forces with differences and different histories can come together and demonstrate that we understand that the world has entered a new stage of development. While it may be fraught with dangers, it is also full of revolutionary potential. Let’s push to see what victories we can gain.

Long live the Bolivarian Revolution! Long live the rebirth of revolutionary internationalism — starting now!