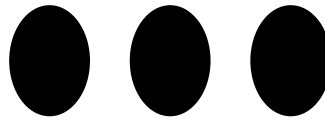




Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 7, 2010

Russia-Venezuela Deepen Military, Nuclear, Economic Ties

As the implosion of Venezuela's economy accelerates and the capital Caracas remains plagued by power outages, socialist "President" Hugo Chavez and the Russian regime announced myriad new agreements including a multi-billion dollar proposed arms package and increased cooperation in the fields of nuclear energy and oil exploration.



Russian Prime Minister and former KGB man Vladimir Putin made his first "official" visit to the Latin American tyrant late last week, coinciding with the delivery of attack helicopters and other armaments from Russia. After returning, he was [quoted](#) by the RIA Novosti news agency explaining that "the total volume of [arms] orders may exceed \$5 billion." The nation has been Venezuela's primary source for weapons since a U.S. arms embargo was established in 2006.

"If the U.S. doesn't want to supply weapons to other countries, including Venezuela, then it's good for us, and long may it continue," [boasted](#) Putin as he sat next to Chavez during a signing ceremony. "As we say in Russia, there is always someone to fill a vacancy."

The Venezuelan regime has already purchased billions of dollars worth of advanced Russian weaponry including fighter jets, tanks, air-defense systems, and more. And the Russian regime will help finance the planned future acquisitions by providing over \$2 billion in loans.

The U.S. State Department said the announcements were a bilateral matter between Russia and Venezuela, but some concerns were expressed. "We're hard-pressed to see what legitimate defense needs Venezuela has for this equipment," said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Crowley. "We can probably think of better things that could be invested on behalf of the Venezuelan people. But our primary concern is that — that if Venezuela is going to increase its military hardware, we certainly don't want to see this hardware migrate into other parts of the hemisphere."

Crowley also noted during a daily press briefing that, under international accords, Venezuela has a duty to be transparent about the arms purchases and their purpose. Analysts are concerned that some of the weapons could be transferred to various terrorist groups like the FARC. But Chavez insists that the massive arms build-up is aimed at countering an increased [U.S. military presence in Colombia](#). He has repeatedly expressed the alleged need to defend the nation and its vast oil reserves from what he calls the "Yankee empire."

In all, the two rulers signed a total of 31 agreements during Putin's visit. One deal in particular that prompted concern among international observers was a "statement of intent" for Russia to help the



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socialist Venezuelan regime build a nuclear power plant. But Chavez promptly brushed off the criticism.

“We are not going to build the atomic bomb, but we will develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes,” he [claimed](#). “We have to prepare for the post-petroleum era.” Indeed, the nation has been suffering from chronic power shortages for years. But [not](#) everybody is totally convinced that Chavez is simply seeking a power station.

Another deal [reached](#) by the leaders involves oil exploration. The Russian “National Oil Consortium” will launch a joint venture with Venezuelan state-owned PDVSA to develop some of the nation’s vast reserves. Fellow socialist ruler Evo Morales of Bolivia also [stopped by](#) Caracas to meet Putin, resulting in a \$100 million loan from Russia to purchase helicopters and an agreement to allow a state-owned Russian oil firm to participate in gas extraction.

Other topics covered by Putin and Chavez include cooperation in agriculture, education, the automobile industry and more. Reports also surfaced of a discussion about space collaboration and possibly building a launch pad in Venezuela. The U.S. State Department ridiculed the idea.

In addition to the wide-ranging agreements, Chavez [awarded](#) Putin the highest possible honor granted by the Venezuelan government — the Orden del Libertador (Order of the Liberator) — while giving him a replica of Latin American revolutionary Simon Bolivar’s sword. Putin presented a framed letter from another revolutionary to Chavez.

“This visit is very important for our country and for Latin America,” Chavez [told](#) a government-owned television station. “We’re forging a new multipolar world and Russia plays a big part in that process.” During his frequent visits to Russia and communist China, the socialist leader has repeatedly called for a “new world order” with a diminished role for America. And communist Chinese “President” Hu Jintao will also be visiting Chavez later this month, according to a government [release](#).

The Venezuelan regime is often perceived as leading the socialist revolution throughout Latin America. But there is much more to the situation than meets the eye, as reported in an article for *The New American* magazine entitled “[Resurgent Communism in Latin America](#).”

Chavez is merely one player in a region-wide expansion of statism being orchestrated through the Foro de São Paulo (São Paulo Forum — FSP), a shadowy but powerful alliance of authoritarian governments, political parties, “social movements,” and terrorist narco-trafficking groups founded by former dictator Fidel Castro, the Sandanistas, and current Brazilian President “Lula.” And the cabal has help from the outside, too — particularly from Russia.

“[The Russians] are running the same game, just slightly different — it’s more of a franchise operation than a central corporate operation, if you will. But if you take Russia out of it, the whole thing collapses,” explained Toby Westerman, editor of [International News Analysis](#) and author of *Lies, Terror and the Rise of the Neo-Communist Empire*, in an interview with *The New American*.

And while the Russian regime has played a crucial role in helping Chavez on several fronts, U.S. government policies have also contributed to his solid grip on power. At least half of Venezuelan oil is sold to Americans, for example, while the U.S. government has busied itself with stifling the exploration of American resources. The unconstitutional drug war also indirectly helps fund the Chavez regime by keeping prices massively over-inflated. His collaboration with drug cartels has been widely documented.



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But while sovereign nations have the right to purchase weapons for their own defense, the odds of the U.S. invading Venezuela are probably very slim. And even if the U.S. government did decide to invade Venezuela, no amount of Russian arms could stop it barring the use of nuclear weapons.

It is unfortunate that the American government provides Chavez with a scapegoat and boogeyman by unconstitutionally occupying military bases in Colombia. But for the sake of Venezuelans, Chavez should quit wasting the people's resources and implement true reforms. [Arresting critics](#) and squandering billions on more weapons is not going to solve Venezuela's underlying problem — socialism.

Photo of Putin (left) and Chavez: AP Images

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