

Hugo Chávez [28 July 1954 – 5 March 2013]

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[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia] Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías (Spanish pronunciation: [ˈuˈo rafaˈel ˈtʃaβes ˈfri.as]; 28 July 1954 – 5 March 2013) was the President of Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013. He was formerly the leader of the Fifth Republic Movement political party from its foundation in 1997 until 2007, when it merged with several other parties to form the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), which he led until his death. Following his own political ideology of Bolivarianism and "socialism of the 21st century", he focused on implementing socialist reforms in the country as a part of a social project known as the Bolivarian Revolution, which has seen the implementation of a new constitution, participatory democratic councils, the nationalization of several key industries, increased government funding of health care and education, and significant reductions in poverty, according to government figures.

Born into a working-class family in Sabaneta, Barinas, Chávez became a career military officer, and after becoming dissatisfied with the Venezuelan political system, he founded the secretive Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200 (MBR-200) in the early 1980s to work towards overthrowing it. Chávez led the MBR-200 in an unsuccessful coup d'état against the Democratic Action government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez in 1992, for which he was imprisoned. Released from prison after two years, he founded a social democratic political party, the Fifth Republic Movement, and was elected president of Venezuela in 1998. He subsequently introduced a new constitution which increased rights for marginalized groups and altered the structure of Venezuelan government, and was re-elected in 2000. During his second presidential term, he introduced a system of Bolivarian Missions, Communal Councils and worker-managed cooperatives, as well as a program of land reform, whilst also nationalizing various key industries. He was re-elected in 2006 with over 60% of the vote. On 7 October 2012, Chávez won his country's presidential election for a fourth time, defeating Henrique Capriles, and was elected for another six-year term.



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Allying himself strongly with the Communist governments of Fidel and then Raúl Castro in Cuba and the Socialist governments of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, his presidency was seen as a part of the socialist "pink tide" sweeping Latin America. Along with these governments, Chávez described his policies as anti-imperialist, being a prominent adversary of the United States' foreign policy as well as a vocal critic of the US-supported neoliberalism and laissez-faire capitalism. He supported Latin American and Caribbean cooperation and was instrumental in setting up the pan-regional Union of South American Nations, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, the Bank of the South, and the regional television network TeleSur. However, Chavez had extensive disputes with Colombia, and supported rebels in Colombia and Ecuador, causing ambassadors to be recalled and troops to be mobilized. Chávez was a highly controversial and divisive figure both at home and abroad, having insulted other world leaders and compared US president George W. Bush to a donkey, and called him the devil.

On 30 June 2011, Chávez stated that he was recovering from an operation to remove an abscessed tumor with cancerous cells. He required a second operation in December 2012. He was to have been sworn in on 10 January 2013, but the National Assembly of Venezuela agreed to postpone the inauguration to allow him time to recuperate and return from a third medical treatment trip to Cuba. He died in Caracas on 5 March 2013 at the age of 58.

Courtesy: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo_Ch%C3%A1vez