

Hugo not the boss of UN council

VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHÁVEZ WAS dealt an embarrassing blow yesterday when his country failed to beat US-endorsed Guatemala for a two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

In perhaps the most controversial seat race since the start of the Cold War, neither Guatemala nor Venezuela was able to obtain the required two-thirds majority after ten rounds of voting to replace Argentina on 1 January, 2007 as the representative for Latin-American and Caribbean states.

After the third round of restricted voting, the election opened up to all UN members. The race remained a two-man show with the countries tying in in sixth round before Guatemala pulled ahead in the tenth and final round of the day with 110 votes compared to Venezuela's 77. However, it's unlikely that a consensus will be easily reached when voting resumes today, and this latest deadlock is a perfect example of how diplomatic war can divide the UN.

A similar stalemate in 1979 saw Cuba and Colombia go through no less than 155 rounds of voting over the course of three months before Mexico was finally picked as the compromise candidate. And with the showdown between Venezuela and US-backed Guatemala seen as a symbolic fight between anti-US politics versus America and her allies, it's unlikely that supporters on either side will be eager to compromise.

Chávez's beef with the White House began in 2002, when the US was quick to acknowledge as Venezuela's leaders those who temporarily ousted Chávez in a coup. A non-permanent Security Council seat was to be a milestone victory for Chávez, who is up for re-election in December and has fingered all opposition candidates as puppets of US President George W Bush, building a campaign centred on US-bashing.

Leading up to yesterday's vote, Venezuela was the frontrunner, and though it was never certain his country would win the two-third majority, Chávez has no one to blame but himself for not winning the seat. Backing Venezuela's bid became a symbolic act of rebellion against big, bad, corporate America. And prior to voting, Russia, China, several Arab nations, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and many African countries were all expected to support Venezuela.

However, Chávez made the mistake of taking his campaign too far when addressing UN General Assembly on 20 September. Standing at the same podium from which Bush had addressed the assembly the day before, Chávez lost credibility during his rant against the American President.

"The devil himself is right in the house. And the devil came here yesterday. Right here," Chávez said during his speech.

"The world is waking up," Chávez said. "I have the feeling, dear world dictator, that you are going to live the rest of your days as a nightmare because the rest of us are standing up, all those who are rising up against American imperialism."

There's been a resurgence of left-wing populism in South America, and Chávez likes to play to the David and Goliath card of small nations standing up against the evil superpowers. But unfortunately for Chávez, he hasn't learned where to draw the line. And while at the time his remarks were greeted with applause by some UN delegates, Chávez didn't just shoot off his mouth—he shot himself in the foot.

Venezuela is now the world's fifth-largest oil exporter, and thanks to high crude-oil prices, this perennial have-not nation has been seeing some strong revenues of late. However, continued insults against the US will only hurt its trade—and ultimately Venezuela as a whole—as other UN members are unlikely to support a policy that has no room for political compromise.

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

A Liberal Haiku

Iggy, don't pander
To Québec—remember your
Sexy Harvard roots

MATT FREHNER
Editor-in-Chief



MATTHEW BARRETT

LETTERS

Powerplant ought to mass-produce some patrons

I have been at the University of Alberta for two years and have steadily watched the Powerplant being run into the ground. I am unsure who's in charge of making the latest round of decisions that have resulted in 1) Dewey's being converted into a coffee shop; 2) The Powerplant becoming a buffet; and most importantly, 3) The Powerplant not serving alcohol from Monday to Wednesday. My current speculations range from puritans to teetotalers, while my colleagues have speculated that it may be representatives of Coca-Cola, trying to increase liquid sugar sales early in the week.

It is clear to me that the individuals who enacted these changes have, at best, questionable business sense, and at worst, no sense of community. As Ford showed while marketing his Model-T, the way to make more money is by selling at increased volume, not at increased cost. So rather than raising the price of products (eg beer)—and as a result, having to shut early half the week to compensate for the loss of customers—prices should be lowered and volume of sales relied on for profit.

Even if prices were as little as \$0.50 lower [than] competitors, patronage would increase. Profit margins notwithstanding, I feel that the ultimate function of a pub should be to provide a communal location where people can get together and discuss the issues of the day. This is particularly important at a university, where individuals are exposed to many ideas for the first time, things that may be new to them, things that may need to be discussed with ones peers. The Powerplant has been failing miserably at providing this venue, and I believe it is this, in combination with

the aforementioned pricing, that has led to the dire straits that I perceive the Powerplant to be in. For example, the employment of unfriendly bouncers, tossing everyone out of the bar at 8 PM (raise your hand if this has happened to you ... I thought so), all serve to alienate patrons. Who would want to go somewhere where they are so obviously not valued?

Needless to say, I am fairly disappointed with the direction that the Powerplant is heading and I welcome any management (at last count there was three or four) to discuss this with me.

LARRY AMSKOLD
PhD Candidate
Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

A happy medium for marriage meleé

There were two very adroit defenses of the proposed Defense of Religions Act in Thursday's paper (much more adroit than the cynically pandering excuse for a proposal really deserved), but they both seem to have missed a critical point or two (re: "Intolerance is a two-way street, Frehner," "More balance needed in marriage laws," 12 October). It's admittedly an easy one to miss—do fish think about water?

Both of Thursday's correspondents recommend that, instead of trying to force a given JP/marriage commissioner who disagrees with their marriage to marry them, a given couple should simply try and find one who agrees with them. Frankly, I agree that it would be the polite thing to do in that situation, but I live here in Edmonton, where one is likely to find one such. There are a great many places in this country where that isn't the case.

We have Charter provisions against discrimination on the basis of various characteristics including sexual orientation, in part because it's entirely too easy for discrimination [of] service to

become denial of service in just that way, especially in a country this geographically endowed.

While I appreciate the issues of individual freedom involved here, building any tolerant society requires the occasional balance of the rights of the many against the rights of the few, especially when the few are supposed to be agents of a secular state who, like any agents of any organization, need to decide whether their role is worth the freedoms they give up in order to effectively represent said organisation and its ideals.

CHIGBO IKEJIANI
Political Science V

Giant fence a fantastic idea, Canada

Hey you got some good fence ideas! (re: "Hey, Bush, leave that border alone," 12 October). But you see, we only need 700 miles of fence because the other 1300 miles of border is the Rio Grande River. We will just put alligators and piranha fish in it.

What we really need to do is fence off the US Chamber of Commerce and Council on Foreign Relations, to prevent them from bribing our politicians. They are the ones who want cheap and easy to control foreigners replacing liberty and freedom-loving Americans.

TIM BRUMMER
Via e-mail

Becoming Canadian as easy as putting 'eh' at the end of every sentence

I read your [article] and want to tell you that the invasion of my country is a very serious matter. Canada has a stricter immigration policy than the US so it's possible you don't get it since your borders are more secure. Mexicans are sneaking in and milking our system dry. They are not

welcome and I hope you try to imagine millions of third-world immigrants in Alberta and what that would do to your province so you might have a better understanding of our situation down here.

By the way, you might be interested to know the reason I'm a "patriot" against this invasion of illegal hordes is because my wonderful daughter-in-law, the mother of my beautiful grandson, is Canadian. She's a registered nurse who went through the legal process and expense to be in this country with a legitimate green card. I admire her and do not think it's fair that she paid the money, filed the papers and waited for approval while 12-30 million illegals from our southern border demand their "rights" and to go to the front of the line. It isn't fair to those who obey the laws, eh?

If our idiot President and government approve this ridiculous "guest worker" (aka "amnesty") to these invaders, me and my family will be moving up North. How is Alberta, anyway? I actually prefer BC but I'm open and since this is such a joke to you, we'll see how you like it when Americans bail out of here and take off for the Great White North. Not so funny now, eh?

JUDY MCNEESE
Via e-mail

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