



## Hugo Chávez: Oil, Politics, and the Challenge to the U.S.

*By Nikolas Kozloff*

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Audacious, provocative, and bombastic, few world politicians are as colorful as Hugo Chávez, now making international news for his plans to nationalize U.S. owned businesses and his bold opposition to Washington's economic and trade policies. As Venezuela gains importance as the fifth largest oil exporter in the world, this firebrand leader is quickly moving to the public spotlight by uniting much of South America against the Bush administration and wielding oil as a "geopolitical weapon." To create this rich and objective portrait, Nikolas Kozloff--one of the few American journalists who has spent years in the Andean region--has profiled Chávez's top advisors, leaders of his movement, and other key figures in both Venezuela and the U.S. The result is a timely, exhaustive analysis of Chávez as a political leader, and a nuanced examination of the president moving to the center of the global stage. Includes a new afterword by the author, with insights into Chávez's reelection in relation to wider hemispheric politics.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Hugo Chavez has put Latin America back on the U.S. radar with his outspoken attacks on American imperialism and his leadership in forming economic ties among Latin American nations outside U.S. influence. To many in the southern hemisphere, he represents a welcome alternative to the U.S., whose efforts to heal the region's economic woes through the World Bank and the IMF have largely failed. In the northern hemisphere, he is often seen as a threat to free-trade agreements and democracy in the Americas. Kozloff, a senior research fellow for the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, tries to neutralize the latter image as he recounts recent Venezuelan history and analyzes Chavez's rise to power. Paying equal attention to Chavez as a man and as a political phenomenon, he inserts slow-moving anecdotes among dense historical details, making for an uneven read. Kozloff's use of sources like the *Nation*, the *New Left Review* and the *International Socialist Review*, as well as his participation in the antiglobalization movement, also reveal a leftist bias toward Chavez. He offers little criticism of Chavez's policies or the nondemocratic means—a 1992 failed coup—through which he first garnered public favor, before winning office in a 1999 election and 2002 reelection. But while this bias might make for some one-sided storytelling at times, it also makes for a thoughtful, well-researched alternative to the majority of information available on Chavez in the English-speaking world. (Sept. 19)

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### Review

“A thoughtful, well-researched alternative to the majority of information available on Chávez in the English-speaking world.” *Publishers Weekly*

“A reasoned, historical presentation of Chávez's rise to power and the social context which produced him.” *Political Affairs*

“This book is highly recommended reading for those who want to understand Chavez beyond his rhetoric – the real basis of his support and his actual policies.” *Journal of Peace Research*

### About the Author

**Nikolas Kozloff is an expert on South America and a former fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, D.C. He contributes articles to Counterpunch, buzzflash.com, venezuelanalysis.com, Z Net, and blogs on senorchichero.blogspot.com. He has appeared on PBS World Focus, C-SPAN Washington Journal and The Daily Show and is the author of Revolution! He lives in Brooklyn, NY.**

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