

The San Juan Star

THE ONLY PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PUBLICATION IN PUERTO RICO

Readers' Viewpoint

Beware the nation-*patria-pueblo*

Puerto Rico turned a major political corner on July 23 at the moment Salinas' Miss Puerto Rico, Zuleyka Rivera, catapulted into stardom over and above entries from eighty plus aspiring nations to become Miss Universe. More so than the previous four wins, this event could well prove a grim foreboding to all Puerto Ricans who dream of becoming full-fledged United States citizens via the statehood process.

With the Bush administration ever more enmeshed in the quagmire they have stirred up in the Middle East, events occurring in the Caribbean basin and South America have been buried deep and out of mind in some distant oceanic canyon. Distracted U.S. leaders fail to focus on the ever-rising tsunami that now overwhelms many of the nations between the Straights of Magellan and the Rio Grande.

While Maurice Ferré (STAR, July 19) argues Puerto Rico is a "nation" and Guillermo Moscoso (STAR, July 27) insists it is a *patria-pueblo*, the Castro/Chávez axis of evil steadily closes in to take advantage, not only

of this quandary, but of the monumental political bumps this nation-*patria-pueblo* has suffered upon itself during the past decade.

During thirty-one years in Cuba before and after Fidel Castro and ten in Venezuela before and after Carlos Andrés Pérez, I witnessed close up the self-inflicted forces that drove both nations into the hands of non-benevolent dictators. I see many of these same ingredients brewing today within Puerto Rico: shaky leadership, fiscal irresponsibility, petty politics, governmental confusion, and, worse of all, no clear consensus toward the long-term future.

Divided, the nation-*patria-pueblo* will fall into the grips of the evil axis. The time is ripe for a true patriot to come forth to forge a union that all within this island truly deserve.

Miss Rivera proved yet again that Puerto Rico is world-class. Unfortunately, the prominence of this win will cause the enemy-axis to focus ever more intently on the *Isla del Encanto* to further fire their egotistical totalitarian ambitions toward freeing it from all links to the USA.



Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza, Miss Puerto Rico 2006, reacts after winning the Miss Universe 2006 pageant on Sunday, July 23, in Los Angeles.

Time is running out. The axis of evil is way ahead of the United States in bonding with all islands within the Caribbean Basin. Puerto Rican leaders need to act wisely and seriously, now, if

they hope to bequeath the freedoms enjoyed by this great nation-*patria-pueblo* to future generations.

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