

The San Juan Star Viewpoint

Wake up, P.R., you're ripe for major upheaval

Three items appeared in the Oct. 2 issue of The STAR which, when woven together, foreshadow a rocky road ahead for Puerto Rico.

A.W. Maldonado's column summarizes the historical aspects of Fidel Castro's oppressive, dictatorial regime in Cuba and how its modus operandi has spread to Venezuela and will soon affect other nations to our south. In this same issue, The STAR ran two stories that tie directly into Maldonado's thesis and into my strongest fears.

The Associated Press's Washington reporter George Gedda outlines the 400-page mega plan by the U.S. State Department designed to "undermine" the succession plan in place in Cuba and put in place an Iraq-type intervention whereby the United States steps in and gets the country up and running anew.

What incredible hogwash! This latest move accentuates and confirms that the U.S. State Department, as it has during the entire 20th century, exists in its own dream world, is totally incapable of understanding the predicaments of their neighbors to the south and consistently reacts incorrectly to the area's needs.

Castro is riding higher today than he ever has since the Russian bear tripped and fell. With his deep-pocketed pal Hugo Chávez's investments in the democratic takeover of Latin America, Fidel's eternal dream is well



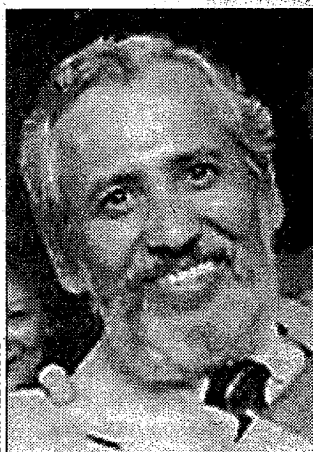
Cuban President Fidel Castro



Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez

on the way to realization. With most Spanish-speaking countries ripe for being baited with Venezuelan oil and/or money, no amount of State Department fantasy world huffing and puffing will knock this power hungry consortium down. Worse yet, Condi Rice's backing of this inane proposal knocks her credibility down a peg or two.

On page 4 of the same issue of the Star, Robert Friedman brings to light the reborn menace that festers with renewed vigor in Puerto Rico since the death of "Comandante Filiberto." Most of the basic ingredients present in Cuba and Venezuela prior to each of their major political upheavals are present in Puerto Rico: petty political discord, dishonesty and mismanagement in the government sector, a strong desire by the majority of voters not to get involved in politics, and a small number of people avidly dedicated to bring



Slain Los Machetero leader Filiberto Ojeda Ríos

change. Puerto Rico, awaken. Unless you are ready to live out your days under a dictatorship or in some far off land, as so many of us have, awaken from your slumber, take charge of your land, rise and forge a united front with sensible realistic solutions aimed at securing your long-term welfare.

William Butler Salazar Santurce

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