

# THE MARXIST HURRICANE IN SOUTH AMERICA

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A lot is

*changing in South America. As many nations elect leaders with Marxist roots, we are wondering where it all goes from here. The biggest surprise is that for the first time ever, Colombia now has a leftist leader, poised to make huge changes. So is this the beginning of a Marxist revolution throughout South America? Are we going to see these nations embrace the fate of Venezuela and Cuba? What is China's role in this, and what do they have to gain?*

*On this episode, we talk about all that's at stake in South America, how this revolutionary orbit toward Marxism is a lot like the BLM Movement here in the U.S., and how the U.S. should respond.*

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**Tim Doescher:** Now, we've got an incredible lineup of podcasts here at The Heritage Foundation, so much good content. But one podcast in particular that we wanted to highlight is The Kevin Roberts Show. Now Kevin is the new president here at The Heritage Foundation and each week his compelling interviews give a rallying cry for freedom lovers everywhere. And he gives us a playbook for how we can go on offense with our ideas. You can subscribe to the Kevin Roberts Show anywhere you listen to podcasts, so do it today.

**Doescher:** From The Heritage Foundation, I'm Tim Doescher and this is Heritage Explains.

**Doescher:** In March 2020 at the peak of COVID lockdowns, we released an episode touting the strength of U.S. relations with Colombia. It was important because they were very cooperative in pushing back against Marxist Venezuela and Cuba's influence in the region. In addition, they were also relatively open to listening to us about China's dangerous infrastructure investments within the region. Since then, a lot has changed. Chiefly among them, Colombia has elected a far leftist leader for the first time ever

**>>> A Marxist "Hurricane" Threatens the Western Hemisphere**

**Clip:** Victory, a historic moment for Colombia, as it votes in its first ever leftist leader. Former rebel Gustavo Petro has vowed to launch profound social and economic change.

**Gustavo Petro:** We are writing history at this moment, a new history for Colombia, for Latin America and for the world. A new history, because undoubtedly, what has happened today with those 11 million voters is a change. What is coming is a real change, a fundamental change.

**Doescher:** Now Petro's roots are revolutionary as he is a former member of the radical M19 Marxist gorilla group and praises the disastrous socialist regime in Venezuela and its patron communist regime in Cuba. Now, while this is a first for Colombia, this is certainly a part of a larger, more concerning trend happening in South America. Nations electing far leftist leaders propped up by Marxist organizations. So what does this mean for the US, our close relationship with Colombia and the surrounding region. What about for our security? What is communist China's role in all of this? And how is this Marxist hurricane sweeping South America being perpetuated?

**Doescher:** Mike Gonzalez is a senior fellow here at The Heritage Foundation. He's also the author of the hit book, BLM: The Making of a Marxist Revolution. He knows this stuff inside and out. On this episode, Mike goes through how this Marxist movement through South America is being fostered. It's prime beneficiaries, China and Russia, and draws important parallels to our moment here in the US and how we must respond.

**Doescher:** All right, Mike. Colombia, Colombia, Colombia. In March 2020, that's just over two years ago, we did an episode praising Colombia, our Latin expert at the time. Anna Quintana said, "Colombia is a bright example of freedom and a valuable ally to America." A little over two years later, you have a piece with our Heritage colleague Mateo Hadar in National Review using the recent election in Colombia where leftist candidate, Gustavo Petro was elected. And now you say, "A Marxist hurricane threatens the Western hemisphere."

**Doescher:** Now we are going to talk about the playbook here, but this is a pretty stark contrast from two years ago. So first tell me who is the newly elected leader, Gustavo Petro.

**Mike Gonzalez:** He's a former terrorist and present day Marxist who is going to take what was, two years ago, the staunchest US ally in South America and is going to turn it far to the left. Something that has many people, including me, very worried because of the way it's going to deeply impact our national interest. Something that we can least afford right now when we have a very, very, very weak leadership in Washington, if it's any leadership at all.

**Doescher:** Well, let me just ask you that, because I was reading Colombia doesn't typically vote for far left people. This-

**Gonzalez:** It never has.

**Doescher:** Never has. This is the first one.

**Gonzalez:** It never has.

**Doescher:** How was he able to connect his far left Marxist ideas to a country that has traditionally not gone that way at all?

**Gonzalez:** Because, first of all, he hides it. He says he's not really a Marxist, though he very much is. They hide what they want to do to Colombia. And then, as I've written, Venezuela and Venezuelan Cuban masters have

applied a tried and true blueprint to Colombia that has worked in many countries before. And the blueprint is the following. You have an event like the killing of George Floyd here, it's very similar to what happened in 2020, by the way. And it's no coincidence that the Black Lives Matter, the founders of the Black Lives Matter organizations are very close to Caracas and are members of the regional Marxist forum, Foro de São Paulo.

### >>> **BLM: The Making of a New Marxist Revolution**

**Doescher:** That's amazing.

**Gonzalez:** So you have an event take place, then it is exploded and manipulated in social media, social media that is controlled from Caracas, by the way, studies have shown this. Then you have disturbances across the country. Then you have riots. You have demonstrations. The President is stabilized. There are elections. The left loses by a bare minimum margin like Petro that he won by just over 50%, not even 51%. Then the President comes in, calls in a new Constituent Assembly. They change the Constitution. They get rid of the checks and balances. The Institute where they call participatory democracy, not representative democracy, which is a way of getting rid of checks and balances on this new constitution. And you have a dictatorship that ruins the economy, a Marxist dictatorship that ruins the economy and it's very difficult to dislodge. That's what has happened in Venezuela. It is very different.

**Gonzalez:** This approach is very different from the way, for example, that the Marxists in Cuba took over. They took over there through the force of arms. China, Mao took over through the force of arms. The Bolsheviks in Russia took over through the force of arms. This time they do it through an election, and that is the last really free election or the one of the last free elections that the country will ever see.

**Doescher:** So now are we in a season of leftist control or is this just a flash in the pan and we're going to be done with it in four years? What does this mean then for Colombia and the surrounding nations? You mentioned there's several other nations in the region that they either have fallen or they are falling to this extreme leftist, Marxist ideal. So is this here to stay? Or is this just a flirtation?

**Gonzalez:** Well, we don't know. We don't know. Because we don't know if the second round, the next round of elections in four years time or so are going to be still free. And the Colombian people, the Chilean people are going to be able to get rid of the Marxist president they elected. But you have the same thing, exactly the same thing happened in Chile with Boric, who is another Marxist. Xiomara Castro in Honduras, exactly the same thing.

**Doescher:** One thing that I was curious about, and I asked you just earlier before we started the interview is what China's role is here because we know China loves destabilization, especially when it does not benefit the United States of America. And all of this right now does not benefit the United States of America. So my question was is China helping with this? Or is this just Cuba and Venezuela that's pushing for this?

**Gonzalez:** Look, China benefits, not just indirectly, it benefits directly. For example, Brazil is going to have elections later this year in the fall and the government, the conservative government, of Jair Bolsonaro, doesn't look like it's going to win reelection. It's going to go to Inácio Lula da Silva, who's another Marxist.

**Doescher:** Oh my gosh.

**Gonzalez:** And he was the one... The organization that began all of this is called the Foro de São Paulo, which is a-

**Doescher:** Wait, I just have to stop you, Mike. I'm sorry for interrupting. So you're saying now, so we've got Peru, we've got Chile, we've got Argentina, Honduras, Ecuador-

**Gonzalez:** Not Ecuador.

**Doescher:** Colombia.

**Gonzalez:** Not Ecuador.

**Doescher:** Not Ecuador yet?

**Gonzalez:** Not yet. Not Ecuador yet.

**Doescher:** But they're flirting with it.

**Gonzalez:** No, no. Yeah. Ecuador-

**Doescher:** Now Brazil.

**Gonzalez:** Is being stabilized at the moment.

**Doescher:** And now Brazil.

**Gonzalez:** Yeah. Brazil is going to have election.

**Doescher:** This is incredible.

**Gonzalez:** Yeah, I know. It really is. It really is-

**Doescher:** So all of South America.

**Gonzalez:** And it's a cultural Marxist plan by a regional grouping called Foro de São Paulo, which was begun in the early 1990s. As soon as the Soviet Union collapses and Fidel Castro is left without a sugar daddy, he establishes the Foro de São Paulo with Lula de Silva actually as a way to bring communist parties, communist leaders of which at the time were very few, non-government NGOs, non-government actors together to discuss strategy. And the Foro, by the way, it's a complete in cultural Marxism. It understands the nature of culture where you have to first take over cultural institutions before you take over the economy and the country. So Lula, the man who creates Foro de São Paulo with Fidel Castro in 1990, he could very well, many people think, will win elections in Brazil later this year. So yeah, no, the situation is dire.

**Doescher:** Well, Mike, let me stop you here because this is something that we have talked about over the years now, as we see the Belt and Road Initiative, we see China making big investments in developing nations and third world nations. They build out cell towers, they build out mass transit systems, they build out security systems, they build buildings all over the place. And of course, it's all a ploy to get intelligence, to gather intelligence. I got to imagine that's also going to be up for grabs here is-

**Gonzalez:** In Brazil, definitely, yes. Most definitely. And let me tell you something that China is very involved in, and this is really dangerous and scary. Iran, China and Russia are going to have a joint military exercise in Venezuela in August next month, it's called Sniper Frontier and Venezuela is hosting it. I believe it is the first time that these three truly evil regimes are having military exercises in the Western hemisphere.

**Doescher:** Wow.

**Gonzalez:** Vladimir Putin has gone to war to invade a country that wants to be free, Ukraine, because he says, “Well, this is a threat to me.” Well, Iran, Russia and China are going to have military exercises in our backyard. And it’s doing so because they know that we have a very, very weak leader in Joe Biden.

**Doescher:** Well, it’s funny you should mention the Biden administration because Secretary of State Blinken said, “On behalf of the United States, I congratulate the people of Colombia for making their voices heard in a free and fair presidential election. We commend the many officials, public servants and volunteers whose dedication made these elections possible.” I mean, sounds like they’re pretty excited about this.

**Gonzalez:** Yeah, no. Biden called Petro within like 48 hours. We have to watch very carefully how the Biden White House, especially the Vice President, who is one of the most leftist people in that administration, how Juan Gonzalez in the National Security Council, how the State Department, how Blinken, how Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor, we need to watch what they do regarding this growing threat in Latin America. Because I guarantee you, Tim, that it’s not going to be anything good. They’re not going to react in a way that puts America first in terms of our national security. Which is really, if you’re in charge of national security and you are not thinking that the national security of your country has the top priority above everything else, then you’re just not doing your job and you should be fired.

**Doescher:** We call this a playbook and we’re making that case. What I want to know is the playbook is, as you say in the piece, some form of land appropriation, they’re going to propose confiscatory taxes on landowners basically to revert it back to government control, I imagine. You mentioned environmental extremism, where they’re not going to drill for oil. They’re not going to expand their energy portfolio. These are all things that we’re doing here in America.

**Gonzalez:** That’s the playbook after gaining power. The playbook that’s important is the one on how to gain power. And that is the one that was applied to Chile, Colombia, Peru, and is going to be applied, and I believe was attempted here, which is an event, in this case, the death of George Floyd, which is then manipulated by very leftist individuals, i.e., the founders of Black Lives Matter, which then unleash hundreds of riots throughout the country that are very costly. That completely destabilize the country, that cause chaos. We saw that here. And then that leads to an election in which a leftist leader is elected, we saw that here. And then after that, in the case of Colombia, I think it’s very clear he’s going to appropriate lands, even though he says he’s not going to. What he says is that he’s going to raise taxes on land holdings that he deems to be underused.

**Doescher:** Okay.

**Gonzalez:** And it’s the government that will decide what land is unproductive. And then he will hike taxes. And if the owner cannot pay these taxes, well, he just then leaves the land to the state. That to me sounds like a straight up expropriation. He’s going to stop drilling because he understands that extreme climatism is a way to also to choke off capitalism. This guy is a Marxist. Gustavo Petro is a Marxist. He’s going to implement Marxist policies in a country that has been the staunchest US ally in South America.

**Doescher:** You wrote a book, BLM: The Making of a Marxist Revolution. You’re comparing a lot of what has happened over the last two years here in America to what’s the playbook that’s happening down in South America right now. You worried about where we’re headed here?

**Gonzalez:** Obviously. I’m very extremely worried about where we’re heading. Let’s make clear, I’ve talked about the Foro de São Paulo, which is the regional grouping of governments, politicians, and non-state actors that are Marxist. BLM has attended Foro de São Paulo meetings. BLM supports Maduro, which is the

government that really finances all of this. BLM invited Maduro, or at least one BLM leader, Opal Tometi, to Harlem. She went to Caracas during an election. She wrote a manifesto praising his participatory democracy. Once again, participatory democracy is a way of getting rid of the checks and balances that representative democracy has. In representative democracy, you have representative government and you have an executive, you have a legislative, and you have a judiciary. Participatory democracy pretends to give power directly to the people. What that means is that you have an elected dictator that has dictatorial power over everything.

**Doescher:** Well, Mike, we're watching this. We're going to keep covering it because I think it is extremely instructive to, again, what we are facing here in America right now and the future of our country, as well as our allies and our former really good friends, it seems like. And we will be checking in with you as we keep it going. Thanks for being with us here.

**Gonzalez:** We still have good friends there. They're just in the opposition now. Thanks a lot for giving me the time.

**Doescher:** Thanks for being here, Mike.

**Gonzalez:** Thanks.

**Doescher:** And we want to thank Mike for doing that interview, really provided great context. And we are going to continue to follow this moment in Colombia. But we want to hear from you. What do you think of this podcast? Are we hitting the issues? What are we missing? We love your feedback and encourage you to leave us a comment wherever you listen, or send us an email at [email protected]. That's [email protected]. Now, if you're not much for words, you can give us a five star rating wherever you listen. We really appreciate that too.

**Doescher:** Michelle's up next episode, and we'll catch you then.

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