

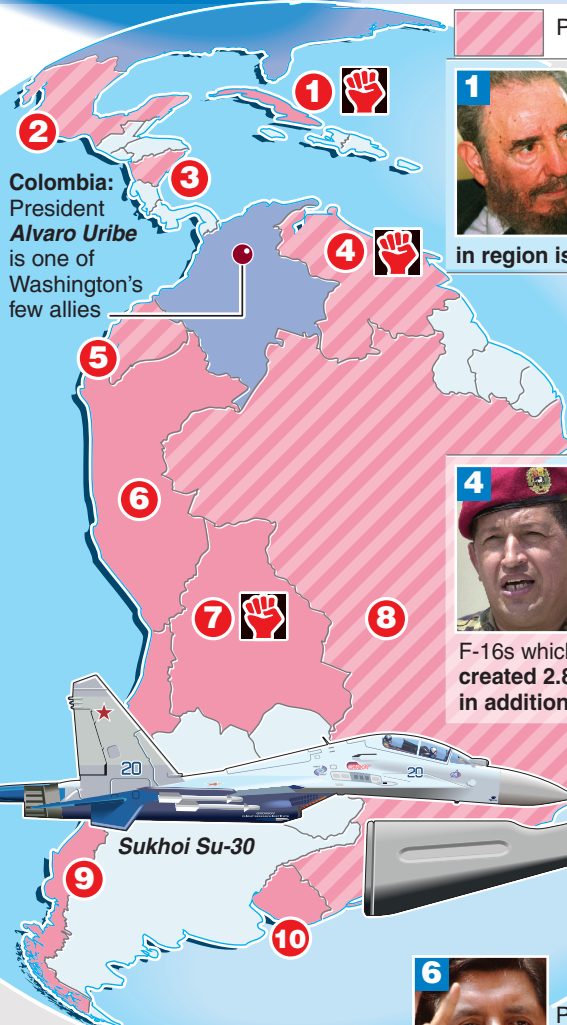
# Latin America – ascendancy of left gains pace

The so-called pink tide sweeping Latin America is seen as a showdown between *soft-left* leaders in Chile and Brazil – who support economic ties with Washington – and *hard-left* nationalists led by Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia, who cast Uncle Sam as an imperialist enemy

Presidential elections in 2006



Hard-left leaders



**Colombia:** President **Alvaro Uribe** is one of Washington's few allies



**1** **Cuba:** President **Fidel Castro** has survived four-decade-long U.S. embargo aimed at bringing down his communist regime. **Popularity** in region is at highest in 15 years



**2** **Mexico:** **Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador** (left) is tied with conservative **Felipe Calderon** ahead of July poll. **Supporters** hope he will adopt **Chavez-style control** of oil revenues to combat poverty



**3** **Nicaragua:** Left-wing Sandinista leader **Daniel Ortega** plans to run for president for fourth time in November, sparking concern in Washington. **Sandinistas** were voted out of office in 1990 elections, following 10-year civil war against U.S.-backed **Contras**



**4** **Venezuela:** Flush with cash and oil, President **Hugo Chavez** is buying \$2.7 billion of arms from Spain, Brazil and Russia, including 48 speedboats, four coastal patrol ships and four corvettes, 12 CASA military transport aircraft, 11 Mi-17 series multi-role helicopters and 100,000 high-tech Kalashnikov AK-103 assault rifles. Chavez is also buying Russian Sukhoi Su-30 and Su-35 fighter jets to replace U.S.-built F-16s which the Bush administration has refused to upgrade. **Chavez has created 2.8 million-strong armed militias reporting directly to president, in addition to 34,000-strong army, sparking fears of regional ambitions**



**Sukhoi Su-30**



Laser sight

**Kalashnikov AK-103**

30-round 7.62mm magazine

New muzzle break ensures barrel stays on target



**5** **Ecuador:** Leftist President **Alfredo Palacio** has expelled U.S. oil giant **Occidental Petroleum** and is cutting profit margins for foreign investors, raising fears he will nationalize oil industry. **Washington has frozen free trade deal with Ecuador**



**6** **Peru:** Centre-left President **Alan Garcia** wins June election pledging to cut poverty and improve already record economic growth. **Result means Bush administration has one less challenge to deal with in Latin America**



**9** **Chile:** President **Michelle Bachelet**, socialist, no-nonsense former minister of defence who came to power in January, is spending \$2.8bn to acquire 100 Leopard IIA4 tanks from Germany, two newly built French-Spanish Scorpene submarines, 4 Dutch and 3 British frigates, 10 new F-16 fighter bombers from U.S., and 18 refurbished F-16s from Holland



**7** **Bolivia:** Left-wing President **Evo Morales** has nationalized large part of Bolivia's natural gas industry, plans to nationalize mining and forestry, confiscate and redistribute unused land to landless farmers. Bolivia's vital soy bean market to Colombia has been decimated following free trade agreement in which Bogota must now import all its soy from United States. **Four in 10 Bolivians live on less than \$1 a day**



**8** **Brazil:** Left-wing President **Luis Inacio Lula da Silva** plans energy security, raising gas extraction, use of alcohol and biodiesel in gasoline. **Lula maintains 53-54% approval rating ahead of October's election**



**10** **Uruguay:** President **Tabare Vazquez** became Uruguay's first left-wing head of state in March 2005. **On taking office he restored diplomatic ties with Cuba and announced \$100m emergency plan to help poor**