

Peruvians Unsympathetic to Chávez, Morales

May 26, 2006

Few Favor Nationalization of Peruvian Oil and Gas



Peruvians hold predominantly negative opinions about Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and Bolivia's Evo Morales and resent their comments about Peru's presidential election. Few support following Bolivia's lead and nationalizing their country's oil and gas industry.

Hugo Chavez in 2000 (Globovision)

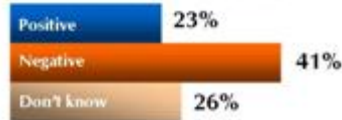
These findings emerge from nationwide surveys conducted in May 2006 by [Apoyo](#) and [Datum](#). The Apoyo poll asked Peruvians their opinion about Chávez, a vociferous critic of the United States and a close ally of Cuban President Fidel Castro. Sixty-one percent responded "negative," 17 percent said "positive," while 14 percent said they did not know. Asked about Bolivia's president Evo Morales, who has also allied himself with Chávez and Castro, 41 percent of those polled said they held a negative opinion, 23 percent said positive, 26 percent did not know.

The Datum poll focused on the recent nationalization of Bolivia's natural gas industry by President Morales. Asked whether it would be positive to nationalize Peru's oil and gas industries, 34 percent said it would be positive while 49 percent said it would be negative. A similar poll by Apoyo among residents of the capital city of Lima found that 40 percent favored the nationalization of Peru's oil and gas industry and 51 percent were opposed. Few thought taking over foreign oil and gas companies would benefit Peru. Slightly more than a third (36 percent) said the country would be better off. Only 23 percent said nationalizations would be good for foreign investment and 33 percent said it would have a positive impact on employment.

Peruvian Opinion of Morales and Chavez

Do you have a positive or negative opinion of the following international figures or do you not know enough to form an opinion?

The President of Bolivia Evo Morales



The President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez



Presidential

run-off

The nationwide survey, conducted this month by the polling firm [Apoyo](#), comes as Peruvians prepare for the second-round of their country's presidential elections, scheduled for June 4. The race pits Ollanta Humala, a nationalist former army officer allied with Chávez and Morales, and Alan García, a populist ex-president who now preaches economic pragmatism. Though Humala won a plurality in the first round, he has fallen behind García in recent polls

Humala has promised more state intervention in Peru's economy to redistribute income to its overwhelmingly poor population. Though he has not said he would expropriate foreign assets, he has threatened to renegotiate international contracts to exact higher royalties. The country is in the midst of a multi-billion dollar pipeline project to bring natural gas from the Amazon jungle to the Pacific coast.

Peruvians in Lima on Consequences of Nationalization of Oil and Gas Industries

Would Peru be better off, the same, or worse off with nationalization?



How would foreign investment be affected by nationalization?



Would it have a positive, neutral, or negative impact of job creation in Peru?



Apoyo 5/06

The Venezuelan and Bolivian presidents have emerged as important issues in Peru's presidential campaign because of their outspoken support for Humala and their attacks on both García and Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo. Chávez has repeatedly declared his desire to see Humala elected and publicized his disdain for García, calling him a "thief" and a "crook." Toledo withdrew his ambassador from Venezuela at the end of April, accusing Chávez of "persistent and flagrant interference" in Peruvian affairs. That sparked another volley from Chávez, who called Toledo an "office boy" for President Bush.

Morales also publicly declared his support for Humala when the Peruvian candidate visited Bolivia earlier this month. Nor has he refrained from attacking Peru's President Alejandro Toledo, calling him a "traitor" for supporting a free trade pact with the United States. According to the Apoyo poll, 61 percent of Peruvians disapproved of Morales' attack on Toledo. A larger majority (75 percent) said they disapproved of Chávez's comments about candidate Alan García.

Though García governed Peru as a populist in the 1980s, he is now campaigning on a platform of political and economic pragmatism, saying he will pursue the center-left, pro-growth policies of neighboring Chile. But as president of Peru from 1985-1990, García was more radical. He nationalized foreign banks and left Peru with hyper-inflation and an escalating guerrilla war.