

Abstract

The relations between the United States and its traditional ally, Venezuela, experienced a turn for the worse during the presidency of George W. Bush. The Bush administration reacted to the radical president Hugo Chavez with an increase in funding of the so-called democracy promotion in Venezuela and with a silent support of the unsuccessful coup in 2002. The long history of U.S. interventions in Latin America during the cold war gives ground to the criticism by many authors who see these steps as an attempt to get rid of a democratically elected president just because he is confronting the American vision about a political and economic system desirable for the region. This work focuses on democracy promotion as a tool of the U.S. foreign policy, which is on one hand related to the identity of the United States as a unique historical democratic experiment, but also reacts to a threat posed to the national interests by other states. It deals with the types of threats that Hugo Chavez could have possibly presented, and thus shows to what extent the Bush administration used democracy promotion in a pragmatic way. The analysis of Chavez's actions in oil politics, economic integration and security issues, and its comparison with the trend in democracy promotion shows that the U.S. financing activities were increasingly more understandable. However, the initial sharp rise of the financial flow represented rather a panic caused by the presence of a radical and anti-American president who was incompatible with the black-and-white views of the American administration.