



[Read today's paper](#)

guardian@fricklawfirm.com | [Saved stories](#) | [My details](#) | [Sign out](#)

Go to:

MediaGuardian.co.uk **Television**

[Home](#) [Media law](#) [Advertising](#) [Television](#) [Radio](#) [Marketing & PR](#) [Press & publishing](#) [City Monkey](#) [New media](#) [This week](#) [The Tenner](#) [Talk](#) [Special reports](#) [TV ratings](#) [Jobs](#)



[Television](#)

Evangelist tells 7m TV viewers: US should kill Venezuela's president

Julian Borger in Washington and Duncan Campbell
Wednesday August 24, 2005

[The Guardian](#)

America's leading televangelist appeared to take Christian fundamentalism into uncharted territory yesterday when he called for the assassination of Venezuela's president, Hugo Chávez.

Speaking on his own channel, the Christian Broadcasting Network, Pat Robertson said President Chávez should be targeted because he was a "terrific danger" whose country, a big supplier of oil to the US, was "a launching pad for communist infiltration and Islamic extremism all over the country".

Furthermore, killing the Venezuelan leader would be "a whole lot cheaper than starting a war _ We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability."

The Venezuelan government expressed outrage and said it was examining its legal options. Vice-president José Vicente Rangel said: "It's huge hypocrisy to maintain this discourse against terrorism and at the same time, in the heart of that country, there are entirely terrorist statements like those."

A state department spokesman, Sean McCormack, said: "Allegations that the US would take hostile action against the Venezuelan government are completely baseless and without fact."

The secretary of defence, Donald Rumsfeld, said: "Our department doesn't do that kind of thing. It's against the law."

President Chávez, who was visiting Fidel Castro in Cuba yesterday, claimed earlier this year the US was plotting to



Online
For the latest internet news click here

Wheels
For the latest news and views on cars click here

Search this site

[Advanced search](#)

Recent articles

[Interview with Nick Robinson, the new BBC political editor](#)

[Lawson on TV: Comedy's greatest double act](#)

[A Canadian farce the BBC must not repeat](#)

[Opinionated journalists are short-changing electorate](#)

[How best laid plans went awry for Makosi](#)

[Fancy a Kumars curry?](#)

[US braced for The Power of Nightmares](#)

[TV review: Step back in crime](#)

[Five revenues boost RTL](#)

[Australian PM casts doubt on media ownership rethink](#)

kill him and yesterday's assassination call, coming from an ardent supporter of the Bush administration with a television audience of 7 million, was unlikely to reassure him.

"As everybody knows, the Christian right is the muscle behind the Republican party and the current Bush administration," Alfredo Toro Hardy, the Venezuelan ambassador to the UK, told the Guardian.

"Televangelist Pat Robertson is, in turn, the undoubted patriarch of the Christian right. The fact that Pat Robertson is openly calling for the assassination of President Chávez, invoking ... the supposed rights of the US over its Latin American backyard, is extremely serious and worrisome."

In his remarks, Mr Robertson called Mr Chávez a "dangerous enemy to our south, controlling a huge pool of oil, that could hurt us very badly".

He added: "This is in our sphere of influence, so we can't let this happen. We don't need another \$200bn war to get rid of one strong-arm dictator. It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert operatives do the job and then get it over with."

His spokeswoman said he was not available for interview and would not elaborate.

Mr Robertson's remarks will embarrass the Bush administration, which has insisted that Mr Chávez's fears of a US assassination plot are groundless.

The White House denied Venezuelan claims it was behind an abortive coup attempt in 2002, although CIA documents suggested US officials had some prior knowledge.

Mr Chávez, a former army colonel who was first elected as president in 1999, has long been a thorn in the Bush administration's side, mainly due to his support for Castro. He pledged to send Venezuelan troops to defend Cuba if the US ever invaded.

He has also criticised the US decision to go to war with Iraq and has branded the US a "terrorist state". This week he accused the US of being the main destabilising force in Latin America and said: "The grand destroyer of the world and the greatest threat _ is represented by US imperialism."

In February, in a broadcast to the nation, Mr Chávez accused Mr Bush of plotting to assassinate him. "If I am assassinated, there is only one person responsible: the president of the United States."

Mr Robertson, 75, founder of the Christian Coalition and a former Republican presidential candidate, has become increasingly idiosyncratic with advancing age.

Two years ago, he joked about getting rid of the state department's Washington headquarters, long suspected by the right to be a den of liberals, saying: "Maybe we need a very small nuke thrown off on Foggy Bottom to shake things up."

Last year, he declared liberal judges were a worse long-term threat than al-Qaida, arguing: "I think the gradual erosion of the consensus that's held our country together is probably more serious than a few bearded terrorists who fly into buildings."

He also believes that feminism encourages women to "kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians".

The chairman of America's National Council of Churches, Bob Edgar, said Mr Robertson's declaration was "appalling to the point of disbelief."

"It defies logic that this so-called evangelist is using his media power not to win people to faith but to encourage them to support the murder of a foreign leader."

guardian.co.uk/usa

Advertiser links

[Eastern Idaho Skiing](#)

Come and enjoy cross country and downhill skiing in Eastern...

yellowstoneteton.com

[Gliding Snowshoes](#)

Yupi Skishoes. The mountain bike of crosscountry skiing.

yupiskishoes.com

[TravelCanada.ca - Ski Vacation](#)

Explore vacation possibilities. Find vacation inspiration...

comeskicanada.com

[Printable version](#) | [Send it to a friend](#) | [Save story](#)



[Privacy policy](#) | [Terms & conditions](#) | [Advertising guide](#) | [A-Z index](#) | [About this site](#)

MediaGuardian.co.uk © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005