

Venezuela: Chavez says "Comrade" Obama more left-wing

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Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez said on Tuesday that he and Cuban ally Fidel Castro risk being more conservative than U.S. President Barack Obama as Washington prepares to take control of General Motors Corp.

During one of Chavez's customary lectures on the "curse" of capitalism and the bonanzas of socialism, the Venezuelan leader made reference to GM's bankruptcy filing, which is expected to give the U.S. government a 60 percent stake in the 100-year-old former symbol of American might.

"Hey, Obama has just nationalized nothing more and nothing less than General Motors. Comrade Obama! Fidel, careful or we are going to end up to his right," Chavez joked on a live television broadcast.

During a decade in government, Chavez has nationalized most of Venezuela's key economic sectors, including multibillion dollar oil projects, often via joint ventures with the private sector that give the state a 60 percent controlling stake.

Obama has vowed to quickly sell off General Motors once the auto giant is back on its feet, but the government will initially control the company after a \$30 billion injection of taxpayer funds.

Chavez, a vehement critic of the U.S. "empire," has toned down his rhetoric since Obama took office in January and the two men shook hands during a summit in Trinidad and Tobago in April.

(Reporting by Enrique Andres Pretel; Writing by Frank Jack Daniel, Editing by Jackie

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