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International

Belafonte Calls Bush 'Greatest Terrorist'

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AP Photo CAR102

By IAN JAMES

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CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) - The American singer and activist Harry Belafonte called President Bush "the greatest terrorist in the world" on Sunday and said millions of Americans support the socialist revolution of Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez.

Belafonte led a delegation of Americans including the actor Danny Glover and the Princeton University scholar Cornel West that met the Venezuelan president for more than six hours late Saturday. Some in the group attended Chavez's television and radio broadcast Sunday.

"No matter what the greatest tyrant in the world, the greatest terrorist in the world, George W. Bush says, we're here to tell you: Not hundreds, not thousands, but millions of the American people ... support your revolution," Belafonte told Chavez during the broadcast.

The 78-year-old Belafonte, famous for his calypso-inspired music, including the "Day-O" song, was a close collaborator of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and is now a UNICEF goodwill ambassador. He also has

been outspoken in criticizing the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

Chavez said he believes deeply in the struggle for justice by blacks, both in the U.S. and Venezuela.

“Although we may not believe it, there continues to be great discrimination here against black people,” Chavez said, urging his government to redouble its efforts to prevent discrimination.

Belafonte accused U.S. news media of falsely painting Chavez as a “dictator,” when in fact, he said, there is democracy and citizens are “optimistic about their future.”

Dolores Huerta, a pioneer of the United Farm Workers labor union also in the delegation, called the visit a “very deep experience.”

Chavez accuses Bush of trying to overthrow him, pointing to intelligence documents released by the U.S. indicating that the CIA knew beforehand that dissident officers planned a short-lived 2002 coup. The U.S. denies involvement, but Chavez says Venezuela must be on guard.

Belafonte suggested setting up a youth exchange for Venezuelans and Americans. He finished by shouting in Spanish: “Viva la revolucion!”

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