

Chavez ties Merkel to Hitler ahead of EU-Latin America summit

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has attacked German Chancellor Angela Merkel, comparing her to Adolf Hitler in response to her criticism of the South American leader's policies.

Merkel belongs to the political right, 'the same right that supported Hitler, fascism,' Chavez said on his television programme 'Alo Presidente' Sunday.

Chavez's remarks came after Merkel said that the left-wing leader is not the voice of the region.

Merkel, speaking in an interview to DPA ahead of the European Union-Latin American summit, indicated that leftist policies pursued by leaders like Chavez were not the solution.

Pointing to the emergence of 'left-wing populism' in some of the nations of Latin America, Merkel said: 'Based on our experience in Europe, I don't believe that state-guided economies can provide a better or more sustainable response to such pressing problems.'

Chavez replied that he would answer Merkel at the summit if he chooses to attend.

'Many people want you to shut up. But if I fly to Lima and I say something to her and she gets upset, she would then stand up and say 'why don't you shut up?' Why don't you shut up? Because here there is dignity,' Chavez opined, playing off a controversial moment last year that set off a diplomatic spat between Venezuela and Spain.

Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero criticized Chavez at the Iberian American Summit in November for calling his predecessor Jose Maria Aznar a 'fascist' who favoured the failed coup in Venezuela in 2002, sparking an outburst that ended with Spanish King Juan Carlos shouting, 'Why don't you shut up?' at Chavez.

On Sunday, Chavez said the region could do without empty offers of help from the US and Europe.

The Europeans 'come here to help us. Where is their plan to help the poor? Ask the president of Haiti how much promises from [Europe](#) and the United States have done,' Chavez said, stressing the region's social programmes would be carried by Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina and Brazil.

Merkel is visiting Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Mexico during her week-long trip to Latin America, the highlight of which will be her participation in the fifth EU-Latin American and Caribbean Summit (EU-LAC) to be held Friday and Saturday in Lima.

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