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Autor: Kozloff Nikolas

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Audacious, provocative, and bombastic, few world politicians are as colorful as Hugo Chávez, now making international news for his plans to nationalize U.S. owned businesses and his bold opposition to Washington's economic and trade policies. As Venezuela gains importance as the fifth largest oil exporter in the world, this firebrand leader is quickly moving to the public spotlight by uniting much of South America against the Bush administration and wielding oil as a "geopolitical weapon." To create this rich and objective portrait, Nikolas Kozloff--one of the few American journalists who has spent years in the Andean region--has profiled Chávez's top advisors, leaders of his movement, and other key figures in both Venezuela and the U.S. The result is a timely, exhaustive analysis of Chávez as a political leader, and a nuanced examination of the president moving to the center of the global stage. Includes a new afterword by the author, with insights into Chávez's reelection in relation to wider hemispheric politics.