

Anti-war meeting with President Chavez

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We started the day with another CODEPINK / Women Say No To War march through the streets. With our umbrellas, banners, Cheney and Rumsfeld masks and a fabulous mix of activists. We went the other direction this morning, towards the tents from the various countries. June, Woody and I hung the giant pink slip off the Anauco, one of the main hotels of the WSF, it faces everything, the tents and the Hilton, the other hub, it stayed up for about 6 hours. We watched as the team below snaked through the streets handing our flyers for our afternoon panel and stopping for photographs. We all arrived at the panel room just in time to begin.

Yanar Mohammad joined the panel for the first hour, we had just run into her in the streets. Yanar is the head of one of the women's groups in Iraq, she can only be there about 6 months of the year because her life is constantly threatened. It was about this time 2 years ago that we did a women's march with her in the streets of Baghdad with other women's groups. Many of the people left the panel really amazed at what they saw and heard. Cindy was of course her fabulous self and Medea wove the whole program together. The 2 hours went too quickly, with the audience wanting more we had to end and be rushed off to a meeting Medea set up with President Chavez and other anti-war activists. Tiffany had to run off in another direction and represent us at the meeting of the anti war groups and Jamie had to get 2 huge suitcases of banners, pink slips and t-shirts back to the hotel.

On the ride to the palace, Medea helped us craft an agenda for our meeting. It was interesting to watch her move the other members of the delegation off wanting to tell the stories of what is happening in their countries to what we needed Chavez to do to help boost and support the movement. We had an hour to walk around the palace and question his Chief of Staff before moving into his office for our time with him. The atmosphere at the palace was so comfortable. It is called a palace, but it feels more like a home. No one stopped me when I started wandering around the halls, no one even asked questions. At the end of one corridor I push open a door and found the counsel room I knew so well from "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised". We were well supplied with coffee the entire time, Chavez had to leave the meeting for 5 minutes to take an international call and as he left he asked for more coffee for his guests.

He was a doll. Generous, open, passionate, excited, stimulated by the requests an