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- [Alicia D. Polak](#): The post is very good. There is one comment I would like to point out and that revolves around low...
- [Hammad Siddiqui](#): The program will go on air on radio pakistan and several regional FM stations in Pakistan. It will...
- [Pakistani Drama](#): I am happy that the article besides showing the bleak picture also points to the ray of hope. The...
- [Tahira Hyder](#): good information, thanks, keep it up. There r various organizations/ associations working for women...

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June 2009

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Democracy in Venezuela

June 5th, 2009 John Zemko Posted in [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) |

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Last week, CIPE's partner in Venezuela, the Center for the Divuligation of Economic Information (CEDICE)

celebrated its [25th anniversary](#) with a true show of intellectual force. Present at their two-day celebratory event entitled: “The Latin American Challenge: Liberty, Democracy, Property Rights and Combating Poverty,” were the renowned Peruvian author, Mario Vargas Llosa, writer Alvaro Vargas Llosa, former Mexican Foreign Minister, Jorge Castañeda, former President of Bolivia, Jorge Quiroga, and many other political and intellectual luminaries from the region.

The event presented a sharp contrast to the increasing infringement of political liberties being imposed by the Venezuelan government. Venezuela’s Minister of Education shut down a CEDICE-Cato Institute educational seminar held the week before at a local university. In addition, both Mario and Alvaro Vargas Llosa were detained for several hours at the Caracas Maiquetia airport upon their arrival and were told not to speak about politics during their visit.

The government clearly felt that it must somehow respond to the ideas being presented at the CEDICE conference. President Chávez called for a four day marathon of his “Alo Presidente” television program in order to counteract the visibility of CEDICE’s event. He also conducted a parallel conference with the government’s intellectual supporters several blocks away from the CEDICE event. The press coverage of CEDICE’s event was extensive by both television and printed press. That also placed the event in stark relief to the government’s imposition of draconian media control laws, its shutting down of Radio Caracas Television (RCTV) and its current efforts to shutter the last remaining independent broadcaster in the country, Globovisión.

CEDICE should be commended on the occasion of its 25th anniversary for its many years of service in promoting democratic principles in Venezuela. This conference represented a courageous effort to keep democratic dialogue alive in the country and to maintain the important role that independent civil society institutions play in Venezuelan society.

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