CARACAS, Venezuela (Reuters) - Venezuelan lawmakers are complaining that a video game to be marketed by a U.S. company next year provides a blueprint for violently overthrowing President Hugo Chavez.

The game, "Mercenaries 2: World in Flames," simulates a military invasion of the oil-rich South American nation and will be released by Pandemic Studios of Los Angeles.

"A power-hungry tyrant messes with Venezuela's oil supply, sparking an invasion that turns the country into a war zone," Pandemic says of the game on its Web site.

Venezuelan lawmakers who back Chavez called it the latest example of a U.S. government-inspired propaganda campaign against Chavez that could even help lay the psychological groundwork for an actual invasion.

"This could be a point of departure," lawmaker Luis Tascon said on Thursday. "The United States has an impressive media machine. In that machinery the gringos are always the heroes and their adversaries are always the villains."

An executive at Pandemic said the video game would be released in 2007 but declined to comment on its content. A public relations firm representing the company did not return calls for comment.

Chavez has been locked in a war of words with Washington as he pushes his leftist agenda in Latin America, with the United States charging that the self-proclaimed revolutionary is trying to destabilize the region.

President Bush said this week he was concerned about the erosion of democracy in Venezuela. Chavez accused the White House of planning to topple him to gain access to his nation's vast oil reserves.

Last week Venezuela, the world's No. 5 oil exporter, staged a mock invasion complete
with naval landing craft and camouflaged tanks to train military troops and communities to defend against an attack.

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