

Britain's Foreign Policy Meddling in Venezuela, Supportive of Washington's Aggressive Stance

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Region: [Europe](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Intelligence](#)

A wide-scale Washington-driven aggression against Venezuela is underway, imperialist and anti-democratic at its core, and it has the full backing of the British government. British meddling in Venezuela is packaged in human rights and democracy rhetoric, the same way it was in aggressions against Iraq, Libya and Syria, but behind it the real agenda is not hard to spot.

The British Foreign Office funds the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), a British government think tank, 'dedicated to supporting democracy around the world' to work inside the Venezuelan parliament. The WFD claims it works to support the National Assembly's 'Modernisation Committee,' and paints a picture of being unbiased, democratic and disinterested in party ideology

"...Westminster Foundation for Democracy works with all political parties on the National Modernisation Committee in the National Assembly of Venezuela and the parliamentary staff that support it."

However, the Modernisation Committee, is made up of members from the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), a coalition of members from right-wing [opposition parties](#). The MUD was created to challenge the Chavez government and the Bolivarian revolution. It consists of First Justice, whose leader, Julio Borges, is living in self-exile in Colombia under the protection of the right-wing government of Ivan Duque, and is [accused](#) of authoring the assassination attempt on President Maduro in August last year. It consists also of the far-right Popular Will party that has seen various members of its leadership [arrested](#) or [self-exiled](#), accused of acts of terrorism carried out during violent protests against the government. These are the parties assisted by the UK Foreign Office in Venezuela, deliberately engaged because they aim not just to undermine, but overthrow the Venezuelan government. To explain its operations in the Venezuelan parliament, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy insinuates it is there to help mend the rift between the Venezuelan government and the people

"Following the 2015 Parliamentary elections in Venezuela, political polarisation increased and led to a deadlock that has eroded the public's trust in politics during a time of deep economic crisis, hyperinflation and episodes of violence against the civil population."

It then encourages the notion that it is working in collaboration with the government by claiming to work with all sides of the 'political divide'

WFD works on a cross-party basis, seeking to engage all sides of the political divide while supporting democratic institutions in the country.

The WFD claims to do this in a number of ways

“...legislation, inclusion, representation, public budget, oversight and parliamentary administration. Implementation of recommendations for each area is currently underway.”

This would suggest that the elected government, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), accused by the Foreign Office of violent repressive activity against its own people, and a target of UK [sanctions](#), has invited the Foreign Office into its heart to help produce its own legislation.

A look through the [legislation by the National Assembly](#) shows how unlikely this is. The National Assembly systematically and methodically produces documentation to attack the Maduro government almost on a weekly basis. This is because the National Assembly is in most part, made up of opposition seats won in the 2015 parliamentary elections. Since 2016 it has had little power as it has been held in [contempt of court](#) for swearing in legislators under investigation for voter fraud. A political gridlock followed, which resulted in Maduro invoking a [Constituent Assembly](#) in 2017 to produce a functioning legislative body, and a new constitution. He did this in accordance with the 1999 [Constitution](#), announcing it would resolve violent anti-government protests by [unifying all sections](#) of society. The opposition then [boycotted](#) the elections, claiming the invoking of a Constituent Assembly was illegal, despite advocating for one in [2014](#). The opposition incited [violent protests at polls](#) during which a number of people died, including an election candidate. Delegates were voted in and the Constituent Assembly was formed in what has been described by some as the mobilising of the population against [rising fascism](#).

Therefore, the narrative that the British Foreign Office is supporting the Venezuelan government in mending rifts with its own people through legislation, or any other activity within the Venezuelan National Assembly, does not hold water. It is more likely that the Foreign Office is working to enable right-wing parties and fascists to overthrow the Venezuelan government. It is not known to what extent National Assembly documentation content is influenced by the Foreign Office, but a collaboration with such authors of anti-Maduro publications is a useful tool.

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy’s credibility that it is helping to re-establish the trust between the Venezuelan government and its people, is dependent on the narrative that Venezuela has a failing democracy with corrupt elections. To this end, the UK government has continued to [discredit elections](#) in Venezuela, backed by British [mainstream media](#) to drive the ‘rigged’ narrative, despite recognition by international inspecting bodies of [fair and proper electoral practice](#). It has used this narrative as a pretext to further destabilise the country through sanctions, in alliance with the [EU](#) and the [Trump administration](#), all stakeholders in a regime change in Venezuela.

To validate its role, Westminster Foundation for Democracy uses academic ‘experts on democracy’ to produce [strategy](#) frameworks for ‘fragile countries’ such as Venezuela. Rubber-stamping with Oxbridge insignia continues to be a practice for manufacturing approval for government intervention, whether it is through the self-promoting antics of

theorists selling strategy for commercial reasons or the co-opting of the impressionable and idealistic young onto the fake human rights platforms of the British government and its US ally as they deliver democracy overseas. Such was the purpose of the visit by Luis Almagro, head of the Organisation of American States (OAS), to Oxford University last year.

President Nicolás Maduro is rigging an election in Venezuela. The BBC headline tells us that he “won”. Find out how to pull off this neat trick here, courtesy of [@ForeignPolicy](#) and our new book [#howtoriganelection](#) pic.twitter.com/4PJusDlf8Q

— Prof Nic Cheeseman (@Fromagehomme) [May 21, 2018](#)

Grateful for the invitation to [@UniofOxford](#). Yesterday I had an insightful and engaging conversation with the faculty and students of the LatAm and Caribbean on the role of the [@OAS_official](#) in the ongoing political crises in the region. pic.twitter.com/ktTWVoLohG

— Luis Almagro (@Almagro_OEA2015) [October 9, 2018](#)

The [OAS](#) is heavily funded by the US and is considered by the Venezuelan government to be a mouthpiece for Washington. The head of the OAS, Luis Almagro, is vehemently opposed to the Maduro government, and has supported US and EU sanctions. He has also given his support for a [military coup](#) in Venezuela.

But the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and establishment academic strategists are just a small part of the multimillion-pound military, business and intelligence machine that ‘innovates’ for democracy in Venezuela, much of which is connected through Chatham House.

It is the [Sister institute](#) to the influential US foreign policy think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), where America’s imperialists and militarists network, and many US foreign policies are grown. Chatham House has its own imperialists and receives funds from the British Foreign Office, the Home Office, the Department of International Development, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence, demonstrating its value as a think tank tool for policymaking and intelligence matters.

Chatham House and the CFR attract the same calibre of imperialist. While [Richard Haass](#) was advising Colin Powell going to war on Iraq in 2003, British chief advisor [David Manning](#) was doing the same for Tony Blair. Haass went on to become director of CFR while Manning is a senior advisor at Chatham House. But as well as being a natural home for regime change strategists, these think tanks are where the oil, gas and weapons industries network, as [David Manning’s comments](#) to Condoleezza Rice three months before the invasion of Iraq show

“It would be inappropriate for HMG [Her Majesty’s government] to enter into discussions about any future carve-up of the Iraqi oil industry. Nonetheless it is essential that our [British] companies are given access to a level playing field

in this and other sectors.”

Manning went on to become a director of the weapons manufacturer [Lockheed Martin](#), that profited from the Iraq war. He also became the director of BG oil, taken over by Shell in 2016 in a [multibillion-pound deal](#).

Ever better relations with Argentina and spoke today at Chatham House along with their Foreign Minister [@jorgefaurie](#). Also Venezuela is collapsing, regional action desperately needed. <https://t.co/iLCX4WgiZ8>

— Sir Alan Duncan MP (@AlanDuncanMP) [October 25, 2018](#)

Tory MP Alan Duncan, who spoke at a closed meeting at Chatham House on Venezuela in October 2018, is another regime change tactician. For years Duncan worked as a consultant in oil, with links to Vitol, a corporate member of Chatham House. In 2011 Duncan’s oil contacts became useful in the overthrow of Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, when Duncan was Minister for the Department of International Development (DfID). The [Guardian](#) reported

“The government has admitted that the international development minister, Alan Duncan, took part in meetings between officials operating a Whitehall cell to control the Libyan oil market and Vitol – a company for which Duncan has previously acted as a consultant.”

“The “Libyan oil cell” involved a group of officials working in the Foreign Office since May waging a quiet campaign against Muammar Gaddafi’s regime by controlling the flow of oil in the country.”

[Interviewed](#) in 2016 at a House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry on [how the UK invasion led to a failed Libyan state](#), Duncan distanced himself from the operations in Libya and diminished his role. There was no mention of his involvement with a cell [engineering passage of oil to jihadists](#), and the misery inflicted by the UK government on Libya was put down to staffing issues at the Home Office and tribal wars, NATO’s [military adventurism and funding of Islamist groups vying for power](#) forgotten. However, in 2011 the [Telegraph](#) described the transport of oil to jihadist ‘rebels’ as ‘vital’

“Supplies of diesel, petrol and fuel kept creaking power stations under rebel control from grinding to a halt and ultimately proved vital to efforts to overthrow Gaddafi. The trade was even more audacious because the rebels had no means of paying up front so Vitol agreed to provide it on credit.”

This suggests that Duncan’s role in regime change in Libya was more significant than suggested in the inquiry. Now, as Minister for the Americas, Duncan has turned his attention to Venezuela. Vitol, meanwhile, under the chairmanship of Ian Taylor, Duncan’s friend and [Tory](#) sponsor, has been named in [corruption cases in Venezuela](#) and [Brazil](#).

Through his Chatham House [speech](#), Duncan has indicated his allegiances to oil networks remain firm, music to the ears of Shell Oil, [looking to resolve its current problems](#) in Venezuela

“We cannot talk about Venezuela without understanding the central role played by oil since the early 20th Century, I speak as a former oil trader myself.”

“The revival of the oil industry will be an essential element in any recovery, and I can imagine that British companies like Shell and BP, will want to be part of it.”

His comments take us back to the rape of Libya, but also to the planned carving up of Iraq. It is clear that Duncan would reprise his role; he has the connections, the resources, the knowledge and the experience in how to use oil networks to overthrow governments. He has the British mainstream press behind him, as it was behind Cameron for the NATO bombing of Libya, providing fake human rights abuse narratives as shown in the Parliamentary inquiry report.

Duncan’s comments on sanctions against Venezuela make it clear that the UK will stick to this same strategy, as used in [Iraq](#) and [Syria](#), where the catastrophic effects from sanctions have been seen. No end of suffering through sanctions will deter the British government from its geopolitical goals. It has shown its commitment to back Washington’s goal to overthrow Maduro and destroy the Bolivarian revolution. The UK’s [refusal to return Venezuela’s gold](#), held at the Bank of England, a much-needed resource for the struggling Venezuelan economy, is further proof.

Meanwhile, unlike most concerned that a far-right president has come to power in Brazil, Duncan, so concerned about democracy in Venezuela, has welcomed Bolsonaro. In a recent meeting at the [House of Commons](#), Duncan, in his role as Minister for the Americas, was asked

“What assessment he has made of potential risks to (a) democratic institutions, (b) the rule of law, (c) freedom of the press and (d) human rights in Brazil as a result of the election of Jair Bolsonaro as that country’s President.”

In answer, Duncan had seen no reason to make assessments

“Brazil is Latin America’s largest democracy. It has strong institutions to guarantee the rule of law, freedom of the press and human rights with the clear separation of powers protected by the constitution. This has not been changed by the election of Jair Bolsonaro. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.”

Met this morning with Latin American Ambassadors and Canadian High Commissioner. Followed by meeting with new Brazilian Ambassador. Broadly like-minded on the unfolding political and economic disaster in Venezuela. pic.twitter.com/5pvl28Uva0

— Sir Alan Duncan MP (@AlanDuncanMP) [October 18, 2018](#)

Duncan is likely to be engineering an alliance with Bolsonaro’s government, far-right ideology overlooked, with the aim of regime change in Venezuela.

As well as pushing sanctions, and pursuing diplomatic alliances, Duncan has also promoted the Lima Group as a mechanism for regional intervention. The Lima Group was created with the sole purpose of [attacking](#) the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly and is made up of a coalition of Washington's Latin American allies. It is a US asset with no legitimacy for interfering in the internal politics of an individual sovereign nation

"We are fully behind the Lima Group of countries in their efforts to seek a regional solution to the crisis."

This is a strategy also promoted by Washinton via the [CFR](#)

"...there are some efforts the United States could make in a supporting role to the Lima Group. Colombia has called for a reconstruction plan for Venezuela; the United States should encourage a Latin American conference to develop that plan with clear U.S. commitments."

Ironically, the recent spotlight on Duncan over FO funding of the Integrity Initiative designed to '[counter Russian disinformation](#)' reveals the hypocrisy and fake agenda of the British government, that works to overthrow democratically elected governments while claiming it will not tolerate political interference on its own territory. Were the Venezuelan government to fund activities inside Westminster aimed at overthrowing Theresa May's government, it would be viewed with outrage. Yet the Foreign Office appears entitled in its plotting against Venezuela's elected government. This same culture of entitlement is apparent in the Integrity Initiative operations, where the [discrediting](#) of the democratically elected leader of British government opposition, is designed to undermine his threat to the British establishment. These growing and more frequent attacks on democracy by Britain's elite, expose a self-serving class and network who think they can carve up and profit from whatever group, land, or resource they feel entitled to, whatever the cost to any population, whether at home or in Venezuela.

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