

Media Reports “Good News”: Kids Are Dying in Venezuela, Sanctions are Working...

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The Guardian's Tom Phillips' article Venezuela Crisis Takes Deadly Toll on Buckling Health System (January 06, 2019) is more good news for US psychopaths, such as Trump, Bolton and Pompeo. Children are dying in Venezuela. Sanctions are working!

Tom is becoming the Luke Harding of Venezuela. Luke...err, Tom blames all of Venezuela's problems on president Nicolas Maduro. Tom has piled on, repeating the Washington Consensus vilifying Maduro.....that is what “repeaters” do.

If Maduro is illegally and violently removed from office, what will come after? Probably chaos, since there is no united opposition. Chaos is what the US desires, because chaos gives the US an excuse for interventions. A dysfunctional opposition then gives the US the power to be the kingmaker. The US has a self-proclaimed “right” to intervene anywhere, anytime in Latin America, according to the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, and the 1904 “Big Stick” Roosevelt corollary.

As a rule, US doctrines do not become international laws, and instead usually violate international law. Doctrines are just a “wish-list” of US foreign policy. The main US foreign policy objective is to promote US corporate exploitation of foreign countries.

If the US gets its way in Venezuela, then Venezuela will be ruled by oligarchs, dictators or the military—or a confabulation of the three natural allies. The Venezuelan people overwhelmingly rejected the 40-years of oligarchy, when they elected Hugo Chavez in 1998. Chavez ran for election on a socialist platform. The US has been trying to overthrow Chavez's socialist movement from the first moment Chavez took office.

In 2002 Bush backed a failed coup. Trump and his cronies have been planning another coup.

This just in from Tom Phillips January 11th: Juan Guaido of the opposition is calling for an international intervention and a military coup. An illegal violent regime change is very likely soon.

After Chavez died of cancer at the age of 58 in 2013, his vice president Nicolás Maduro constitutionally assumed his office. Maduro has been struggling to continue Chavez's socialist programs for the poor. Maduro is no Chavez, but he is trying to carry on Chavez's legacy. Maduro was reelected to his second term in 2018.

Maduro faces many economic problems, much of them stemming from the collapsing international oil price in 2015. There are good reasons to believe that the collapse in oil prices was a US-Saudi conspiracy, since the economic victims were Russia and Venezuela, two of the countries the US is trying to regime change. Oil is 95% of Venezuela's revenue

from exports, and 25% of its GDP.

The other major problem for Maduro is that on top of collapsing oil prices the US imposed crushing economic sanctions. Tom's article unwittingly exposes the lie that the sanctions were targeted, and not intended as collective punishment of the people. Children are dying! Instead of using dead children as propaganda props, economic sanctions should be immediately suspended, and foreign aid sent to save the lives of these innocent victims. Tom did not mention that in the article. All he had for the dead children was crocodile tears.

The US is stomping on Venezuela's neck, trying to kill socialism. And vengefully killing Venezuelan kids. (Just a few weeks ago, Pompeo mocked Iran, saying"if you want your people to eat"). The US is stomping its boot on the neck of socialism throughout Latin America, after years of a "pink tide" of elected progressive governments. It is working, as progressive governments in Latin America are becoming extinct.

Critics of Chavez and Maduro claim that socialism never works. It worked just fine under Chavez, as people were lifted out of poverty. Inequality declined dramatically. Critics blame Chavez and now Maduro for "overspending" on the poor.

As the US rebounds from one economic crisis to another, one bank bailout to the next, it is obvious to those that can see: Capitalism does not work. The US with its hyper-neoliberalism is 25th on the UN Human Development Index, adjusted for inequality. The US has its own healthcare crisis of 45,000 people dying every year because they cannot afford healthcare. Many of them children, Tom!

Sad how the critics never blame a country's economic problems on over spending for US weapons, concentration of wealth in a few wealthy families, or austerity for the people because of crooked debt-imposed austerity by the IMF. The poor are expendable for oligarchs North and South. US healthcare and needed infrastructure suffer from overspending on the military and wars.

Socialism, even a democratic one is a dirty word to the US, because socialist governments use their country's natural resources, and state-owned enterprises for the benefit of the people. US corporations want those resources, privatized state-owned enterprises, and to have poor people as a source of cheap labor. The driver of US foreign policy is what corporations want.

US foreign policy and US corporate exploitation in Latin America increases poverty there. The poor and indigenous people have their land stolen out from under them, and paramilitary death squads enforce their removal. Large land owners, resource corporations and monocrop plantations for export move in, often they are US corporations.



US welcoming committee for asylum seekers on the southern border. (Photo by the White House)

Unfair trade agreements allow the import of cheap US agricultural products. Cheap agricultural products, such as corn, is highly subsidized by US taxpayers, corporate welfare to agribusiness. Indigenous small farmers cannot compete with the dumped US imports. They are driven out of business and off their farms. With nowhere else to go, the poor and dispossessed migrate to the city where they are exploited as wage-slaves. Because the poor are vulnerable, they are easy targets for extortion from criminal gangs.....while corrupt police look the other way.

Ironically, the poor fleeing for their lives, seeking protection and an opportunity to earn a subsistence wage head in the direction of their abuser.....to the USA. That is why the US is experiencing a sharp increase in people from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador seeking political asylum.

Trump and his xenophobic racist supporters want the US to turn asylum seekers away. They want the US to be a “gated community”, as Trump put it. When other countries such as Venezuela want to be a “gated community” and keep out US corporations and unfair trade from exploiting them, then the US sends in the jackals.

In the old days the US “opened” foreign “gated communities” with gunboats, and admitted that the purpose was commercial interests. At one time or another, over the past 200 years the US has invaded almost every Latin American and Caribbean country; some of them multiple times. US invasions haven’t been for democracy. They have been for commercial reasons, and the source of wealth for those that became elite families.



William Allen Rogers's 1904 cartoon recreates the Big Stick Diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt as an episode in Gulliver's Travels.....(Wikipedia)

Today foreign holdouts from the neoliberal Washington Consensus are “opened” by the CIA, Special Forces, mercenaries, terrorists, local collaborators, the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, and other government-private NGOs. NGOs do overtly what the CIA used to do covertly to sow discontent, opposition and violence.

The US uses psychological warfare and propaganda to “open” closed foreign countries. The US uses threats, bribes, political isolation, economic sanctions and the constant reminder that “all options are on the table”. The mainstream media, such as the Guardian (British, but very much part of this fetid media conspiracy) are complicit by keeping up a steady drumbeat of propaganda.

The US always presents its aggression as being out of concern for democracy, human rights, or because the US is being threatened by some small country, like Cuba, Bolivia, or Venezuela. Absurdity and blatant cowardice do not exist in the minds of US policymakers or their media stenographers: The US multforce attack on puny Grenada (with a population smaller than a single neighborhood in Brooklyn, and with no actual armed forces of any kind) was hailed as a victory for US arms, and made into a “hero” movie by Clint Eastwood.—Ed) And quite typically, Pompeo just gave a delusional lying speech in Cairo that the US is a force for good, and he praised the bloody military-coup dictator Sisi. Mentioning commercial interests, greedy banks and the military-industrial-complex is considered uncouth, even though it is the truth behind US foreign policy.

The mainstream media is a vital player and collaborator in preparing the domestic audience for US wars of aggression, interventions, and regime changes. Mockingbirds, such as Tom Phillips, members of a compliant media, can only be described charitably as “useful idiots”

in advancing the US agenda, when not outright hidden collaborators. The mainstream media such as the Guardian creates a circus-like atmosphere of a crisis. They sell the public that “something has to be done”.

After a US invasion the mainstream media again provides the cover story. When all the lies come out as they did about the Iraq War, then the media sticks its head in the sand and denies any responsibility. But in all cases, when the media acts as a propagandist for war, then they have blood on their hands too. They are first-degree accomplices to grave international crimes for which people were hanged under Nuremberg tribunal statutes.

US imperialism, neocolonialism, resource exploitation, imposed austerity, unfair trade, and the US monopolizing of the international financial system have destroyed millions of people’s lives. Trump says he does not hate US victims. Like a lot of US Americans, he just does not care. The US has no empathy for its victims, but cries crocodile tears for the alleged victims of US enemies. It is the syndrome that Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky referred to as “Worthy and Unworthy Victims”.

As Paul Jay of The Real News Network put it, for Donald Trump, Chuck Schumer, and Tony Soprano, the US is like the mafia: “it’s not personal, it’s just business”.

The Guardian used to challenge the Washington Consensus. It used to inform, instead of misinform. As the Guardian was publishing the Snowden Files the GCHQ cracked down. They smashed the Guardian’s computers, as well as freedom of the press. The Guardian said it obliged as a symbolic act. The “symbolic act” was the Guardian caving in to the GCHQ. Afterwards there was an exodus of many courageous editors and real journalists from the Guardian. This vile act—which the rest of the media did nothing to rescind—happened in a nation that has long boasted of being one of the world’s most stable democracies. The “new” Guardian is not just a pale version of its former progressive self; it is a toxic zombie bent in most cases to do the bidding of the empire.

Tom Phillips is the Guardian’s Latin America mockingbird for Washington’s neocons who are trying to destroy Venezuela, and stamp out socialism in Latin America. It is not a question of pro-Maduro or against-Maduro. It is about the integrity and professionalism of journalism.

Tom Phillips, Luke Harding and the Guardian are enablers of US regime change projects, from Russia, Iran, and North Korea to Venezuela. They have abandoned their responsibility to the public and freedom. Tom’s anti-Maduro articles are appearing almost daily. Here is another one on January 9th: Venezuela’s Neighbours Turn Up Heat as Nicolás Maduro Begins Second Term; (the Guardian left out the adjective “rightwing” and “murderous” in neighbours).

Anyway, in Tom’s “unfriendly neighbours” article he quotes generously from the rightwing Lima Group. The Lima Group was formed in 2017 for the specific purpose of ousting Maduro and socialism. Washington’s fingerprints are all over the Lima Group. As Tom repeated, the Lima Group voted on January 4th to put crushing regional sanctions on Venezuela.....more children will die.....and declared Maduro’s democratic election illegitimate.

Before the Lima Group voted, which the US is not a member of, the CIA directo...err, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave a video presentation to the group. Pompeo’s message of “carrots” for those voting correctly, and “sticks” for those voting incorrectly was clear.

How shameful to see the US bully its tiny neighbors, and watch them humiliate themselves.

The Lima Group's members are **Argentina, Brazil, Canada (?), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru**. Most of the members of the Lima Group are disqualified from judging anybody else, because of their own miserable records on democracy and human rights. Most of the members of the group are rightwing governments. Leftwing governments were left out purposely, except by accident. Canada should not even be a member. The Lima Group is for the most part mafia states, and they are doing the enforcement work for their USA godfather.

The US has 79 military bases in Latin America. The supposed purpose of these US bases in Latin America is to counter the threats of:

"Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia; the struggle against drug trafficking; regional and transnational criminal networks; the greater presence of China, Russia, and Iran in Latin America and the Caribbean; disaster response (remember the "aid" given Haiti after the earthquake); as well as the role assigned to security forces in every country in terms of internal, regional, and international order."

What a bunch of crapola. Tiny Cuba with 10 million people is a threat? Venezuela with a military budget of \$6 billion is a threat? Bolivia with 11 million people, a military budget of \$659 million, and its mild-mannered president Evo Morales, the first Indigenous Native president.....he is a threat? The aid to Haiti that went into the Clinton Foundation, and never reached the people? Ridiculous!

As with all US foreign policy, the real reason for US military foreign bases is to promote the interests of US corporations, prop up global neoliberalism. As General Smedley Butler said in his little classic, "War is a Racket":

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903.....Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints."

In the 100 years since Butler's book was written, nothing has changed about US foreign policy and US interventions. It is still a money-making racket for the rich, corporations, banks, oligarchs, and their servants. Nothing has changed (if anything, it's gotten worse) because its true fountainhead, the dynamics and culture of capitalism, remain at the helm of the American nation.

The Lima Group, Tom Phillips, and the Guardian are the servants of warmongers that Butler wrote about. They scramble for the crumbs of war profiteers. They eat well enough, if they can stomach the taste of blood.

With the exception of Costa Rica's center-left Carlos Alvarado Quesada and Mexico's

historically elected left-wing Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (known affectionately as AMLO), the members of the Lima Group are Washington stooges, right-wing governments, and dictatorships. Canada shouldn't even be in the group, much less vote, because of its extensive, environmentally destructive, and exploitative mining activities in Latin America. Not to mention that Canada by no stretch of the imagination can qualify as "Latin American." Period.

Mexico was the only country to vote not to go along with the Washington consensus of the Lima Group. He sided with the international principles of non-intervention, sovereignty, self-determination, and respect for the internal affairs of other countries.

Lopez Obrador is courageous. It is up to the Venezuelan people to determine their own destiny without illegal economic sanctions, threats and subversion by outsiders. Obrador also stood up to Trump on the humanitarian crisis that the US has created on the US southern border.

Obrador is calling on the US for "reparations" (i.e. US investment) to make amends for its neoliberal-neocon exploitation and invasions. US exploitation has been a driver of poverty in Central America. Obrador has hinted that if the US will not invest to create jobs in Central America, then he might turn to the Chinese. Obrador's "bad behavior" is pushing the US envelope. We should all cheer and pray for him, because he is putting himself in the crosshairs of Washington's jackals.

As for Tom Phillips, his articles further shred his integrity and credibility. His article on "Venezuela's neighbours" mostly just quoted the Lima Group. In other words, Tom is a stenographer, and the Guardian regurgitates it.

The US purposely creates chaos and crisis as an excuse for intervention. That is what the US is doing to Venezuela. US regime change artists and their mockingbirds in the media never consider what might come after. They really don't care about the people, except as props for regime change. If and when Maduro's socialist government falls, then Venezuela will be turned over to rightwing oligarchs, whom will do Washington's bidding.

Venezuelans can then say "Hello" to neoliberalism, privatization, ExxonMobil, austerity, and neglected social programs. And, "Good-bye" to state-owned enterprises, universal healthcare, free education, and a voice speaking up for the poor.

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Featured image: Chávez with fellow South American presidents Néstor Kirchner of Argentina and Lula

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