

Obama's War in the Western Hemisphere and Venezuela's National Liberation Struggle

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Why did Obama declare a 'national emergency', claim that Venezuela represents a threat to US national security and foreign policy, assume executive prerogatives and decree sanctions against top Venezuelan officials in charge of national security, at this time?

Venezuela's Support of Latin America Integration is Obama's Great Fear

To answer this question it is essential to begin by addressing Obama's specious and unsubstantiated charges of a Venezuelan '*threat to national security and foreign policy*'.

First, the White House presents no evidence . . . because there is nothing to present! There are no Venezuelan missiles, fighter planes, warships, Special Forces, secret agents or military bases poised to attack US domestic facilities or its overseas installations.

In contrast, the US has warships in the Caribbean, seven military bases just across the border in Colombia manned by over two thousand US Special Forces, and Air Force bases in Central America. Washington has financed proxy political and military operations intervening in Venezuela with intent of overthrowing the legally constituted and elected government.

Obama's claims resemble a ploy that totalitarian and imperialist rulers frequently use: Accusing their imminent victims of the crimes they are preparing to perpetrate against them. No country or leader, friend or foe, has supported Obama's accusations against Venezuela.

Obama's charge that Venezuela represents a '*threat*' to US foreign policy requires clarification: First, which elements of US foreign policy are *threatened*? Venezuela has successfully proposed and supported several regional integration organizations, which are voluntarily supported by their fellow Latin American and Caribbean members. These regional organizations, in large part, replace US-dominated structures, which served Washington's imperial interests. In other words, Venezuela supports alternative diplomatic and economic organizations, which its members believe will better serve *their economic and political interests*, than those promoted by the Obama regime. Petrocaribe, a Central American and Caribbean association of countries supported by Venezuela, addresses the development needs of their members better than US-dominated organizations like the Organization of American States or the so-called '*Caribbean Initiative*'. The same is true of Venezuela's support of CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations). These are Latin American organizations which exclude the dominating presence of the US and Canada and are designed to promote greater regional independence.

Obama's charge that Venezuela represents a *threat to US foreign policy* is an accusation directed at all governments who have freely chosen to abandon US-centered organizations and who reject US hegemony.

In other words, what arouses Obama's ire and motivates his aggressive threats toward Venezuela is Caracas's political leadership in challenging US imperialist foreign policy.

Venezuela does not have military bases in the rest of Latin America nor has it invaded, occupied or sponsored military coups in other Latin American countries – as Obama and his predecessors have done.

Venezuela condemned the US invasion of Haiti, the US-supported military coups in Honduras (2009), Venezuela (2002, 2014, 2015), Bolivia (2008) and Ecuador (2010).

Clearly, Obama's 'emergency' decree and sanctions against Venezuela are directed at maintaining unchallenged US imperial supremacy in Latin America and degrading Venezuela's independent, democratic foreign policy.

To properly understand Obama's policy toward Venezuela, we have to analyze why he has chosen overt, unilateral bellicose threats at this time?

Obama's War Threat Results from Political Failure

The principal reasons why Obama has directly intervened in Venezuelan politics is that his other policy options designed to oust the Maduro government have failed.

In 2013, Obama's relied on US financing of an opposition presidential candidate, Henrique Capriles, to oust the incumbent Chavista government. President Maduro defeated Obama's choice and derailed Washington's '*via electoral*' to regime change.

Subsequently, Obama attempted to boycott and discredit the Venezuelan voting process via an international smear campaign. The White House boycott lasted 6 months and received no support in Latin America, or from the European Union, since scores of international election observers, ranging from former President James Carter to representatives of the Organization of American States certified the outcome.

In 2014, the Obama regime backed violent large-scale riots, which left 43 persons dead and scores wounded, (most victims were pro-government civilians and law enforcement officers) and millions of dollars in damages to public and private property, including power plants and clinics. Scores of vandals and rightwing terrorists were arrested, including Harvard-educated terrorist Leopoldo Lopez. However, the Maduro government released most of the saboteurs in a gesture of reconciliation.

Obama, on his part, escalated the terror campaign of internal violence. He recycled his operatives and, in February 2015, backed a new coup. Several US embassy personnel (the US had at least 100 stationed in their embassy), turned out to be intelligence operatives using diplomatic cover to infiltrate and recruit a dozen Venezuelan military officials to plot the overthrow of the elected government and assassinate President Maduro by bombing the presidential palace.

President Maduro and his national security team discovered the coup plot and arrested both

the military and political leaders, including the Mayor of Caracas.

Obama, now furious for having lost major internal assets and proxies, turned to his last resort: the threat of a direct US military intervention.

The Multiple Purposes of Obama's 'National Emergency'

Obama's declaration of a national security emergency has psychological, political and military objectives. His bellicose posture was designed to bolster the spirit of his jailed and demoralized operatives and let them know that they still have US support. To that end, Obama demanded that President Maduro free the terrorist leaders. Washington's sanctions were primarily directed against the Venezuelan security officials who upheld the constitution and arrested Obama's hired thugs. The terrorists in their prison cells can console themselves with the thought that, while they serve 'hard time' for being US shock troops and puppets, their prosecutors will be denied visas by President Obama and can no longer visit Disney Land or shop in Miami... Such are the consequences of the current US 'sanctions' in the eyes of a highly critical Latin America.

The second goal of Obama's threat is to test the response of the Venezuelan and Latin American governments. The Pentagon and CIA seek to gauge how Venezuela's military, intelligence and civilian leaders will deal with this new challenge in order to identify the weak links in the chain of command, i.e. those officials who will run for cover, cower or seek to conciliate, by giving in to Obama's demands.

It should be remembered that during the US-backed April 2002 coup, many self-styled '*Chavista revolutionaries*' went into hiding, some holing up in embassies. In addition, several military officials defected and a dozen politicians curried favor with the coup leaders, until the tide turned and over a million ordinary Venezuelans, including slum dwellers, marched to surround the Presidential Palace and, with the backing of loyalist paratroopers, ousted the *golpistas* (coup-makers) and freed *their President Chavez*. Only then did the *fair-weather* Chavistas come out from under their beds to celebrate the restoration of Hugo Chavez and the return of democracy.

In other words, Obama's bellicose posture is part of a '*war of nerves*', to test the resistance, determination and loyalty of the government officials, when their positions are threatened, US bank accounts are frozen, their visas denied and access to 'Disney Land' cut.

Obama is putting the Venezuelan government on notice: a warning this time, an invasion next time.

The White House's openly thuggish rhetoric is also intended to test the degree of opposition in Latin America - and *the kind of support Washington can expect in Latin America* and elsewhere.

And Cuba responded forcefully with unconditional support for Venezuela. Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Argentina repudiated Obama's imperial threats. The European Union did not adopt the US sanctions although the European Parliament did echo Obama's demand to free the jailed terrorists. Initially Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Mexico neither backed the US nor the Venezuelan government. The Uruguayan Vice President Raul Sendic was the only official in Latin America to deny US intervention. However, on March 16 at an emergency meeting of UNASUR in Quito Ecuador, the foreign ministers of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia,

Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela unanimously denounced US sanctions and military intervention

President Maduro Stands Firm: They Shall Not Pass

Most important, President Maduro stood firm. He declared a national emergency and asked for special powers. He called for 2 weeks of nationwide military exercises involving 100,000 soldiers beginning March 14. He made it clear to the Pentagon and the White House that a US invasion would meet resistance. That confronting millions of Venezuelan freedom fighters would not be a 'cake walk' - that there would be US casualties, body bags and new US widows and orphans to mourn Obama's imperial schemes.

Conclusion

Obama is neither preparing an immediate invasion nor giving up on 'regime change' because his coup operatives failed in two consecutive years. His militarist posture is designed to polarize Latin America: to divide and weaken the regional organizations; to separate the so-called 'moderates' in Mercosur (Brazil/Uruguay/Paraguay) from Venezuela and Argentina. Despite his failures thus far, Obama will press ahead to activate opposition to Venezuelan security policies among the Chilean, Peruvian, Mexican, and Colombian neo-liberal regimes.

Washington is building pressure *externally* and preparing for a new round of violent unrest *internally* to provoke a robust government response.

In other words - Obama's military invasion will follow the well-rehearsed scenario of 'humanitarian intervention' orchestrated in Yugoslavia, Libya and Syria - with such disastrous consequences on the people of those countries. Obama, at this time, lacks international political support from Europe and Latin America that would provide the *fig leaf of a multilateral coalition* and has lost his key internal operatives. He cannot risk a bloody unilateral US invasion and prolonged war in the immediate future.

However, he is inexorably moving in that direction. Obama has seized executive prerogatives to attack Venezuela. He has alerted and mobilized US combat forces in the region. He understands that his current teams of operatives in Venezuela have demonstrated that they are incapable of winning elections or seizing power without major US military backing. Obama is now engaged in a psychological as well as physical war of nerves: to run down the Venezuelan economy, to intimidate the faint-hearted, and exhaust and weaken the militants through constant threats and widening sanctions over time.

The Venezuelan government of Nicolas Maduro has accepted the challenge. He is mobilizing the people and the armed forces: his democratically elected regime will not surrender. The national resistance will be fighting in their own country for their own future. They will be fighting an invading imperial power. They represent millions, and they have a 'world to lose' if the '*squalidos*' (the domestic fifth column) should ever take power: if not their lives, their livelihoods, their dignity and their legacy as a free and independent people.

Epilogue

President Maduro has sought and secured Russian military support and solidarity in the form of arms, advisors and an agreement to engage in joint military maneuvers to meet the challenges of Obama's war of attrition...President Putin has addressed a public letter of

support to the Venezuelan government in response to Obama's threats.

Obama is engaged in a two-pronged economic and military strategy, which will converge with a US military invasion.

The overt military threats issued in early March 2015 are designed to force the Maduro government to divert large-scale financial resources away from meeting the economic crisis to building emergency military defense. Through escalating military and economic threats, the White House hopes to diminish government subsidies for the import of basic foodstuffs and other essential commodities during an internal campaign of hoarding and artificial shortages committed by economic saboteurs. Obama is counting on his Venezuelan proxies and the local and international mass media to blame the government for the economic deterioration and to mobilize the big protests of irate consumers. White House strategists hope a massive crowd will serve as a cover for terrorists and snipers to engage in violent acts against public authorities, provoking the police and armed forces to respond in a replay of the 'coup' in Kiev. At that point, Washington will seek to secure some form of support from Europe or Latin America (via the OAS) to intervene with troops in what the State Department will dub as 'peace mediators in a humanitarian crisis'.

The success of sending in the US Marines into Venezuela on a *peace mission* will depend on how effective Special Forces and Pentagon operatives in the US Embassy have been in securing reliable collaborators among the Venezuelan military and political forces ready to betray their country. Once the collaborators seize a piece of territory, Obama can mount the charade that US Marines are there *by invitation...of the democratic forces...*

Under conditions of explicit military threat, Maduro must change *'the rules of the game'*. Under emergency conditions hoarding is no longer just a misdemeanor: it becomes a capital crime. Politicians meeting and consulting with representatives of the invading country should lose their immunity and be summarily jailed. Above all, the government must take total control over the distribution of basic goods; establishing rationing to ensure popular access; nursing scarce financial resources by limiting or imposing a moratorium on debt payments; diminishing or selling assets in the US (CITCO) to avoid confiscation or their being made illiquid ("frozen") by some new Obama decree. On the external front, Venezuela must deepen military and economic ties with its neighbors and independent nations to withstand the US military and economic offensive. If Obama escalates the military measures against Venezuela, the parliamentary elections scheduled for September should be temporarily suspended until normality is re-established.

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