

# Permanent Agression: War on the Horizon in Latin America

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The Empire will stop at nothing to find mechanisms and techniques to achieve its final objective, and we cannot disregard the possibility of a military conflict in the near future. If the US places Venezuela on the “terrorist list” this year, we could be on the verge of a regional war.

Latin America has suffered constant aggressions executed by Washington during the past two hundred years. Strategies and tactics of covert and overt warfare have been applied against different nations in the region, ranging from coup d’états, assassinations, disappearances, torture, brutal dictatorships, atrocities, political persecution, economic sabotage, psychological operations, media warfare, biological warfare, subversion, counterinsurgency, paramilitary infiltration, diplomatic terrorism, blockades, electoral intervention to military invasions. Regardless of who’s in the White House – democrat or republican – when it comes to Latin America, the Empire’s policies remain the same.

In the twenty-first century, Venezuela has been one of the principle targets of these constant aggressions. Since the April 2002 coup, there has been a dangerous escalation in attacks and destabilization attempts against the Bolivarian Revolution. Although many fell beneath the seductive smile and poetic words of Barack Obama, it’s not necessary to look beyond the past year to see the intensification of Washington’s aggressions against Venezuela. The largest military expansion in history in the region – through the US occupation of Colombia – the reactivation of the Fourth Fleet of the US Navy, as well as an increased US military presence in the Caribbean, Panama and Central America throughout the past year, can be interpreted as preparation for a conflict scenario in the region.

## Escalation in Aggressions

The hostile declarations from various Washington representatives during the past few weeks, accusing Venezuela of failure to combat narcotics operations, violating human rights, “not contributing to democracy and regional stability”, and of being the “regional anti-US leader”, form part of a coordinated campaign that seeks to justify a direct aggression against Venezuela. Soon, Washington will publish its annual list of “state sponsors of terrorism”, and if Venezuela is placed on the list this year, the region could be on the brink of an unprecedented military conflict.

Evidence seems to indicate a move in that direction. A US Air Force document justifying the need to increase military presence in Colombia affirmed that Washington is preparing for “expeditionary warfare” in South America.

The 2009 Air Force document, sent to Congress last May (but later modified in November after it was used to demonstrate the true intentions behind the military agreement between the US and Colombia), explained, ““Development of this CSL (Cooperative Security Location) will further the strategic partnership forged between the US and Colombia and is in the interest of both nations... A presence will also increase our capability to conduct Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), improve global reach, support logistics requirements, improve partnerships, improve theater security cooperation and expand expeditionary warfare capability”.

### **On the Verge of War**

The first official report outlining the defense and intelligence priorities of the Obama administration dedicated substantial attention to Venezuela. The Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community - which has mentioned Venezuela in years past, but not nearly with the same emphasis and extension - particularly signaled out President Chavez as a major “threat” to US interests. “Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has established himself as one of the US’s foremost international detractors, denouncing liberal democracy and market capitalism and opposing US policies and interests in the region”, said the intelligence document, placing Venezuela in the same category as Iran, North Korea and Al Qa’ida.

Days after the report was published, the State Department presented its 2011 budget to Congress. In addition to an increase in financing through USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to fund opposition groups in Venezuela - more than \$15 million USD - there was also a \$48 million USD request for the Organization of American States (OAS) to “deploy special ‘democracy promoter’ teams to countries where democracy is under threat from the growing presence of alternative concepts such as the ‘participatory democracy’ promoted by Venezuela and Bolivia”.

One week later, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the OAS - funded by Washington - emitted a whopping 322-page report slamming Venezuela for human rights violations, repression of the press and undermining democracy. Despite the fact that it was a report - and a Commission - dedicated to the topic of human rights, the detailed study barely mentioned the immense achievements of the Chavez government in advancing human rights; advances which have been recognized and applauded over the past five years by the United Nations. The evidence used by the OAS to elaborate the report came from opposition testimonies and biased media outlets, a clear demonstration of dangerous subjectivity.

Simultaneous to these accusations, a Spanish court accused the Venezuelan government last week of supporting and collaborating with the FARC and ETA - organizations considered terrorist by both the US and Spain - provoking an international scandal. President Chavez reiterated that his government has absolutely no ties with any terrorist group in the world. “This is a government of peace”, declared Chavez, after explaining that the presence of ETA members in Venezuela is due to an agreement made over 20 years ago by the government of Carlos Andres Perez in order to aid Spain in a peace treaty with the Basque separatist group.

### **The Empire Has No Color**

Last week, on tour in Latin America, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton couldn't stop attacking Venezuela during her different declarations made before international media. She expressed her "great concern" for democracy and human rights in Venezuela, accusing President Chavez of not "contributing in a constructive manner" to regional progress. In a cynical tone, Clinton advised President Chavez to "look further south" for inspiration, instead of towards Cuba.

Clinton's regional trip was part of a strategy announced by the Obama administration last year, to create a divide between the so-called "progressive left" and the "radical left" in Latin America. It's no coincidence that her first tour of the region coincided with the announcement of a new Latin American and Caribbean Community of States, which excludes the presence of the US and Canada.

### **The Coming Conflict**

A military conflict is not initiated from one day to the next. It's a process that involves first influencing public perception and opinion - demonizing the target leader or government in order to justify aggression. Subsequently, armed forces are strategically deployed in the region in order to guarantee an effective military action. Tactics, such as subversion and counterinsurgency, are utilized in order to debilitate and destabilize the target nation from within, increasing its vulnerability and weakening its defenses.

This plan has been active against Venezuela for several years. The consolidation of regional unity and Latin American integration threatens US possibilities of regaining domination and control in the hemisphere. And the advances of the Bolivarian Revolution have impeded its "self-destruction", provoked by internal subversion funded and directed by US agencies. However, the Empire will not cease its attempts to achieve its final objective, and a potential military conflict in the region remains on the horizon.

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