

“Pink Tide” Against US Domination Rising Again in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Once again, the left is rising in Latin America as people revolt against authoritarian regimes, many of whom were put in place by US-supported coups. These regimes have taken International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and are under the thumb of international finance, which is against the interests of people.

After the embattled President of Ecuador claimed that **President Nicolas Maduro** was the cause of the massive protests against him, [Maduro made clear what was occurring in Latin America](#), saying:

“We have two models: the IMF model which privatizes everything and takes away the people’s rights to health, education and work; and the humanist-progressive model which is emerging in Latin America and has the Bolivarian Revolution at the forefront.”

Maduro’s clear understanding of the conflict is why it has been so important for the US to remove him. His success in defeating ongoing US coup attempts is a model guiding Latin America to a future independent of US domination.



Ecuadorians celebrate the repeal of Decree 883. From Twitter.

Ecuador in Rebellion Against IMF and the US Puppet Moreno

On October 4, [Moreno](#) proclaimed the end of a 40-year policy of fuel and petrol subsidies, which had traditionally benefited his country's working-class population. He also announced a 20 percent decrease in the salary of public employees and initiated plans to privatize pensions. He removed workplace and job security safeguards. Decree 883, known as 'The Package', was a series of neoliberal policies demanded by the IMF in return for a \$4.2 billion dollar loan. It was [preceded by policies for the wealthy](#) including reducing their taxes.

The IMF loan was part of [Moreno serving as a puppet](#) and bowing to [multiple US demands](#). Ecuador promised to settle a long dispute with Chevron whose oil drilling and pipelines have polluted the country. Tens of billions of dollars in [restitution from Chevron](#) are at stake but Moreno said he is willing to give them up. In fact, the IMF loan is strange in that it was dependent on Ecuador paying external debt obligations, i.e. it was not new funds for Ecuador but new debt to subsidize paying back Wall Street.

In making the announcement, Moreno called the people "Zánganos," or Drone Bees leading to [the uprising of the Drone Bees](#). The mass protests were [called by](#) the Popular Front, a group of unions, and the Unified Workers Federation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). Students and social movements joined protests throughout the nation in Loja, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Ambato, and Riobamba, among other cities as well as Quito, the capital. Moreno claimed without any evidence that the uprising was financed by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Correa.

[Protests in Ecuador](#) were relentless with no end in sight. They grew when 20,000 indigenous people marched into Quito. Police responded with violence, tear gas, and mass arrests. An October 4 [video circulated on social media](#) showed nonviolent protesters killed in the street by the police as well as [other police violence](#). On October 5, Moreno [declared a 60-day state of Emergency](#). Sometimes [police had to retreat in the face of mass protests](#). On October 7, [Moreno fled the capital](#) to hide in the Navy base 260 miles away in the conservative stronghold of Guayaquil.

As we wrote this newsletter, [unrest in Ecuador was escalating](#). On Saturday, the nation was [put on military lockdown](#). Law enforcement attacked protesters with pellets and tear gas in the immediate vicinity of the National Assembly. By Sunday, Moreno [decreed](#) a 3:00 pm curfew, which people defied. Then, facing an [emergency session in the National Assembly](#), Moreno backed down. Protesters celebrated when Moreno's government announced that Decree 883 [had been repealed](#) after eleven days of popular mobilizations.

[Peter Koenig describes](#) a root cause of the problems:

"Since January 2000, Ecuador's economy is 100% dollarized, compliments of the IMF (entirely controlled by the US Treasury, by force of an absolute veto). The other two fully dollarized Latin American countries are El Salvador and Panama."

The US and IMF used the economic crises of the 1990s to dollarize Ecuador's economy and gain full control over the nation's riches as Ecuador is the second-largest oil economy in South America. This led to unaffordable goods for Ecuadorians, social unrest and a series of unstable governments until President Correa, who served from 2007 to 17, was elected.

A Center for Economic and Policy Research [2017 report](#) found under Correa Ecuador did well with an average annual GDP growth of 1.5% compared to 0.6% average for the previous 26 years; a decline of 38% in poverty with extreme poverty reduced by 47%; and a decline in inequality with the Gini coefficient falling substantially. Correa doubled social spending from 4.3% in 2006 to 8.6% in 2016; tripling education spending from 0.7% to 2.1%; and, increasing public investments from 4% of GDP in 2006 to 10% in 2016.

Correa served two terms. A third term would have required a constitutional amendment. Rather than running, Correa endorsed Lenin Moreno who had served as his vice president from 2007-13. He was expected to continue Correa's policies but instead reversed them.

Moreno was unpopular before announcing 'The Package' due to [structural poverty increasing](#) from 23.1 percent in June 2017 to 25.5 percent in June 2019 with projections of 30 percent by the end of the year. Injustices like the [imprisonment of the popular former Vice President Jorge Glas](#) on dubious charges and his [continuous political](#) witch hunt [against Rafael Correa](#) and other leaders of the Citizens' Revolution Party added to his unpopularity. In addition, he has been [engulfed in a personal corruption crisis](#) involving an offshore [Shell corporation INA](#), which [cast Moreno's presidency in doubt](#).

Moreno's forcible and illegal ejection of Julian Assange from the London embassy [in return for payoffs from the US and UK resulted in a national strike in Ecuador in July](#). This, along with the arrest of [Ola Bini](#), who is being prosecuted falsely as a conspirator with Wikileaks, was unpopular with Ecuadorians.

Will repeal of 'The Package' end the protests and the threat to Moreno's presidency? As we write, the answer to these questions are unclear. The people won a major victory, but the Moreno/IMF infection remains.



Rally in Argentina. By Enfoque Rojo.

Latin American countries are rejecting neoliberalism and US domination using multiple strategies to achieve change.

This month the deepening anti-capitalist movement in Bolivia is set to strengthen with the probable re-election of Evo Morales on October 20. Argentina is expected to remove right-wing President Mauricio Macri on October 27 and replace him with Alberto Fernandez. And, Mexico put in place its first progressive, left-of-center government with the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) on July 1, 2018. Elections are also upcoming in Uruguay on October 27 and in Peru in January. Venezuela may have National Assembly elections in January as well.

Bolivia's Evo [Morales has a 13-point lead in polls](#) as [his governing party Movement Toward Socialism](#) (MAS) looks to re-election for a third Morales term that will last until 2025. Morales has 38.8 percent, just 1.2 percent short of the 40 percent required for a first-round victory in the upcoming elections. The survey also indicated majority support for the nationalization of gas and strategic industries, 51 percent say that public ownership is positive for the economy. On social programs, 61.7 percent say they are essential for providing dignity to those of low incomes.

Morales has launched a [large reforestation plan](#) and put in place a [model healthcare program](#). He is [under attack from](#) the United States and segments of Bolivia. [Morales leads an independent, sovereign Bolivia](#) that has rejected US dominance, [decolonized and displaced neoliberalism](#). A recent [color revolution attempt](#) by the wealthy, with the [support of the US and western powers](#), failed.

Argentina's [first round of voting](#) on August 11 resulted in Fernandez, running with former president Cristina Kirchner, finishing 15 percent ahead of Macri. The surprising landslide brought into question Macri's ability to govern between now and the election. As a result, the [IMF put a \\$5.4 billion dollar loan on hold](#) part of the \$56.3 billion stand-by agreement signed in mid-2018. Fernandez opposed the loan, which required sharp budget cuts affecting public services at a time of increasing poverty.

Under Macri, the economy has gone into crisis with [poverty increasing to a record 36.4 percent](#), a recession accompanied by a 47 percent inflation rate in 2018 and an inflation rate of 25.1 percent during the first seven months of this year. Argentina's unemployment is at the highest level in 14 years. Poverty was at [19.7 percent](#) when Kirchner left office in 2015. [Fernandez has put forward an anti-hunger plan](#), not dependent on the IMF. Three weeks before the election, [thousands of people rallied](#) in Buenos Aires as the Workers Left Front sent a message of opposition to neoliberalism and austerity to the two major political parties.

In Mexico, [AMLO won a landslide 53 percent](#) of the vote on July 31 ending decades of right-wing rule. People were fed up with the corruption, impunity, and violence — decades of loss of rights, pillaging and destruction of the nation's wealth and public enterprises. At [his inauguration](#), AMLO decried 36 years of neoliberalism and public and private corruption, [promised a "peaceful and radical" transition](#) with "indigenous people as its priority," in a government "for the good of all, first the poor." His fight against [neoliberalism is challenged by NAFTA II](#) (or the [USMCA](#)), as AMLO is careful not to confront Trump on this. On border policy, AMLO [offered migrants home in Mexico](#) and urged investment in Central America.

The [Zapatistas have conflicted with AMLO](#) over the exploitation of resources and the use of the military in policing, demanding its autonomy based on indigenous principles but he has sought diplomacy with them. AMLO has also faced [massive strikes](#) of tens of thousands of autoworkers, workers at [US companies in Mexico](#) and [wildcat strikes at the border](#). AMLO has been a [counterweight to US aggression](#) in Latin America standing with Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

Peru is in the midst of a crisis. President, Martin Vizcarra, who came into office after a corruption scandal removed his predecessor, [dissolved the Congress](#), a move [supported by the left](#), because it is controlled by far-right politician Keiko Fujimori and was preventing Vizcarra's anti-corruption campaign. Congress ignored the president's order and voted to remove him from office instead. The [vice president resigned](#) rather than take over and Vizcarra remains in office with the support of the military. He has now called for new congressional elections to be held on January 26. Vizcarra is a conservative battling the oligarchic right. The left, which has been divided, is [coalescing around the Popular National Assembly](#) and allying with social movements. The [movements want](#) an end to neoliberal policies, a Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution and to break with Washington's domination.

In Central America, [Honduras has been in revolt](#) against the coup government of Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH), which for [ten years](#) has [put in place neoliberalism](#), repression, and violence. [Protests have been ongoing](#) since his coup and fraudulent re-election. This summer, protests intensified with [a national strike](#) over austerity and privatization measures required by [an IMF loan, leading to a 66-day uprising](#). [The US has trained Honduran police to use repressive measures](#) in an attempt to stop the protests, but their actions feed more protests.

Many have fled Honduras to [escape the corruption and violence](#) in [caravans](#). Now, a coalition of civil groups is urging the president's departure over a scandal ignited by accusations of large-scale drug trafficking to the United States being litigated against the president's brother Juan Antonio "Tony" Hernandez. In the trial, several witnesses have declared JOH's campaign was financed with drug money, and that he took [millions in bribes from various Mexican drug lords](#), including the infamous [Joaquin "El-Chapo" Guzman](#). The [Liberal Party joined](#) in calling for his resignation and [protests have intensified](#). The trial may be the [end of this cocaine-fueled presidency](#).

Brazil's election of Bolsonaro has been marred by scandal now that the corruption of Operation Car Wash has been exposed. Private conversations between the prosecutors and then-judge Sergio Moro, now Super Minister of Justice, show that former President Luiz Inacio [Lula da Silva was the "victim of a conspiracy"](#) to prevent him from running against Bolsonaro. In the secret exchanges, Moro admitted that the corruption case was designed to frame him. [Lula has said](#) the US is behind the conspiracy.

[Calls to free Lula are increasing](#) and the Supreme [Court will be reviewing](#) the case. Lula is demanding his record be cleared and [refused a panicked offer from prosecutors](#) that he be freed from jail and put under house arrest. Bolsonaro is also [under attack](#) for the [Amazon fires](#), for an [increase in police killings](#), for [genocide against the Indigenous](#) and for [attacks on public education](#). Former President Michel [Temer acknowledged that the impeachment](#) of former president Dilma Rousseff, the Worker's Party leader, was a coup d'etat.

Nicaragua [survived a 2018 US coup](#) attempt and the revolution [continues to thrive after 40](#)

[years of independence](#) from US domination after US-backed dictator Anastasio [Somoza fled](#). [People were very confused](#) about what happened in the 2018 coup attempt as [media misinformation was prevalent](#). A group of us joined produced [a reader to help people understand the reality of Nicaragua](#). [Peace is coming back to Nicaragua](#), even though continued pressure from the US is expected in the form of new illegal sanctions.

Venezuela, which [we have reported on intensively for years](#), has also survived [ongoing coup](#) attempts that continue to escalate in the post-John Bolton era of the Trump administration most recently with [a threat of war](#) through the Organization of American States (OAS). They are prepared for a military attack and have created new alliances to overcome the US economic war. This week, [Russia announced it was investing \\$16.5 billion in Venezuela by the end of 2019](#).

Russia has provided anti-missile defense systems, is [keeping Navy ships in Venezuela](#) to deter a US blockade and has helped gather intelligence on US actions. With their help, Venezuela has uncovered [terrorist plots coming from Colombia](#) and [involving US-puppet Juan Guaidó's team](#). Guaidó has faltered and failed time and again, and now is being [investigated for ties to Colombian drug traffickers](#) and [corruption](#).

The [non-aligned movement of 120 nations](#) met in Caracas this summer and expressed support for Venezuelan sovereignty. Venezuela has been a lynchpin for left movements in Latin America. When oil prices were high, it shared its wealth not only with poorest Venezuelans but with other countries seeking to challenge US and oligarch domination. Even in the midst of an escalating economic war with the United States, they continue to [provide housing, food, and essentials](#) to their people.



Protesters in Haiti. Twitter.

Caribbean Resistance

In the Caribbean, Cuba is challenged by the US economic war but continues its revolution. Mass protests in Haiti threaten the survival of the government and Puerto Rico's revolt

removed a governor.

Cuba, despite the increasing US economic war, continues to be a bulwark against US imperialism, [standing with governments like Venezuela and Nicaragua](#) when they are under attack. Cuba completed a [successful transition to a new president](#), Miguel Díaz-Canel, and [voted on a new constitution](#) developed using a participatory process involving 9 million people through 133,000 citizen meetings. The constitution includes “universal and free health, education, sports and recreation, culture and respect for human dignity.” Cuba is currently facing major economic challenges as [the US is blocking their access to oil](#). Russia and Venezuela are [helping Cuba](#) overcome this oil blockade.

Haiti has been in [protest since April](#) calling for an end to neoliberal US domination and the [resignation of Jovenel Moise](#). The president has not spoken in public since the beginning of this latest round of protests and this week he [named a commission](#) of seven politicians to lead discussions for a solution to end the crisis.

In Puerto Rico, a colony of the United States, [massive protests led to](#) Governor Ricardo A. Rosselló resigning on July 22, 2019. People also want the corrupt legislature cleaned out, the Fiscal Control Board, created by Obama, ended and the debt to be audited. Former political prisoner, Luis Rosa, said three things are needed: “decolonization, an end to our colonial status through a constitutional assembly; health care, free for all Puerto Rican citizens; and free public education up through the university level.”

Stephen Sefton wrote a [country-by-country review](#) of Latin America and the Caribbean in June describing the decline of the United States in the region and how changes were coming to many nations. He predicted that we are seeing “the last throw of the dice for the US to retain its accustomed power and influence against the relentless fundamental drive for emancipation by the region’s impoverished majority.”

[Rafael Correa said](#), “Neoliberalism is what failed, not socialism of the 21st century, on the contrary, socialism of the 21st century is what has us firmly on our feet, withstanding all of these difficulties.” This hemisphere is a [key battleground in the conflict between neoliberalism v Socialism and US dominance v. independence](#). People are demanding democracy from the bottom up and a fair economy that meets their needs.

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