

Era of US Domination of Latin America Coming to an End: Nicaragua, Venezuela, Bolivia

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Global Research, August 10, 2020

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

Theme: [History](#)

Despite its failings at home, the United States intervenes in countries across multiple continents seeking to control their governments and resources.

This week, we look at the US' latest efforts in Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Bolivia to undermine their independence and force them to serve the interests of the US government and transnational corporations.

In all three countries, the US has displayed a lack of understanding of the people and their support for their revolutionary processes, and as a result, is failing. As US empire fades, so might the Monroe Doctrine come to an end.



Sandinista- FSLN rally in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua: USAID Multi-Year Destabilization Plan Exposed

A US Agency for International Development (USAID) document [revealed by](#) reporter William Grigsby describes covert plans to overthrow the democratically-elected Nicaraguan government in the next two years. USAID seeks to hire mercenaries “to take charge of the plan . . . to disrupt public order and carry out other [violent] actions before, during, and/or after the 2021 elections.”

USAID is creating Responsive Assistance In Nicaragua (RAIN), allotting \$540,000 in grants to remove the Sandinista government in what it calls “Nicaragua’s transition to democracy.”

Daniel Ortega won the 2016 election with 72 percent of the vote in what election observers from the Organization of American States (OAS), a US tool, [described as](#) taking “place in a calm, smooth and pacific manner, with no large incidents.”

Brian Willson, who has opposed US efforts to dominate Nicaragua since the 1980s Contra war, [concludes](#) the US realizes Ortega will win the 2021 election. In fact, this week, [a poll](#) showed support for Ortega’s party, FSLN, at 50% and for the opposition at 10%. One of USAID plans, as they tried in Venezuela in 2018, is for the opposition to boycott the election since they know they will lose, then call it illegitimate and create a political and economic crisis.

The real goal is not a democracy but domination so US transnational corporations can profit from the second poorest country in the hemisphere by putting in place a neoliberal economy to privatize public services, cut social services, and purge all traces of the Sandinistas. USAID also plans to “reestablish” the police and military to enforce their rule. Another goal is to stop Nicaragua from being the “[threat of a good example](#)” for its economic growth, reduction of inequality, poverty, illiteracy and crime.

[Ben Norton points out in the Grayzone](#) that “the 14-page USAID document employed the word ‘transition’ 102 times” making clear the intent is regime change. A “sudden transition without elections,” a euphemism for a coup, is [one of three possible regime change scenarios](#).

[John Perry writes](#) about “US interference in Nicaragua, going back at least as far as William Walker’s assault on its capital and usurpation of the presidency in 1856.” Since the 1979 Sandinista Revolution, the US has sought to take back control of Nicaragua.

USAID and its National Endowment for Democracy ([NED](#)) have been funding the opposition. NED financed 54 projects from 2014-17 to [lay the groundwork for a 2018 coup](#) attempt, which [also involved USAID](#). [Wiston Lopez writes](#) the US has provided “more than 31 million dollars between the end of 2017 and May 1, 2020.” When the [attempted coup in 2018](#) failed, the US also put in place illegal unilateral coercive measures, known as economic sanctions, supported by [both Democrats and Republicans](#), to try to weaken the country.

The USAID’s RAIN program outlines the usual regime change steps, e.g. remake the police and military as enforcers of the new neoliberal order, move “quickly to dismantle parallel institutions,” i.e. the Sandinista Front, the Sandinista Youth, and other grassroots institutions, and implement “transitional justice measures,” i.e., the prosecution of current government officials and movement leaders.

A new area of attack is a [disinformation campaign](#) against Nicaragua’s handling of COVID-19. The opposition [misrepresents the government’s response](#) and puts forward [false death statistics](#) in an attempt [to create chaos](#). As [Wiston López points out](#), “Since March the US-directed opposition has focused 95% of their actions on attempting to discredit Nicaragua’s prevention, contention, and Covid treatment. However, this only had some success in the international media and is now backfiring since Nicaragua is the country with one of the lowest mortality rates in the continent.”

The US [media fails to report](#) on the success of Nicaragua in combating the virus using a [community-based health system](#). Nicaragua has been building its health system for the

last 12 years and took rapid action to prepare for the virus. Nicaragua did not impose a lock down because it is a poor country where 80 percent of people are in the informal economy and 40 percent live in rural areas. People must work in order to eat.

[Stephen Sefton](#) puts the failure of the United States so far in context. At its root, the US does not understand the people of Nicaragua, their history of fighting US domination, and their ability to overcome right-wing puppets. It also misunderstands what the Sandinista government is doing to better the lives of the people in every sector of the economy. Sefton concludes, “The US government has failed notoriously to meet the needs of its own people during the current pandemic but can still find money to try and destroy a small country whose success makes US social, economic and environmental policy look arbitrary, negligent and criminal.”



Nicolas Maduro kicks out Donald Trump. Photo by Ben Norton.

Venezuela: Bipartisan Failed Regime Change

Ever since the 1998 election of Hugo Chavez, successive US administrations have tried and failed to dominate Venezuela. The bipartisan nature of this policy was on display on August 4, when Elliot Abrams, the notorious coup-monger for multiple presidents, testified in Congress. Not a single Senator criticized the attempt to illegally overthrow a democratically-elected government.

Abrams was criticized by both Democrats and Republicans for his inability to remove President Maduro from power. Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) was most open about the coup attempt [describing it](#) as “a case study in diplomatic malpractice” and claiming Trump botched a winning play in a comedy of errors that strengthened Maduro. After the hearing, Murphy [posted a series of Tweets admitting the coup](#) and how it could have been done better.

A [clip](#) from Murphy’s embarrassing comments was shared widely including by the

Venezuelan Vice President [Delcy Rodríguez](#) and Foreign Minister [Jorge Arreaza](#). When [Vijay Prashad asked Arreaza his reaction](#), he described the US openly admitting crimes and said the “confessions” of Murphy, Gen. John Kelly, John Bolton, and Elliot Abrams “are priceless evidence for the complaint we raised at the International Criminal Court.”

Elliot [Abrams testified that he would continue to work very hard](#) to remove Maduro hopefully by the end of the year. This echoed a [statement by President Trump at SouthCom headquarters in Florida](#). Sen. Murphy’s comments are consistent with those made by Joe Biden who [says he would be more effective](#) at removing Maduro than Trump. Biden described Trump as soft on Maduro because he considered talking to him.

Elliot Abrams [announced](#) the US will be starting a media war against Venezuela. The reality is the US has been conducting a media war against Venezuela for more than 20 years.

Venezuela is [moving ahead with elections for the National Assembly on December 6, 2020](#). Unlike 2018, more parties are agreeing to participate including the larger Democratic Action and Justice First parties, as well as a new Communist Party alliance and the hard-right Popular Will party, which was US puppet Juan Guaidó’s former party. There will be 105 political parties contesting for 277 National Assembly seats, 110 more than the current term. Venezuela uses a combination of majority winners and proportional representation. Venezuela also requires half the candidates to be female, and they use [electronic voting confirmed by paper ballots](#) with a public citizen audit on Election Day.

Juan Guaidó and others allied with the United States said they would boycott the election. Guaidó cannot risk running because he is likely to be defeated. The US is encouraging a boycott and then will claim the election was not legitimate as it did in the last presidential election. After December, Guaidó will not hold any elected office making his fraudulent claim to the presidency even weaker.

These events come after two major embarrassments for the US in Venezuela. [Operation Gideon, an attempt](#) by mercenaries to invade Venezuela was foiled on May 4, leading to [their arrests](#) and [the arrests](#) of their co-conspirators. The [State Department abandoned](#) the mercenaries, and this week two former [Green Berets were sentenced to 20 years](#) in prison after admitting their guilt. It was evident that [Guaidó was heavily involved](#) in this failure [adding to](#) his failed presidential takeover and [tainting him beyond repair](#).

The second defeat was Iran and Venezuela working together to [deliver oil and equipment](#) for Venezuelan refineries. [Five Iranian oil tankers passed by the largest US armada](#) in the Caribbean since the invasion of Panama. [Southcom has been repeatedly sending warships into Venezuelan waters](#). The [solidarity of Iran and Venezuela](#) overcame the naval blockade, undermined US sanctions, and [sent a shudder through the US](#) by showing other nations they can defy the United States.

Venezuela has a strong history of struggle against imperialism but the US’ [economic war is costing](#) their [economy hundreds of billions of dollars](#) and leading to the premature death of Venezuelans. In addition, the United Kingdom is [refusing to release](#) more than a billion dollars of Venezuelan gold held in the Bank of England that was to be used for food and medicine. The [UK court ruled](#) against Venezuela but [they are appealing](#) the decision.



Bolivians protest the postponement of the election.

Bolivia: US Dictator Fears Democratic Vote

On November 12 2019, a US-backed coup in Bolivia removed President Evo Morales who had just won re-election. The self-proclaimed President Jeanine Añez, a right-wing Christian, leads a de facto government involved in massacres, persecution and imprisonment of political leaders. It is destroying the social and economic model and achievements of the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS Party) led by Morales.

The OAS played a crucial role in the coup with their [false analysis of Morales' re-election](#). The western media reported the false OAS analysis without criticism. Now, [studies by MIT and the Center for Economic and Policy Analysis have shown](#) that Morales clearly won the election and should have remained in power. For months the [Washington Post](#) claimed Morales' re-election was a fraud, but finally, in March, it [acknowledged the election was legitimate](#). Similarly, the [New York Times](#) admitted in July that Morales won the election.

Many have called this a lithium coup because the element is plentiful in Bolivia and critical for batteries. This was made evident when [Elon Musk, the head of Tesla, said on Twitter](#) "We will coup whoever we want! Deal with it." Tesla would benefit from cheap and plentiful lithium for electric car batteries.

The [people of Bolivia are struggling](#) to restore democracy. The fraudulent report by the OAS led to a three-week conflict between right-wing Bolivians protesting alleged fraud and pro-government, mostly indigenous, demonstrators defending Morales. The military and police sided with the right-wing coup. The coup government threatened legislators and their families while repressing the people. There were racist attacks against the majority Indigenous population and the Wiphala, the indigenous flag, was burned in the streets. When she took power, Añez, surrounded by right-wing legislators, held up a large leather bible and declared, "The Bible has returned to the palace."

The US recognized the coup government, similar to its recognition of the failed coup leader, Juan Guaidó in Venezuela. Añez claimed she'd be transitory until the next election, but [at the direction of the US](#), she is putting in place deep roots and has delayed elections.

The repression has galvanized the MAS party, as well as peasant unions and grassroots organizations who continue their [struggle to restore Bolivian democracy](#). The pressure led to elections being scheduled. Initially, Añez said she would not run but reversed herself and is now a candidate while she is trying to outlaw the MAS party and its candidates.

Elections were scheduled for May 3, but have been postponed twice allegedly due to the pandemic, but really because [this is an ongoing coup](#).

It is true that the [COVID-19 pandemic is hitting Bolivia hard](#) with horror stories about people unable to get medical treatment. Immediately after the coup, the Añez government expelled the Cuban doctors. The coup-government is unable to manage the health system. Corruption is rampant in the purchase of medical equipment. The health ministry has had three ministers during the crisis. The situation is dire with overcrowded hospitals, lack of basic supplies, and corpses in the streets and in their homes with nowhere to be buried.

The coup-government is using the virus to try to delay elections because [polls show the MAS candidate](#), Luis Arce, is far ahead and likely to win in the first round of elections with Añez coming in a distant third. [Añez has sought to prosecute Arce](#) to keep him from running, so far unsuccessfully. On July 6, the Attorney General of Bolivia charged Evo Morales with terrorism and financing of terrorism from exile and is seeking preventive detention.

Since [mid-July, thousands](#) of [Bolivians have been protesting](#) the postponement of elections. They are holding sustained protests throughout the country and blocking many roads. Indigenous and peasant groups, agricultural groups, along with women and unions are joining together calling for elections. Morales, Arce, and the MAS Party have denounced the delay.



Domination Will Not Reverse Decline

[Evo Morales said in a recent interview](#)

“The United States is trying to make Latin America its backyard forever. We know about the hard resistance of the peoples of Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua.

The struggle of our peoples is very important. The United States wants to divide us in order to plunder our natural resources. The peoples no longer accept domination and plunder. The United States is in decline, and yet it lashes out.”

The US is weakening as a global power and its failures in Latin America are both a symptom of this and are causing further decline. The US’ violations of international law are obvious and are being challenged. But the US is an empire and it will not give up the Monroe Doctrine easily.

As citizens of Empire, we have a particular responsibility to demand the US stop its sanctions and illegal interference in Latin America and elsewhere around the world. In this time of multiple global crises, we must demand the US become a cooperative member of the world community and work peacefully to address the pandemic, recession and climate crisis.

Structures to do this exist to help with this such as the global ceasefire and the Paris Climate agreement. And on the anniversary of the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, we must add the Nuclear Ban Treaty as another effort the US must join.

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