

US Media Intensifies Campaign Against Chavez

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As election time approaches in Venezuela, international media increase negative coverage of the South American nation. CNN applauds terrorism against Venezuela, while Fox News accuses the Chavez government of terrorism

The bombardment of negative, false, distorted and manipulated news about Venezuela in US media has increased in volume and intensity during the last few days. Venezuela is subjected to this phenomenon every time an electoral process nears. This international media campaign against the government of Hugo Chavez appears to have a clear and coordinated objective: removing the Venezuelan President from power.

During the last eight years, those pursuing this same objective have promoted, and attempted to justify, coup d'états, economic sabotages, terrorist acts, assassination attempts, electoral interventions, psychological warfare and a disproportionate increase in US military presence in the region - all with the goal of ousting President Chavez. And to achieve this objective - which every year seems attainable to the powers that be - millions and millions of US taxpayer dollars are channeled by US agencies into political parties, campaigns, candidates and organizations that oppose Chavez.

International media also do their part. With sensationalist headlines and slanted reports, mass media try to condition public opinion to believe any action or aggression against Venezuela will be necessary to remove the "evil" Chavez from power.

According to The Economist, "Venezuela has the worst economy in the world", despite the fact the data cited by the financial magazine doesn't match up. The New York Times, which sets the news standard for press worldwide, erroneously and dangerously headlined two weeks ago, "Venezuela is more lethal than Iraq".

"Venezuela has the highest homicide rate in the hemisphere", claimed Newsweek, falsely adding, "Chavez's popularity has fallen off a cliff".

To these media, it doesn't matter that Venezuela's economy is actually on an upward rise, despite the world financial crisis, or that while Caracas certainly has crime - and homicides - there is absolutely no comparison to the millions killed in Iraq at the hands of the US war machine.

And if a 54% popularity rate (per the latest national polls) means President Chavez's popularity has "fallen off a cliff", well then, where does that put President Obama's "best" rate at 47%?

Regarding coverage of Venezuela, television is even worse. Two weeks ago, CNN International premiered a docu-report titled "The Guardians of Chavez", during which the

international network falsely associated armed groups, criminals, terrorists and paramilitary forces with the Venezuelan government.

On Monday, September 13, just one and a half weeks before the upcoming legislative elections in Venezuela, CNN en Español's primetime anchor, Patricia Janiot, conducted a live interview with an escaped convict from Venezuela, who just two years earlier had been tried and sentenced for terrorism.

In a clear showing of yellow journalism, Janiot referred to the terrorist fugitive as a "political prisoner" and "student persecuted" by the Chavez government. The escaped convict, Raul Diaz Peña, was sentenced in 2008 after a lengthy trial proving his guilt as one of the material authors of a terrorist attack with C4 explosives against the embassies of Colombia and Spain that took place February 25, 2003 in Caracas.

Diaz Peña escaped from his Venezuelan jail cell on September 5 and after arriving in a commercial airliner at the Miami International Airport, was somehow able to easily enter the US, despite his status as a convicted terrorist and fugitive from justice.

A mere week after his US arrival, CNN broadcast him in prime time.

"How many other students are political prisoners in Venezuela", Janiot asked of the terrorist. "Were you tortured", she inquired, with concern in her voice. At the end of the interview, the stellar journalist of the US network wished the fugitive terrorist "good luck", lauding him for escaping Chavez's "terrible dictatorship".

It's a wonder that an international television network can conduct a live interview with a convicted, fugitive terrorist, and wish him "good luck" in public, without a concern for any kind of consequence. But this type of irony is only possible when it comes to US media treatment of Venezuela.

According to CNN, in the case of Venezuela, terrorists are "political prisoners" and fugitives from justice are "immigrants".

Two days after CNN's flagrantly offensive interview with Venezuelan fugitive terrorist Raul Diaz Peña, which openly validated and approved the use of terror in Venezuela, Fox News headlined "Venezuela cancels roundtrip 'Terror Flight' to Syria and Iran".

In the report, which also ran on its website, the US network claimed Venezuela was one of "the world's most terror-friendly nations", along with Syria and Iran.

Regarding a legitimate flight route conducted by a Venezuelan airline, Conviasa, between Caracas-Damascus-Tehran, Fox falsely sustained, "the flight would carry illicit, lethal cargoes — such as explosives and possibly radioactive materials — and provide safe passage to terrorists, spies, weapons experts, senior Iranian intelligence operatives and members of both Hezbollah and Hamas".

The source? "Western intelligence agencies, Venezuelan opposition figures and a former Iran-based spy for the CIA". Sounds convincing.

The dangerous and intentionally erroneous Fox News report, which attempts to link Venezuela to international terrorism (ironically while CNN welcomes Venezuelan terrorists,

Fox accuses the Venezuelan government of terrorism), went on to further accuse the Venezuelan government of facilitating terrorism against the United States:

“Reza Kahlili, the pseudonym for an Iranian who the CIA has confirmed once spied for the United States as a member of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, told FoxNews.com these ‘special flights’ have been ‘instrumental in creating an Iranian dominated worldwide terror network that now reaches the United States.’ He said the flights were used to expand Iran’s efforts to create a base of operations in the Western Hemisphere”.

But right after that false accusation, Fox News discredited its own report, when a prime source admitted he didn’t really have any evidence to prove his claims:

“Peter Brookes, a former Defense Department analyst and CIA employee now with the Heritage Foundation, said there was a steady stream of elite Al Quds officers from Iran’s Revolutionary Guard who were transported to Venezuela aboard the flight and took up positions in the Latin American country’s intelligence service. ‘We can’t say for sure what is going on, but it is clandestine and secretive’, he said”.

In the final stretch before the September 26 legislative elections, media attacks against Venezuela continue to intensify.

Last week, in an interview with the Spanish newspaper El Pais, Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano summed up the media campaign against Venezuela: “There is a process of demonization against Chavez...It’s scandalous that today, every minute, three million dollars are spent on military affairs. And that requires enemies. In the theater of good and evil, at times those concepts are inter-changeable, as with Saddam Hussein, a saint of the West who was converted into Satan”.

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