

# US Planning a Coup d'Etat in Venezuela? Expanded US Military Presence in Colombia. Hurrah for Hugo Chavez

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It's no fun being on Washington's enemies list. Just ask Hugo Chavez. Last week, the Venezuelan president had to cancel a trip to Cuba after he was told that a coup was underway and his life was in danger. The information came from the same anonymous source who had warned him of the earlier coup in 2002. The letter said: "The execution phase is accelerating..... There is an agreement between Colombia and the US with two objectives: one is Mauricio and the other is the overthrow of the government.... They will hunt down 'Mauricio' (and) try to neutralize part of the Armed Forces." ("Venezuela Pushes for Peace", Coral Wynter, Green Left News)

"Mauricio" is Chavez's codename. Whoever is behind the coup, wants to kill Chavez.

There's no way of knowing whether Chavez is really in danger or not, but don't be surprised if he is. After all, the US claims it has the right to kill anyone it sees as a threat to its national security, and Chavez ranks high on its list of threats. In any event, the warnings coincide with other unsettling developments. At a recent meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS), Colombian officials charged Chavez with harboring guerrillas on Venezuelan territory. (The allegations could be used to justify a preemptive attack) Chavez reacted angrily to the accusations and broke off diplomatic relations with Colombia. But the row did not end there. Obama's nominee as US ambassador to Venezuela, Larry Palmer, decided to throw a little gas on the fire by backing-up Colombia's claims. Now the two countries are at loggerheads which seems to be what the Obama administration had in mind from the very beginning. US policy towards Venezuela has changed at all under Obama. If anything, it's gotten worse.

## US Expands 7 Bases in Colombia

The Pentagon recently announced that it plans to expand 7 military bases in Colombia. State Dept officials said that the US merely wants to step up its counter-narcotics operations, but no one's buying it. Everyone knows the US wants to reestablish its control over the region. The military build up in Colombia is another way of ratcheting up the pressure on Chavez and fanning the flames of political instability in the hemisphere. Naturally, the base-expansion has the region's leftist leaders worried that Latin America may be headed for another era of US-backed dirty wars.

Also, the internet is abuzz with stories that Obama is planning to deploy warships and ground troops to Costa Rica in the near-future. Here's an excerpt from an article on Alternet that provides some of the details:

“Rather than retooling its diplomatic approach to fit the new reality in Latin America, Washington is expanding its military footprint. It is will soon be operating out of seven military bases in Colombia and has reactivated its 4th Fleet, both highly unpopular moves in Latin America. Rather than taking the advice of countries in the region to demilitarize its war on drugs, the U.S. recently announced it is deploying 46 warships and 7,000 soldiers to Costa Rica to “interdict” drug traffic and money laundering.” (“Recent Colombian Mass Grave Discovery May Be “False-Positives”, Conn Hallinan, Alternet)

Although the rumors haven’t been verified, the anxiety is growing. The US has never played a constructive role in Latin America’s affairs, and the prospect of more meddling and violence is frightening. The truth is, US intervention has persisted even during (relatively) peaceful periods like the last decade. US intelligence agents and NGOs are sprinkled throughout the civilian population gathering information, swaying elections, and fomenting social unrest. Here’s a clip from an article titled “America’s Covert ‘Civil Society Operations: US interference in Venezuela keeps growing” which shows how America’s tentacles extend everywhere:

“Foreign intervention is not only executed through military force. The funding of “civil society” groups and media outlets to promote political agendas and influence the “hearts and minds” of the people is one of the more widely used mechanisms by the US government to achieve its strategic objectives. In Venezuela, the US has been supporting anti-Chavez groups for over 8 years, including those that executed the coup d’etat against President Chavez in April 2002. Since then, the funding has increased substantially. A May 2010 report evaluating foreign assistance to political groups in Venezuela, commissioned by the National Endowment for Democracy, revealed that more than \$40 million USD annually is channeled to anti-Chavez groups, the majority from US agencies....

A large part of NED funds in Venezuela have been invested in “forming student movements” and “building democratic leadership amongst youth”, from a US perspective and with US values....In the last three years, an opposition student/youth movement has been created with funding from various US and European agencies. More than 32% of USAID funding, for example, has gone to “training youth and students in the use of innovative media technologies to spread political messages and campaigns”, such as on Twitter and Facebook.

NED has also funded several media organizations in Venezuela, to aid in training journalists and designing political messages against the Venezuelan government. ..What these organizations really do is promote anti-Chavez messages on television and in international press, as well as distort and manipulate facts and events in the country in order to negatively portray the Chavez administration... Yet such funding is clearly illegal and a violation of journalist ethics. Foreign government funding of “independent” journalists or media outlets is an act of mass deception, propaganda and a violation of sovereignty. (“America’s Covert ‘Civil Society Operations: US interference in Venezuela keeps growing”, Eva Golinger, Global Research)

It’s hard to believe that a two-year senator from Chicago with a background in “community organizing” presides over this elaborate and opaque system of imperial rule. He doesn’t, of course; it’s all a fake. The real leaders remain hidden behind the cloak of phony democratic institutions. Obama is merely a public relations hologram; a cheery frontman that conceals the machinations of a global Mafia. Other people-whoever they may be-control the levers of

power moving the pieces as needed to assure the best outcome for themselves and their constituents. Now, it appears this shadow government has its eyes on Latin America once again. That's bad news for Chavez and anyone else who hoped that political instability and black ops were a thing of the past.

Washington hates Chavez because he's raised living standards for the poor. That's why he's pilloried in the media, because his socialist model of democracy doesn't jive with America's cutthroat-brand of capitalism. Chavez's policies have reduced ignorance, poverty, and injustice. He has enacted land and oil industry reform, improved education and provided universal healthcare. He's initiated job training programs, subsidies for single mothers, drug prevention programs, and assistance for recovering addicts. Illiteracy has been wiped out. The list goes on and on.

Venezuelans are more engaged in the political process than ever before. That's what scares Washington. US elites don't want well-informed, empowered people participating in the political process. They believe that task should be left to the venal politicians chosen by corporate bosses and top-hat banksters. That's why Chavez has to go. He's given people hope for a better life.

Movie director, Oliver Stone, summed it up perfectly in a recent interview with Nathan Gardels. He said, "The US remains hostile to anyone on the left coming to power in their "backyard," anyone who thinks the resources of a country belong to its people....For the first time in modern history, much of South America is beyond US control.....It is also beyond the influence of the US-dominated IMF."

The people of Venezuela are better off under Chavez; better fed, better educated, and with better access to medical care. The government safeguards their civil liberties and political activism continues to grow. Democracy is thriving in Venezuela. Hurrah for Hugo Chavez!

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