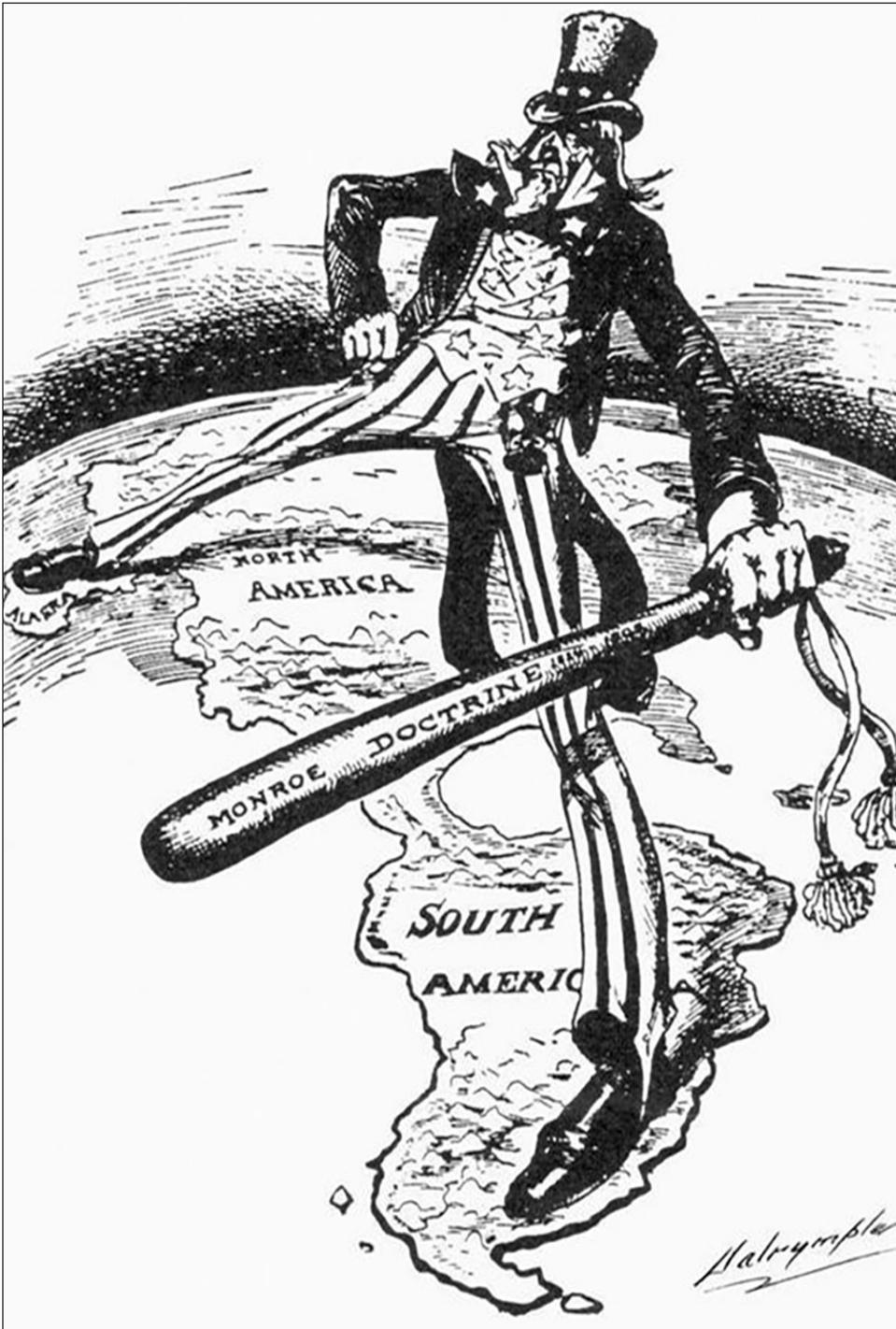


# Report

SPRING 2023

“The US Appears to be Destined by Providence to Plague the Americas with Misery in the Name of Freedom.” - Simón Bolívar, 1829

## The Monroe Doctrine Here and Now



US imperialism has long been a driving force in shaping political landscapes around the world, and Latin America is no exception. From coups and military interventions to economic coercion and political meddling and resource grabs, the US has exerted its influence in ways that have often devastated the region's physical and economic well-being. In this Report, we want to illustrate various recent manifestations of US imperialism in Latin America. Some are still in process and may be unknown or unrecognized as imperialism within the English-speaking world, especially in the US. The editorial committee of the Task Force on the Americas feels the urgency to present a few of the oppressive scenarios. We intend to show the heartlessness and the grim layers of calculation with which the US intervenes and knowingly threatens Latin American autonomy and sovereignty.

The Task Force on the Americas calls for actions to end US intervention in Latin America and support popular movements that oppose the continuance of the Monroe Doctrine.

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## NICARAGUA: Why Criminals Were Deported

*By the Nicaragua Solidarity Coalition*

*Ed. Note: Excerpts from a briefing paper*

The major US media have been less than truthful about the 222 released prisoners, formerly Nicaraguan, who traveled to Washington by agreement with the US government, in a plane provided by the US, on February 9.

What the media should focus on is that, as in the 1980s with Reagan's Contra war, the United States has been trying to overthrow the democratically elected government of Nicaragua. These 222 received US monies directly or indirectly, through nonprofits or businesses, to manage US aggressions against the State of Nicaragua. Many of them conspired with the US embassy in Managua. Most of them were involved in the 2018 US-directed coup attempt that left 253 people dead, hundreds of Sandinistas tortured and traumatized, and billions of dollars of damage to the economy. They were planning further actions in the run-up to Nicaragua's 2021 elections when they were arrested.

The media should be telling the US public how their tax dollars are used for lies and violence and the overthrow of democratically elected governments – as happened in numerous countries in Latin America since World War II beginning with Guatemala in 1954.

These persons, regarded as US agents, received money directly or indirectly from the United States to wage acts of extreme violence during the coup attempt, largely ignored by the international media. Nicaragua gave an amnesty in June 2019 to hundreds of those found guilty of crimes, with the caveat that no further crimes be committed. But after the coup attempt, these 222 continued to direct destabilization actions, or they financed and managed actions with money from the US. Where did the US money come from and what was it used for?

Money from agencies funded by the US government was used in three main ways:

1. To finance media terrorism
2. To create so-called NGOs or nonprofits which, for example, trained young people to overthrow their own government
3. To create or sustain so-called "human rights" organizations

Funds were directed through US agencies such as the US Agency for Inter-

national Development (USAID), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and others. USAID alone provided US\$315,009,297 from 2014 to 2021; the biggest years were 2017 and 2018 with a total of US\$100 million to nonprofits and "human rights" organizations. In May 2018, during the attempted coup, Tom Ricker of the Quixote Center described 55 NED grants awarded between 2014 and 2017, totaling US\$4.2 million, "as part of a US government-funded campaign to provide a coordinated strategy and media voice for opposition groups in Nicaragua."

They used media terrorism with outright lies, fake news, and distortion, including millions of fake messages through social media, to incite and maintain the coup attempt and to foment assassinations and hate crimes. These crimes included torture, murder, and actual burning of Sandinistas; arson of Sandinistas' homes; and destruction of dozens of public buildings like schools, health centers, and city halls. Since 2007, when Daniel Ortega returned to the presidency, the US helped create and fund media not just to misinform Nicaraguans but to fool US citizens.

This funding helped create a subversive front of Nicaragua-based newspapers, television stations, radio stations, websites, news agencies, and social media pages, whose sole purpose was and is to attack the Sandinista government while pretending to be "independent". The US corporate media reprinted the false propaganda narrative created by this media front in Nicaragua. Thus, the news that most people in the US get about Nicaragua is effectively created and paid for by Washington.

US funding set up NGOs and "think tanks," which provided incomes for opposition figures, promoted their views and their "research," and enabled the creation of training schemes aimed at young Nicaraguans. Kenneth Wollack, now chairman of the state-funded NED, bragged to the US Congress on June 14, 2018, that these US-funded bodies had trained 8,000 young Nicaraguans to take part in the uprising. Yorlis Luna has described in detail the indoctrination process. An article for Global Americans gave details of the NED "laying the groundwork for insurrection" in 2018.

US money continues to fund their propaganda work, even when done by other countries. For example, prior to the 2021 Nicaragua Presidential elections, NED allocated US\$1,664,321 for Nicaraguans and

their organizations in Costa Rica to continue lying about the government.

These are some of the key people who lost their citizenship:

Cristiana Chamorro is part of the famous family of oligarchs that count seven members as previous presidents and own various media outlets including La Prensa, funded since the 1980s by the US. Cristiana is the daughter of former president Violeta Barrios de Chamorro who was handpicked by the US as the candidate in the 1990 elections. Cristiana Chamorro adheres to the same neoliberal ideology. She was the director of the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation, one of the recipients and main distributors of US money in Nicaragua.

The foundation's main purpose was to channel funds to some 25 opposition media outlets, several owned by the Chamorro family itself.

Cristiana Chamorro was presented by US think tanks such as The Dialogue as the likely next president of Nicaragua in the 2021 elections and was recently described in the New York Times as a "leading contender" for the presidency. She has little political experience and was not a member of a political party; only political parties can nominate presidential candidates. Moreover, she denied wanting to run for election in 2021 and only changed her mind when her arrest for money laundering appeared imminent.

Cristiana's brother Carlos Fernando has his own media empire including the very slick online Confidential and various expensive television programs. US money through the Chamorro Foundation supported part of these family businesses. His think tank, CINCO, also received funds from the foundation.

Confidential describes itself as an "independent" media outlet, but this is untrue. In fact Confidential goes well beyond the role of a right-wing media outlet. It publishes as fact the outputs of other NED and USAID funded bodies, as well as CINCO, whose "research" bears little relationship to the facts. Ever since 2018, it has completely whitewashed the involvement of opposition leaders in violence, writing for the Associated Press.

Carlos Fernando Chamorro had already left the country before he was charged for the crimes of laundering money, property, and assets; misappropriation and improper

*Continued on page 3*

# CENTRAL AMERICA

retention of funds; and abusive management of funds. Recently, along with 93 others, he was declared a traitor and lost his citizenship. He has never served time and has been lauded as an “independent” journalist and never discusses the funding he receives from the US and elsewhere.

Juan Sebastian Chamorro was chosen by the US to head the Millennium Challenge Corporation under former neoliberal President Enrique Bolaños. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is another “independent” US foreign assistance agency created by Congress in 2004.

He was found guilty on Feb. 23, 2022, and sentenced to 13 years. One criminal conviction was for requesting US intervention toward a change of government in Nicaragua. Chamorro was charged with participating in an international criminal organization to commit grave crimes against the security of the State of Nicaragua. Like his cousin Cristiana, Juan Sebastián claimed to be an election candidate in 2021, but no political party chose to nominate him.

Félix Maradiaga, one of the 222, recently appeared on PBS Newshour and on NPR, where he was described as “a former Nicaraguan presidential candidate.” Yet he has never been a leading political figure or electoral candidate. His nonprofit, the Institute for Strategic Studies and Public Policy (IEEPP), has been a major conduit for US funding and interference in Nicaragua through a US-funded “Municipal Governance Program.” From the NED alone it received at least \$260,000 in the period 2014-2018.

During the attempted coup in 2018, a known gang leader named Christian Mendoza, aka “Viper,” was captured by police. Viper’s subsequent full confession linked Félix Maradiaga, who emerged as one of the leaders of the coup attempt, to organized crime and a plot to overthrow the government. Viper described a multi-pronged plan to destabilize the government by channeling rage and attacking symbols of the Ortega government and the FSLN party, as well as the goal to recruit 28-35 individuals with as many arms as possible.

Viper also stated that Maradiaga and another opposition figure, Hugo Torres, came to UPOLI (Polytechnic University) to give money to a group called “8 de Marzo” (March 8th). The funding was for the group to buy arms and drugs and to perform acts of terrorism. A damaging video showed Maradiaga at UPOLI with a man called Pio Arellano who was brandishing a handgun.

These descriptions, bolstered by cited evidence as well as extensive on-the-ground observation, are intended to counter some of the massive mis- and disinformation about Nicaragua disseminated by the major media, supporters of the Nicaraguan oligarchy, and the US government. The people of Nicaragua have repeatedly expressed their desire to live in peace, to build their country together, and to select their leaders without foreign interference or threats of violence.

Source: *NicaNotes*, 3/2/23

## Rebuttal to UN Report on Nicaragua

By *Nicaragua Solidarity Coalition*

To the United Nations Human Rights Council:

The report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua (GHREN), released by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on March 2, 2023, should never have been published:

- It is extremely biased, based on material from only one side in what was a serious and prolonged conflict, despite the requirement to examine “all alleged human rights violations and abuses committed in Nicaragua since April 2018.”

- The claim that the group was unable to get material from the Nicaraguan government is false because the government had already submitted very substantial documentation to both the UN and the OAS, which was never taken into account by either body.

- It completely fails to address the enormous damage done to ordinary



people, businesses, and public services by violent protesters in 2018, perpetuating a gross injustice against the human rights of thousands of Nicaraguans.

- It makes many allegations that are demonstrably wrong and do not withstand a simple checking of the facts.

- It was presented in a sensational and unprofessional manner, making unfounded and damaging slurs against the Nicaraguan people and their government.

This report is an attempt to use a multilateral human rights body to lend

legitimacy to a regime change campaign and justify sanctions. It is an abuse of the United Nations system.

Instead of repeating these unsubstantiated claims against a country clearly being targeted for regime change by the United States, the UNHRC should be condemning the economic coercive measures the latter country has imposed on one-third of humanity, which violate the UN Charter, kill thousands, and constitute crimes against humanity.

If the UNHRC wants to help the people of sanctioned countries, it must advocate for the immediate lifting of coercive measures, which would create a climate more favorable to the enjoyment of civil and political rights. If the UNHRC wants to facilitate peace and reconciliation in Nicaragua, it must examine the testimony of ordinary Nicaraguans and the findings of the Nicaraguan Commission for Truth, Justice and Peace. Other essential materials that need to be considered are easily located. The spurious, unprofessional report published by the GHREN on March 2, 2023, must be withdrawn.

Source: *NicaNotes*, 3/23/23

## INVASION: Who Takes the Lead in Haiti?

*By Travis Ross, teacher and co-editor of the Canada-Haiti Information Project*

At the behest of Washington, Canada has begun a “significant military deployment in Haiti,” according to Canadian Ambassador to Haiti Sébastien Carrière. “We took over,” Carrière told a journalist on February 19. “We delivered armor. There have been two deliveries since October. There would be a third delivery in the next few days, and another one later in February. There is this CP-140 surveillance operation, intelligence sharing, there are ships arriving. It’s still military deployment in a significant way.”

This deployment is justified by Haitian de facto Prime Minister Ariel Henry’s request to the United Nations on October 7, 2022 for a foreign “special military intervention” into Haiti to fight “gang violence.” But the Haitian people’s overwhelming hostility to this proposal can be understood by Haiti’s recent experience with UN military occupation.

On the day, February 29, 2004, that a US SEAL team kidnapped President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from his home, the US, Canada, and France landed troops in Haiti, militarily occupying the country for the next three months. On June 1, 2004, they handed off the occupation to a much more cheaply paid multinational army called the UN Mission to Stabilize Haiti or MINUSTAH.

Over the 13 years it was deployed in Haiti, MINUSTAH averaged about 9,000 military troops and 4,000 police officers from 56 mostly poor countries around the world. Brazil led the mission in which Latin American soldiers predominated, from Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay. Ironically, most of these nations were then led by “pink tide” presidents who should have shunned collusion with Northern imperialist powers in policing Haiti after a clearly US-backed coup, as Venezuela and Cuba did.

“MINUSTAH is how the US has outsourced its control of Haiti,” author and activist Bill Quigley explained. The UN force helped consolidate the post-coup government of Washington’s puppet Gérard Latortue and committed multiple crimes against the Haitian people. In 2010, MINUSTAH soldiers committed hundreds of acts of sexual assault on Haitian women and minors, even operating a child-sex ring. Poverty-compelled prosti-

tution left at least 265 children abandoned when MINUSTAH left Haiti.

The UN occupation effectively throttled Haitian democracy, helping to install the PHTK as the dominant force in Haitian politics in 2011. Under PHTK rule, state institutions have been dismantled, so that today de facto Prime Minister Ariel Henry rules without a single elected official.

Before January’s CELAC Summit, President Lula of Brazil received a letter from *Mouvement Dialogo 2000* signed by Argentine artist, peace activist, and Nobel-Prize-winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel and long-time human rights activist and co-founder of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Nora Cortiñas.

“We particularly call on the Brazilian government, which you preside over, to support the Haitian people’s rights by rejecting any military intervention, by withdrawing from the ‘Core Group,’ and by working for its dissolution, and the closure of the UN trusteeship office (BINUH),” the letter reads. “The Haitian people are rising up against the enormous social and political crisis they face and the threat of a new military occupation that the US is openly promoting” and demand “the resignation of the de facto government of Ariel Henry. a government not elected by the Haitian people but imposed and supported by those powers through the disastrous ‘Core Group.’”

As the Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) points out, “nowhere in the Buenos Aires Declaration (CELAC, in support of intervention) do they mention the role of the international community in creating the current crisis in Haiti. Nowhere do they mention that the crisis is a crisis of imperialism, brought on by the UN, the Core Group, the US, Canada, and other international so-called ‘friends’ of Haiti.”

On the same day that CELAC published the Buenos Aires Declaration, the Caribbean Community issued a statement that it had begun contacting “Haitian stakeholders over the past few weeks about their willingness to attend a meeting in a CARICOM country.”

Despite “reaching out to stakeholders”, CARICOM only invited Ariel Henry to represent Haiti at their 44th biannual meeting on February 15 in Nassau, Bahamas. Haiti’s security crisis was top of the list for discussion. They also focused on the waves of Haitian migrants arriving on the shores of CARICOM countries flee-

ing poverty and violence. Members complained about the expenses involved in housing and deporting these “migrants.” CARICOM has temporarily rejected the call for military intervention, but “both Jamaica and the Bahamas have said they are willing to contribute by sending members of their own security forces. Other Caribbean countries that have forces that could assist in such a mission include Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.”

The Bahamas’ PM Philip Davis sees the increased flow of Haitian refugees as “a substantial threat,” and said he “would send troops or police to Haiti as part of a peacekeeping force if asked to do so by the UN or the Caribbean Community. What we in CARICOM have come to appreciate is that we do not have the resources to deal with the Haiti problem ourselves, we need outside help, and we are looking to the North, to Canada and the US.”

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended CARICOM’s biannual meeting with Ambassador to Haiti Sébastien Carrière, Ambassador to the UN Bob Rae, and his national security adviser Jody Thomas. He announced that Canada will provide \$12.3 million in new humanitarian assistance and \$10 million for the International Office on Migration to support migrants in the region. He confirmed sending a Canadian military plane to support “anti-gang” operations, two Kingston-class naval vessels to patrol the waters around Haiti, and many armored vehicles to the Haitian National Police to “combat gangs.”

A coalition of countries willing to back a military intervention in Haiti is forming. Canada is not willing to lead a multinational “special military force” into Haiti but has been trying to get a regional body, CARICOM, CELAC, or the OAS to take the lead.

The Caribbean’s most vociferous cheerleader for foreign military intervention into Haiti is the neighboring Dominican Republic. In January, President Luis Abinader reiterated his call to “build a strong military force to help the Haitian National Police.” Over the past year, Abinader has expelled tens of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent from the Dominican Republic, including pregnant women.

Source: *Popular Resistance*, 3/17/23

## USAID: Disaster Capitalism at Work

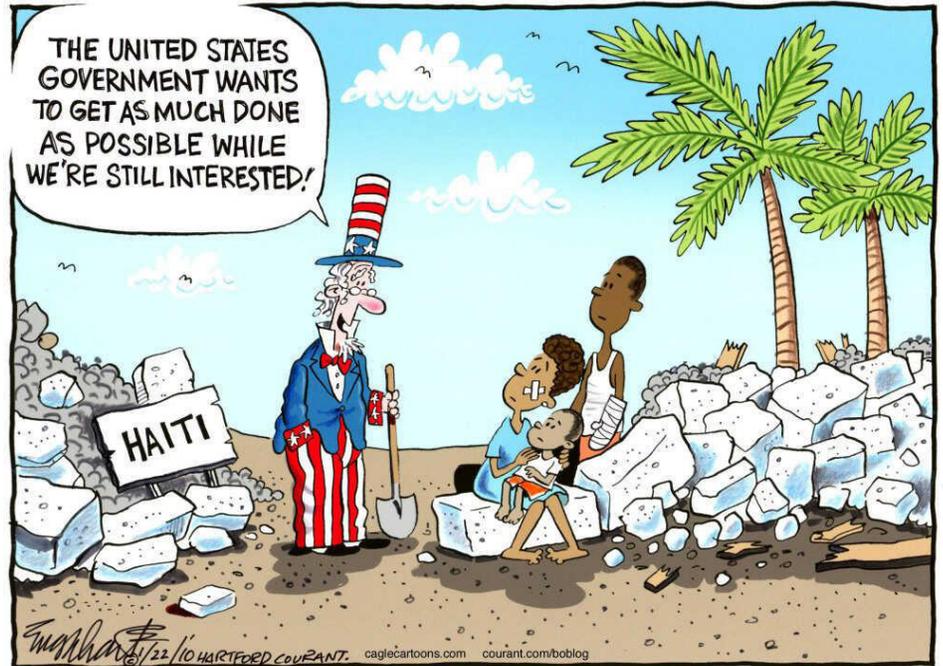
By Amanda Yee, journalist

The US. Agency for International Development was established by executive order under the Kennedy administration in 1961, tasked with the stated mission of administering humanitarian assistance or international development abroad. But make no mistake: USAID serves as a tool of US capitalist and imperialist interests which exists solely to direct the money and resources of the Global South into the pockets of the US capitalist class. USAID now operates in 100 countries worldwide and has an annual budget of nearly \$30 billion to spend on its global development programs. As an arm of US “soft power,” USAID’s intentions are deliberately shrouded within this rhetoric of aid and humanitarian assistance. In the first few decades of its existence, USAID was chiefly responsible for developing programs and infrastructure in other countries to attract foreign investment.

Beginning in the early 2000s, USAID shifted toward more direct engagement with the private sector, a development brought about by the founding of its Global Development Alliance and billed as “a partnership where USAID and the private sector work together to develop and implement market-based approaches to solve development challenges.” What this means in practice is that USAID works closely with private sector firms, handing out multi-million dollar contracts to US corporations like Dupont, Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft and Coca-Cola to carry out “development” and aid projects in the Global South.

As an arm of US corporate interests and US imperialism in general, the objective of USAID is to seek new markets and generate profits for western-based corporations, and it does so in one of two ways. The first is through contracting out humanitarian aid and development work, often in the aftermath of a natural disaster or catastrophe, essentially opening these countries to foreign capital and enriching the US capitalist class at the expense of the local economy. In fact, 80% of all USAID funding goes to just 75 organizations, while only 6% goes directly to receiving countries. The second is through enlisting contractors to carry out “democracy promotion” programs which seek to advance US foreign policy objectives. Often this entails shaping civil society through training programs or backing local movements to subvert governments resistant to US hegemony, with the aim of overthrowing that government in order to install one more subservient to western capitalist penetration and the demands of US. foreign policy.

Haiti is a good example of USAID’s disaster capitalism strategy of awarding contracts to the private sector under the guise of reconstruction and redevelopment, both with disastrous results.



On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, killing 220,000 people, injuring another 300,000 and leaving 1.5 million more homeless. In the wake of the catastrophe, the United States provided \$1.6 billion in reconstruction funding to Haiti, \$651 million of which went to USAID. Rather than employing Haitian construction companies, USAID contracted out the rebuilding projects to international firms. For instance, Minnesota-based construction firm THOR was awarded \$18 million in contracts and Mexico-based firm CEMEX received over \$7 million.

Described as a “gold rush” by US Ambassador Kenneth Merten in a leaked Feb. 1, 2010 Wikileaks cable, the tragedy of the earthquake was a surefire boon for international companies: For every \$1 that USAID spent, less than one penny went directly to Haitian organizations, companies or the Haitian government.

But by far the largest recipient of USAID funding in Haiti was Washington DC.-based contractor Chemonics International, who received over \$200 million to carry out a total of 141 projects. In fact, USAID awarded more money to Chemonics than to the entire Haitian government in the wake of the earthquake.

And just like in Iraq, these foreign contractors produced less-than-desirable results: An audit conducted on Chemonics revealed that the company had a tendency to not finish jobs, evaluated its own projects on arbitrary criteria not having anything to do with the project, and failed to set timelines causing some projects to fall behind schedule. In one case, Chemonics was contracted to build Haiti’s new Parliament building, but what they constructed came out half-finished and unusable: The company only built the framework of the building, not even

erecting interior walls to divide office spaces nor did they bother to furnish the building. Left with this, the Haitian government was forced to draw \$775,000 from its public treasury to complete the project. Despite these disastrous results, Chemonics to this day remains USAID’s top contractor and was awarded \$506.4 million in contracts in 2021 alone.

Another USAID project conducted in the aftermath of the earthquake was a “New Settlement Program” to build over 15,000 houses in Caracol. Due to mismanagement and improper planning, the number of houses built was drastically reduced to 2,649. This was in large part due to ballooning costs associated with contracting work out to foreign firms and importing materials, which raised the initial \$55 million projected cost to \$90 million. Of the houses that were built, many of them were found to be of poor quality, often “missing roof fasteners, sub-specification roof materials.” Due to shoddy work of the first contractors, USAID quietly awarded another \$4.5 million contract to US-based consulting and engineering firm Tetra Tech to provide a plan to repair the Caracol houses.

Whether through relief assistance or promoting “democracy” in the Global South, the pro-business objectives of USAID remain clear: to create new markets for international capital at the expense of the local population, or to employ a longer-term strategy of installing a regime compliant to the whims of international capital and US policy objectives. In this way, USAID serves as the humanitarian face of colonial exploitation.

Source: *Orinoco Tribune*. 2/15/23

## SANCTIONS: Decades of Resistance in Cuba

By Louis A. Pérez, Jr., professor of history and Director of the Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of North Carolina.

*Ed. Note: excerpted for length*

This past September President Joe Biden renewed the US trade embargo against Cuba, thereby extending into the 62nd year the regimen of punitive sanctions. The policy, as Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson acknowledged in 2015, is “harsher than on many other countries in the world over the years.” Cuba has been under US sanctions for more than half of its existence as an independent nation. Set loose in 1960, the policy was thereupon left to drift pointlessly in a recurring loop of history through thirteen presidential administrations, bereft of plausible purpose and barren of results other than adding to the circumstances of privation under which the Cuban people confront daily life.

Conditions of want and need, however, should not be viewed as the unintended collateral consequences of sanctions. On the contrary: conditions of want and need are the purpose of sanctions. The policy is informed by a cynical logic to induce suffering and inflict hardship as a means to deepen Cuban discontent, whereupon Cubans driven by want and motivated by need would rise up to remove a government the United States wishes gone. The “only foreseeable means of alienating internal support,” the Department of State insisted as early as April 1960, “is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship... Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba [and]... to bring about hunger, desperation, and overthrow of government.” A simple cause-and-effect calculus, President Dwight Eisenhower reasoned: “If they [the Cuban people] are hungry they will throw Castro out.” Regime change would come from within and bottom-up, as the State Department exulted, the “result of internal stresses and in response to forces largely, if not wholly, unattributable to the US.”

Punitive sanctions designed to do harm to the Cuban people as a means of regime

change were subsequently recast as a policy of righteous purpose and noble intent on behalf of the best interests of the Cuban people, to support, as President Joe Biden pronounced in 2022, the “Cubans’ aspirations for freedom and to allow the Cuban people to determine their own futures.” The United States is taking it upon itself, in other words, to punish the Cuban people for their own good.

The degree to which US sanctions have contributed to Cuban want and need is, of course, debatable; that sanctions are intended to promote want and need is not. Therein lies the tragic irony of 60 years of sanctions. Conditions of want and need are rarely circumstances conducive to reasoned political deliberations. A policy informed with malicious intent, designed purposely to foster deprivation and foment destitution, does not readily allow Cubans to envision the future in any form other than as an outlook of urgent immediacy. A people preoccupied with matters of subsistence as the overriding reality of daily life, obliged to deploy vast amounts of time and energy in pursuit of even the most minimum needs of everyday life, are unlikely to engage in deliberations on forms of democratic processes. A survey in 2008 published in the *New York Times* reported that more than half the Cubans interviewed considered economic needs to be their principal concern. Less than 10 percent identified political freedom as the main problem confronting the island. As a Cuban colleague once suggested to me: “First necessities, later democracy.”

Sanctions have indeed contributed to Cuban hardship and added to Cuban discontent. But the desired discontent has resulted less in expressions of organized disaffection than recurring cycles of mass emigration. The irony is not lost on informed observers. Those sectors of the population most likely to constitute themselves as a political opposition are often the very people most inclined to emigrate for reasons of personal hardship. Ironic too that at a time of the national mood turning dark about immigration from Latin America, US policy serves to add to the woes of a people for whom emigration to the United States offers the most immediate

remedy to hardship. An estimated 180,000 Cubans have sought asylum in 2022, many of whom have joined the swelling numbers assembling at the US-Mexican border.

The protests in October 2022 responded to dire conditions in the wake of Hurricane Ian. The hurricane served to reveal the utter fragility of an aging infrastructure. Existing chronic shortages of food, fuel, and medicine were exacerbated by flooding, loss of agriculture and livestock, and days of island-wide blackouts coming at a time of a protracted sweltering summer heat. All in all, these constituted conditions of sufficient urgency to prompt the Cuban government to request US aid. On October 18, the Department of State offered Cuba \$2 million in the form of “critical humanitarian aid” and promised to “continue to monitor and assess humanitarian needs [and] continue to seek ways to provide meaningful support to the Cuban people.”

The irony of the scene is palpable: Hurricane Ian contributing further to circumstances of Cuban want and need, a people prostrate soliciting US humanitarian aid to relieve the very conditions to which sanctions have been dedicated to creating. The cynicism of the punitive intent of sanctions stands in sharp relief: humanitarian support to aid Cubans in want and need caused by the hurricane while continuing to induce want and need as the purpose of US policy. Perhaps the most egregious failure of sanctions lies in its ignorance of Cuban history. Cubans have long acted in discharge of agency as protagonists in their own history. They have repeatedly prevailed over misgovernment and maladministration. They have managed their own history without outside political interference. Sanctions serve to compromise Cuban agency and often burden Cuban capacities to act in function of credible purpose on behalf of legitimate political change.

Source: *NACLA*, 10/24/22

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# NORTH AMERICA

## NEOCOLONIALISM: The Gringos Are Coming to Mexico!

*Communique of the Assembly of the Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus in Defense of Land and Territory*

*Editor's note: excerpted for length*

In the 16th century, Charles V entrusted his explorers to find the best passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific. This was perhaps the first moment in the long history of the colonizers' interest in connecting both oceans with an interoceanic passage through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Opening access routes, across countries or entire continents, is a constant in this long history called colonialism. The same goal, an essential condition of the capitalist mode of production, has persisted, and the large international conglomerates continue to promote it today.

Under President Juarez the interoceanic passage was known as the McLein-Ocampo Treaty. During the administrations of Lopez Portillo and De la Madrid it was presented as the Alpha-Omega Plan; under Ernesto Zedillo, it was the Integral Economic Development Program; Vicente Fox included it in the so-called Plan Puebla-Panama; Felipe Calderon inserted it within the Mesoamerica Integration and Development Project; Peña Nieto promoted it within the Special Economic Zones, and it is being promoted again under the name of Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

This megaproject will amputate the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Panama was amputated in the 19th century from Colombia and turned into a defenseless and depopulated country, allowing the United States to establish, in perpetuity, disadvantageous agreements for the administration of the interoceanic canal built there.

Ken Salazar, US ambassador in Mexico, has stated that: "The Isthmus is such a strategic site that it was recognized more than 100 years ago, but it has not been developed. That is why we look to the south. We can do some truly great things. You know that if we just sit still, we cannot thrive. You know it. It happens in your personal lives, in your governments. We have to be optimistic about where we can go, but we need immediate action to make efforts that will have an impact. So, we see opportunity, we see optimism, we see that with this project and other efforts that we are embarking on in Central America, this region of the Americas is where the future of the economy lies. Here is also the future of democracy. Because our values, as President Biden says, are to lift up all people." (San



Juan de Ulua Veracruz, April 22, 2022).

Laura Richardson, the new head of the US Southern Command, during the US dispute with China over world hegemony of lithium and water resources in Latin America, stated that the natural resources of this hemisphere "have a lot to do with (US) national security and we have to up our game."

The American Chamber of Commerce has stated through its spokesperson in Mexico that this megaproject will enable "natural resources, geographic location, strategic industries and trade agreements to accelerate the integration of global supply chains" and turn the Isthmus of Tehuantepec into a center of development controlled by those at the top.

It is important never to forget that a country is and will be dominated by the capital invested in it. The colonialist crusade that clings to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec involves capitalist conglomerates relocating global supply chains to be nearer to their closest and most powerful ally: the US. It will also allow companies to insert themselves in the area and promote the development of productive activities that generate large quantities of goods to supply the immediate market, the US, or the international market. The cost will be the environmental, territorial, symbolic and political degradation of everything that constitutes the entirety of this region.

It has been announced that Constellation Brands, an American company that produces and markets beer, wine, and spirits, will be installed in Veracruz. The brewery conglomerate requires 20 million cubic meters of water annually to operate. But this company is not the only one accompanying the US General Staff in the crusade for the Isthmus. We highlight: Caxxor Group, Hyundai Motor Company, Amazon Inc, CARGILL, General

Motors, VISTEON, SHELL and NESTLE, among several others.

The official reason for the recent visit of John Kerry, currently the US Special Envoy for Climate, to the Isthmus is that the US will be the main investor in the four wind farms that will be installed. The US will provide resources to the CFE (Federal Electricity Commission) to be the owner of these wind farms. What they have not said is that there are also capitalist conglomerates focused on the wind farms sector, such as: Applied Energy Services (AES corporation); EDP Renewables; Semptra Infrastructure; TC Energy; INVENERGY; and again SHELL.

The neocolonialist enterprise over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, headed by the US, will lead to the commercialization, speculation, and disappearance of everything that constitutes the territory under mountains of ash and scrap. It will allow for an almost miraculous improvement of the means of production and at the same time a catastrophic dislocation of the life of twelve different indigenous communities that inhabit this isthmian region.

Today once again the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and we, who are an organic part of it, must be on alert. If we let them advance, they will come to strip us of our land and our memory. It is time to walk very carefully, to defend, as have those who preceded us, this vast territory that belongs to us, in the face of the gringos who come to divide up this convulsive but beautiful territory. We will be waiting for you, with dignity and without stepping back from defending life and our territories.

Source: Sexta Grietas del Norte, 3/13/23

## MILITARISM: US Southern Command

By Jorge Capelán, Nicaraguan political analyst

Ed. Note: excerpted for length

The annual report presented March 8, by General Laura J. Richardson, head of the US Southern Command (SouthCom) before the House Armed Services Committee, provides a series of details on the Pentagon's priorities towards Latin America and the Caribbean. It reasserts and updates the Monroe Doctrine that Latin America is US property that the US is ready to fight to keep.

To counter the influence of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Russia, Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela and Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), the General calls for a "campaign through an integrated approach to use all available levers across the Department of Defense, the US interagency, allies and partner nations to establish the desired conditions of security, peace and prosperity throughout our neighborhood."

According to Gen. Richardson "At the end of the Cold War, the United States, its allies and partners believed that democracy would displace authoritarianism around the world. Twenty-five years later, the strategic environment in Latin America and the Caribbean has changed significantly" with "autocrats...working overtime to undermine democracy."

"Our adversaries use a multidisciplinary, multidomain approach to counter democracy, and SouthCom, our allies and partners must employ the full weight of integrated deterrence, leveraging the whole of government, industry, the private sector and academia, to respond effectively....

with a much greater sense of urgency."

"Integrated Deterrence includes campaigning with our (NATO) partners and allies as force multipliers....We have recently adopted the Western Hemisphere Collaborative Framework. This framework commits us to more frequent information sharing and closer collaboration...."

The SouthCom chief notes that China's trade with Latin America grew from \$18 billion in 2002 to \$450 billion in 2022 and is expected to reach \$700 billion by 2035. "By contrast, current US trade with the region stands at \$700 billion, suggesting that the US.... trade advantage is eroding....What concerns me as a Combatant Commander is the myriad ways in which the PRC is extending its malign influence, wielding its economic might.... to expand its military and political access and influence ...." "The PRC is investing in critical infrastructure, including deep-water ports, cyber and space facilities that can potentially have dual use for malign commercial and military activities." The head of SouthCom mentions Chinese participation in public bids for works in the Panama Canal, and Chinese plans to build maritime facilities in Ushuaia, in southern Argentina, which "would provide proximity to the Strait of Magellan, the Drake Passage and Antarctica."

Also of concern is China's military space capabilities. "There are at least 11 PRC-linked space facilities in five countries in this region.... that provide Beijing with space tracking and surveillance capabilities.... a joint space surveillance facility in Chile and a deep space station in Argentina operated by an agency subordinate to the People's Liberation Army (PLA)."

High on SouthCom's list of "concerns"

with China is fisheries. Chinese Communist Party subsidized vessels "fish off the coast of South America....severely deplete fish stocks, disregard environmental safeguards, destabilize the economies of coastal States, and exacerbate security problems, at a cost of nearly \$3 billion annually in lost revenue."

Gen. Richardson is also concerned with Russia's influence. "Last year, Russia continued its military engagements with both Venezuela and Nicaragua. Last year, Venezuela hosted Sniper Frontier 2022, a shooting competition and subcomponent of the Russian Army International Games. Nicaragua has publicly supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine, voting – along with North Korea, Syria and Belarus – against a UN resolution condemning Russia for its invasion." She lambasts the popularity of Russian media "RT en Español, Sputnik Mundo and their various social networks" in the region.

According to Richardson, "The leading cause of death among citizens aged 15-49 in Latin America and the Caribbean is violence...." She estimates that there are some 200 Transnational Criminal Organizations operating in the region, ranging from drug cartels to guerrillas. These "engage in a wide variety of illicit activities, including drug smuggling, arms trafficking, illegal logging and mining, human trafficking, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, and counterfeit manufacturing." Per Gen. Richardson, these Transnational Criminal Organizations are not only "better funded, equipped and staffed than the law enforcement trying to combat them," but they "increasingly rely on criminal organizations connected to the PRC to launder billions of dollars around the world." The TCOs also cause the deaths of some 100,000 American drug victims a year.

Turning to regional humanitarian crises, Richardson listed a number of issues that are viewed as "security challenges", such as migration. The effects of the COVID pandemic, which left 170 million in poverty, have been driving "irregular migration and creat(ing) an environment conducive to corruption and exploitation". In Haiti, where violence "has reached its worst level in decades....more than 69,000 Haitians to have sought refuge in the United States in FY2022."

For Cuba, the criticisms are political, totally omitting the role of the US in the



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# AMERICAS

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emigration of Cubans and in the difficulties caused by the US blockade of Cuba. Venezuela is similarly critiqued, in more gloomy terms and with “possible crimes against humanity”.

Per Gen. Richardson, “the best way to outmaneuver our adversaries is to.... enhance the capacity and resilience of partner countries through security cooperation programs, exercises and training, while upholding democratic values to ensure that malign influence and autocratic alternatives do not.... take root.... Ultimately, the strategic competition with the PRC is an ideological competition between democracy and authoritarianism.”

For security cooperation, SouthCom is relying on Partner Capability Building programs to develop “...trust and interpersonal bonding.” “Our Ministry of Defense advisors and field service representatives embedded in the security ministries of partner countries, such as Colombia, support modernization and innovation efforts in areas such as personnel, defense intelligence and doctrine development to help our partners address threats to their national security.” Notably, there is “...Colombia to provide training and readiness directly to several countries.... in Spanish, and at a fraction of the cost of training provided by the United States.”

The State Department is also part of the security assistance program. “The Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and Excess Defense Articles programs produce exponential returns in this Area of Responsibility,” states the SouthCom chief. She mentions the recent purchase of 12 joint tactical vehicles by Brazil for \$15.8 million.

SouthCom also runs the Department of State’s International Military Education and Training (IMET) program in the region, which provides professional military training to personnel from 28 countries. With \$13.9 million budgeted for the IMET program, this allocation provides professional military education to about 800 international students in US schools. “The IMET training program is one of SouthCom’s most powerful levers to counter the PRC and other malign actors in the region by familiarizing international students with democratic ideals and professional military doctrine. Partner country personnel attending these schools often become senior military commanders in their respective countries. The relationships established at these schools last a

lifetime.” [Comment: Any resemblance to the School of the Americas is NOT a coincidence.]

The SouthCom commander also praised the joint military exercises in the region, and the SouthCom Health Program. “In 2022, more than 11,000 participants from 34 countries took part in our maneuvers, proving once again that the United States has the convening power to bring nations together.” In SouthCom’s Health Program, the hospital ship USNS COMFORT, in operation since 2007, was deployed to five countries. “Historically, the USNS COMFORT mission.... lasts approximately 159 days, but even during this year’s shortened 52-day mission, COMFORT managed to treat more than 30,000 patients, perform 350 surgeries and positively impact 100,000 people with its outreach activities.” There were also orthopedic, ophthalmologic, and dental operations in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador.

As an area for improvement, the SouthCom chief points to the Army Corps of Engineers. “We have to step up with much greater responsiveness....if we are going to meet the needs of our partner nations and surpass the PRC in this area.” She mentions “technical support” last year to the Panama Canal Authority, work on the Coca Coda dam in Ecuador, allegedly poorly built by China, and the integration of US experts into the Dominican State to “help develop efforts to preserve rare earth materials.” The recent Army Corp of Engineers “agreement with the Peruvian Navy to build Peru’s port facilities, and its continued construction efforts at Tolomaida Air Base in Colombia.... will enhance our partners’ ability to counter CTOs in the region.”

Disaster and climate change assistance received mention, as some of the joint annual exercises “have a humanitarian relief and disaster response component to help increase resilience and preparedness.”

Given that the SouthCom commander was speaking to Congress, which allocates budget funds, she spoke of material and monetary needs. “In this region, a small investment – whether in time, physical resources, funding or collaboration – goes a long way. We don’t have to spend more than the PRC to compete with it, but we must be present on the ground and act at the speed that is necessary. This requires a timely budget.”

“Security assistance goes hand in hand

with security cooperation. The security assistance we provide to countries like Colombia, Ecuador and Panama is a game changer for our partners, who work every day to combat illicit trafficking, tackle irregular migration and protect our region. However, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador are not currently eligible for the Foreign Military Financing [because of documented human rights failures]. We will work with the State Department to explore tailored solutions to advance regional policy objectives.”

Gen. Richardson spoke to Congress of countering organized crime and money laundering as military goals with capitalization needs: “Our Joint Interagency Task Force-S (JIATF-S) carries out the statutory mission of detecting and monitoring illicit drugs transiting into the United States in the maritime and air domains, earning a high return on modest investments.” But: “...much remains to be done. As US resources against this threat diminish, we will continue to innovate, both in strategy....and in unconventional resources.” “While continued disruption of illicit drug movements into the United States remains critical, to truly disrupt these multi-billion-dollar conglomerates, we must also support interagency efforts to follow the money trail....The US Coast Guard is one of SouthCom’s strongest partners.... providing the bulk of our counterdrug forces.” “The Coast Guard is conducting the largest recapitalization of its fleet since World War II. These recapitalization efforts will provide capabilities that support three SouthCom strategic initiatives: enhancing theater security cooperation, countering IUUF, and combating Transnational Criminal Organizations.”

The SouthCom Chief’s report concluded: “The defense of the US homeland is directly linked to the resilience, stability and security of the Latin American and Caribbean region. Proximity places us at the forefront of strategic competition as we share cross-border challenges and global threats .... Meeting these challenges requires campaigning through an integrated approach to use all available levers through the Department of Defense, the US interagency, allies and partner nations to establish the desired conditions of security, peace, and prosperity throughout our neighborhood.”

Source: *Chicago ALBA Solidarity*, 3/13/23

# Venezuela-US Relations: When 'Maximum Pressure' Fails

By Carlos Ron, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ed. Note: Excerpted for length

The strategy of “maximum pressure” imposed by Donald Trump on Venezuela has failed to achieve its goal of changing the Venezuelan government and pulling the country back into Washington’s sphere of influence. The resilience of the Venezuelan people led by President Nicolas Maduro has not only survived the attacks by the Trump Administration, but it has also resulted in adjustments to Washington’s strategy and has proved that resistance, creativity, and commitment to dialogue can pay off.

On January 23, 2019, the government of the United States quickly recognized a little-known deputy of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaido, as the Interim President of Venezuela, undermining the constitutional mandate obtained in May 2018 by President Nicolas Maduro. Immediately afterward, Venezuela broke diplomatic relations with the United States. The combination of strong unilateral coercive measures (or sanctions, as they are wrongly mislabeled), the recognition of a parallel government structure, and the support for overt acts of aggression that later ensued were aimed at ultimately providing the conditions for President Maduro to step down or be removed by force, opening the way for US-friendly actors that had otherwise failed to amass sufficient popular support in Presidential elections. However, none of these efforts or aggressions were enough to achieve the desired goal.

Within a short period of about three years, Venezuela saw its main sources of income blocked by illegal US sanctions: access to international financing was closed, while oil and gold trading was prohibited. An assassination attempt with drones in 2018 against President Maduro barely missed him and most government high officials. In 2019, after Guaido’s self-proclamation and the attempt in February to storm the border under the pretext of bringing humanitarian aid, cyber-attacks led to a massive, nationwide blackout, and were followed by a coup attempt that according to John Bolton’s frustrations, failed when the Venezuelan Chief Justice and Defence Minister failed to adhere to the plan.

In 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, the US Attorney General put a bounty on President Maduro’s head, as well as on the heads of other Venezuelan officials. Meanwhile, Venezuela was kept from tapping the

COVAX fund with its own resources blocked in US and European accounts, while two former US Green Berets attempted a clumsy invasion of Venezuela with Colombia-trained mercenaries. Key Trump officials have wanted to give their own account of the critical decisions made during their tenure at the White House. Pentagon Chief Mark Esper has confessed to how a military intervention was discussed in the Oval Office. More recently, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo revealed how \$1 billion of US taxpayer money was committed to supporting such actions as well as financing the extremist opposition.

The impact of these 924 illegal coercive measures and the aggressions against Venezuela, according to economists Jeffrey Sachs and Mark Weisbrot, could be calculated at around 40,000 casualties in 2018 alone. In comparison to the national income of 2014, the country lost no less than 70% of its revenue. The damage could be felt in access to food and medicine, but also in public services such as water and electricity that under the illegal sanctions had no access to spare parts or maintenance. Overall, the strategy set out to create a situation of national despair that would lead to a change of government. The vast majority of Venezuelans resisted, but some, lured by the narrative of alleged commitment to support for anti-Maduro postures, ended up finding their way across the border into the United States seeking better economic opportunities. The increase in Venezuelan migration to the United States is intrinsically linked to the illegal sanctions policy.

Venezuela employed creative resistance. Social programs like food subsidies were put in place to compensate low-income families. New legislation, such as the Anti-Blockade Law, gave the country new legal frameworks under which it could promote exports and needed investment. Meanwhile, Washington, always concerned about others’ ties to strategic allies such as China or Russia, drove Venezuela in that direction as the country relied on their solidarity to obtain vaccines and medical supplies to combat Covid-19. The result was clear: elections for a new National Assembly and for State Governments in 2020 showed that even opposition supporters rejected the strategy set out by Washington and the extremist leaders. Today, Venezuelan resistance has paid off. An economy set against all odds grew at a rate of 15% in 2022.

President Joe Biden inherited an embarrassing mess. A parallel government, whose recognition dropped from around 50 nations in 2019 to around five by the end of 2022. No

diplomatic or consular relations, amid the context of an influx of Venezuelan immigrants to the United States. But above all, a system of illegal sanctions prevents Venezuela from playing a stabilizing role in today’s energy market when it is most needed, as the effects of the crisis in Ukraine are felt worldwide.

One would expect a radical change of direction, but instead, only a few cautious steps have taken place. In March of 2022, contacts between both governments were taken up again, with several visits taking place throughout the year as well as the handing over to US authorities of some US nationals processed for crimes in Venezuela.

These new measures take place against the backdrop of a severe crisis in the extremist opposition, which led to a decision in late December to discontinue the so-called “interim government” of Juan Guaido. The US still recognizes the National Assembly elected in 2015, as Venezuela’s legitimate authority despite it having had its mandate expire in 2020.

Despite small adjustments, the current US Administration has still fallen short of a return to diplomacy. Both the illegal sanctions and other types of aggression against Venezuela persist. Alex Saab, a Venezuelan diplomatic envoy illegally detained in Cabo Verde, continues to be illegally detained in a Florida prison despite his diplomatic immunity. Venezuela’s accounts are still frozen, its Embassy remains closed, and its most valuable US asset, Citgo, remains in the hands of the extremist opposition. But the resilience of the government in Caracas has shown that the maximum pressure campaign was a complete failure.

President Maduro has shown two firm convictions. The first is that he will not cede the nation’s sovereignty to the pressure of illegal sanctions. He has stated in clear terms to the US that “Venezuela is to be respected and does not accept colonial models over its gas, oil industry, over its economy, and over our country.” But he has also indicated that dialogue and diplomacy are the way; that Venezuela is willing and ready to re-establish relations as long as they are based on mutual respect and an equal footing. For a country so concerned about the level of its geopolitical influence, it should learn from its rivals that the key to strong strategic alliances lies within dialogue, diplomacy, and respect and self-determination of others.

Source: *Valda*, 3/17/23

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# NEWS BRIEFS

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## Ibero-American Summit

The 28th Ibero-American Summit was held in the Dominican Republic in late March, with 13 delegations from South and Central America, the Caribe, and Spain in attendance. Decisions are made by consensus at the Ibero-American Summit, which can lead to fewer pronouncements. The summit did, however, approve the Ibero-American Cooperation Action Plan 2023-26, an Environmental Charter (also known as the Green Pact), the Charter of Principles and Rights in Digital Environments, and a Food Security Strategy. The summit leaders warned that climate change represents a great risk for the region, as well as an opportunity to strengthen economic integration. Later this year, a forum on migration will also be held in Ecuador and the next Summit will take place in Quito in 2024.

Speaking at the summit, Honduran President Xiomara Castro demanded an end to the US blockades against Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. She harshly criticized the US unilateral measures as a crime against humanity, unfair, and shameful, “absurd sanctions for the countries of the region that, if they do not obey.... then blockades and coups d’état are planned.”

Source: *Prensa Latina*, 03/25/23; *El Pais*, 03/26/23

## US Intervenes in Peru Coup

The day before Castillo’s failed maneuver to dissolve Congress, the US ambassador to the country, Lisa Kenna, met with the Minister of Defense, Gustavo Bobbio Rosas. The details of what was discussed in that meeting are not officially known; however, the following day, on December 7, 2022, Kenna wrote on her Twitter page: “The United States categorically rejects any extra-constitutional act by President Castillo to prevent Congress from fulfilling its mandate.” Kenna’s statement was made in reference to Castillo’s action earlier in the day, prior to his arrest. As a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer, Ambassador Kenna’s comment backing Peru’s right-wing controlled Congress is not surprising. Castillo represented everything the US, as well as local elites in Lima, have historically abhorred.

Source: *Orinoco Tribune*, 3/9/23

## Guatemala: US Militarization Continues

In 1996, peace accords were signed supposedly ending the armed conflict, but military support for Guatemala has continued. This includes trainings by the US National Guard, equipment donations such as 95 military vehicles last November, intelligence briefings between the US embassy and high-ranking Guatemalan military officials. While both governments say that militarization is the best way to preserve peace and national security, it really is security for the political interests of US politicians and investor capitalists, by curbing resistance movements and migration from the South. The historic truth is that militarization in Central America is a tool to control and repress people becoming a war on migrants and activists.

Source: *NISGUA*, *Unending War*, *Undying Resistance*, 03/2023

## Immigration: Detention Center Fire

Forty Latin Americans died in a fire at a Ciudad Juárez migrant detention center of the National Migration Institute of Mexico (INM) on the evening of March 27. Another 28 were injured. Many had been taken into custody that same afternoon in roundups carried out across Juárez by the INM at the mayor’s request. Mexican officials said migrants inside the center caused the fire by igniting a mattress in protest.

Policies from both countries placed these men in a migration building with locked doors, then trapped them in a terrible fire. Current US policies push Mexico to prevent people from crossing northward, keeping them in Mexico’s northern border cities at great risk. Mexican policies and practices then exacerbate the unsafe conditions in this limbo. The US’s current policies use Mexico as a key component to enforce US border policies.

Source: *NPR*, *NACLA*, 03/28/23 and 04/20/23

## Colombian “Summit” on Venezuela

On April 24th the Colombian government hosted an international summit supposedly to unblock the negotiations between the Venezuelan government and the US-backed opposition. Representatives from the US, Europe, and Latin America participated but neither Venezuela nor the Mexican government (which has been hosting the talks between the two parties) was invited. Not only was there fighting among the Colombia government participants but no agreements could be reached because the US would not sign the accords. The Venezuelan government issued an official statement noting its position on the conference after the end of the summit on Tuesday, April 25, posted via social media by the Venezuelan minister for foreign affairs, Yván Gil. In the communiqué, Venezuelan authorities reiterated the final goal of all illegal sanctions against Venezuela to be lifted, but also made clear that the resumption of the México Talks demands full compliance with the agreements already reached to unfreeze \$3.2 billion for the creation of the Social Fund, in order to finance health, education, public services, and risk mitigation, as well as the immediate release of Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab, kidnapped by the US.

Source: *Orinoco Tribune*, 3/25/23

## Honduran President Condemns Conspiracy

The president of Honduras, Xiomara Castro, decried that her government is the victim of “a conspiracy in the making” by the very same people who had plotted and perpetrated the coup against ex-President Manuel Zelaya in 2009.

“There is a conspiracy in the making, and it must be made clear to the people of Honduras,” President Castro said in a statement release by her office. “We have to only look at those who are backing this conspiracy, the same people who had perpetrated the coup in 2009. She warned that these sectors “are now trying to destabilize a government elected by the people” in November 2021. “If there is a rule of law, then those who are trying to incite destabilization should be called before the judiciary for treason,” she said.

Source: *Orinoco Tribune*, 4/23/23

# Weaponized Use of the Law

**Have you heard of Alex Saab?**

HE WAS KIDNAPPED IN AFRICA ON JUNE 12, 2020 ON ORDERS FROM WASHINGTON

CARO VERDE

HE WAS MAKING DEALS TO HELP GET FOOD AND MEDICINE TO VENEZUELAN LIVING UNDER A U.S.-LED BLOCKADE

ON OCTOBER 16, 2021 HE WAS ILLEGALLY TAKEN TO A MIAMI DETENTION CENTER

A SECOND KIDNAPPING!

BUT INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THIS HERO IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SANCTIONS GROWS EVERY DAY!

FREE ALEX SAAB!

HE'S A VENEZUELAN DIPLOMAT UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED IN THE UNITED STATES

HE WAS DETAINED IN VIOLATION OF HIS DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY

DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT

VICTIM OF A PLOT AGAINST THE SOVEREIGNTY OF VENEZUELA

INDEPENDENCIA

HE IS CURRENTLY A POLITICAL PRISONER OF THE U.S. SYSTEM

FEEDING THE HUNGRY IS NOT A CRIME! SOONER OR LATER JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL AND ALEX SAAB WILL BE FREE! JOIN THE FIGHT ASAP!

Source: Free Alex Saab Campaign

## LAWFARE: Alex Saab Case

It has been two years and eight months since the US government kidnapped Alex Saab. His health has deteriorated, his cancer has progressed and he has been denied urgently needed medical attention. There is a worldwide campaign for the freedom of Saab after being imprisoned on 15 trumped-up charges. He is being held in the Federal Detention Center in Miami. This is another example of how the US Empire represses “disobedient” governments.



Source: LA Progressive

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