

A US Plan to Topple Hugo Chavez?

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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"The socialist revolution will not be stopped by anyone because it has become the people." Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez

There's no better time to read Cindy Sheehan's heartfelt and galvanizing new book "Revolution, A Love Story" than today, just hours before Venezuela's presidential elections. The author provides a riveting summary of Latin American history dating back to the Conquistadors focusing particular attention on Washington's myriad interventions and the rise of the region's second greatest protagonist, Hugo Chavez. Sheehan—who is a self-confessed Chavez admirer—opines that the charismatic Venezuelan leader "like Simon Bolivar before him, not only dreams of a united Latin America, but is showing the way."

Regrettably, the United States has repeatedly tried to derail Chavez's reform agenda by funding anti-Chavez groups via non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that pretend to be working for human rights or democracy promotion. The real purpose of these US-funded saboteurs is to topple the democratically-elected Chavez. Barack Obama supports this type of subversion as enthusiastically as did his predecessor, George W. Bush. The only difference is that Obama is more discreet.

Here's an excerpt from an article by author and attorney Eva Golinger with more of the details:

"In Venezuela, the US has been supporting anti-Chavez groups for over 8 years, including those that executed the coup d'état 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....

Venezuela stands out as the Latin American nation where NED has most invested funding in opposition groups during 2009, with \$1,818,473 USD, more than double from the year before....Allen Weinstein, one of NED's original founders, revealed once to the Washington Post, "What we do today was done clandestinely 25 years ago by the CIA." (America's Covert "Civil Society Operations": US Interference in Venezuela Keeps Growing", Eva Golinger, Global Research)

In "Revolution, A Love Story" Sheehan provides a long list of Chavez's achievements including a steep reduction in unemployment (from 12 percent in 1998 to 6.1 percent in 2010), a sharp rise in the minimum wage (which is the highest in Latin America), bigger pensions for retiring workers, an increase in literacy to 99.6 percent, universal health care, and a poverty-rate that is less than half of what it was when Chavez took office.

Naturally, the successes of Bolivarian Revolution have incensed Venezuela's 1 percent who want to return to the golden era of plutocratic rule where the nation's wealth was plundered by a Mafia of unelected oligarchs. It's this amalgam of bandits to which Washington has hooked its wagon. Venezuela's elites are expected to challenge the election results shortly after the ballots have been counted (on October 7) and Chavez is declared the winner. Whether the plan goes forward or not is anyone's guess, but here's what's going on below the radar according to an article in Green Left titled "Venezuela: Ex-US ambassador outlines intervention plans":

"In an extraordinary paper released in September, former US ambassador to Venezuela, Patrick Duddy, outlined a range of military, financial and diplomatic measures that the US should be prepared to take against the Chavez government after the October 7 elections. In the paper, published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Duddy's recommendations include that in the event of "an outbreak of violence and/or interruption of democracy" the US should use various means to "to communicate to the Venezuelan military leadership that they are obliged to uphold their constitution, respect human rights, and protect their country's democratic tradition" and "organize a coalition of partners to limit an illegitimate Venezuelan administration's access to government assets held abroad as well as to the international financial system".

Isn't this the same strategy that the State Department used in Egypt when Mubarak was deposed? Didn't the US send signals to the Egyptian military that Washington would support them if they followed their instructions?

More from Green Left:

"In the paper... Duddy suggested the US "could also arrange for the proceeds of Venezuelan government-owned corporate entities to be held in escrow accounts until democracy is restored [and] ... block access to [Venezuelan government owned] CITGO's refining facilities in the United States and consider prohibiting [Venezuelan state] oil sales to the United States".

So the administration plans to carry out an agenda dictated by big oil? Now there's a surprise.

More from Green Left:

"...there are obvious concerns that this fits neatly with the objectives of those inside the right-wing opposition in Venezuela who are planning for the non-recognition of the coming elections if, as expected, Hugo Chavez wins.

With polls showing strong leads for Chavez, a campaign is already under way by sections of the right-wing opposition coalition to present any electoral defeat as being down to Chavez-led fraud."

Haven't we seen this movie before? The CIA-funded opposition immediately appears on the streets of the capital in the thousands; sets up their tents, their food stalls, and their rock bands, while the western media films every minor skirmish, every act of police violence, every sign-waving protester decrying the brutal, repressive regime of..."fill in the blanks." (Ukraine, Lebanon, Georgia etc) It's all so tedious, but effective nonetheless. Toppling democratically-elected governments ("color-coded revolutions) has become Washington's

favorite pastime. Is that what's in store for Hugo Chavez?

Keep in mind that, according to former US President Jimmy Carter, Venezuela's electoral system is "the best in the world". So we can be reasonably confident that the ballot-count will be fair and accurate. What we should be more concerned about is what happens after the votes have been tallied. That's when the real trouble will begin.

The western media has been trying to create the illusion that the race between Chavez and right-wing challenger Henrique Capriles Radonski is close. It isn't. The media is lying. Chavez is ahead by a wide-margin although you wouldn't know it by reading the strumpet press. The polls currently show Chavez holding a 12% lead over his opponent. He also has a presidential approval rating of over 65 percent which means that, barring foul play, he should win in a landslide.

Here's more from an article in Venezuelanalysis:

"In August 2012, the Japanese finance organisation, Nomura Holding published a client analysis stating that Hugo Chavez has a "large lead" against Henrique Capriles Radonski which they found "unlikely to be closed ...before the October 7 election". Likewise a Bank of America Merrill Lynch report earlier this year described "President Chavez's commanding lead in the polls and high level of electoral support".

This lead in the polls is undoubtedly linked to Venezuela's expanding economy, which is growing at 6% per year, as well as new social policies which address the ongoing needs of Venezuela's poor majority. For example in the past year alone 250,000 new social houses have been built, state pensions made available for all and the minimum wage increased by 30%. These follow the policies that have successfully delivered free healthcare and education for all, slashing poverty rates in recent years."

As we noted earlier, Chavez's opponent, Capriles Radonski, is a right-wing stooge who is committed to strengthening relations with Washington while implementing structural reforms that lower living standards. A leaked document linked to Radonski's party, the MUD (Roundtable of Democratic Unity), indicates that a change of leaders would result in more privatisations of public services and assets and an end to many of Chavez's popular social programs. In other words, more welfare for corporate chieftans and more austerity for everyone else. Chavez referred to the secret document- called "the packetazo" -in a recent speech saying:

"Behind Capriles Radonski's democratic mask is the most horrendous thing in politics. Behind his deceptive message of progress and social welfare is the most savage neoliberal capitalist package that has been known in Venezuela and Latin America." Chavez said he would fight against the packetazo and "deliver a knock-out punch to neoliberalism which will never again be implemented in Venezuela."

This is why Washington hates Chavez, because he's raised living standards for the poor and given ordinary working people hope that they can break-free from US domination and the power of big money. Chavez summed it up like this in an interview with Cindy Sheehan who asked "Why do you think the Empire makes such a concerted effort to demonize you?"

Chavez answered: "Because the Empire is afraid that the people of the United States will find out the truth. ...that a Bolivarian movement, or a Lincoln movement, or a movement of

conscious citizens could erupt in their own country and transform the system....

They fear the truth. They fear the contagious effect. They fear an awakening of the people in the United States. They fear a revolution in the United States."

It will be interesting to see what Obama has up his sleeve. Will he support the will of the people and accept that Chavez has been chosen as president for another 6 years or launch another color coded revolution to hasten regime change?

Only time will tell. In the meantime, grab a copy of Sheehan's "Revolution, A Love Story". It's a great read.

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