

Agitprop Capital of the World: The USA Exports Its Poison to Venezuela

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Agitprop, electoral fraud and dirty tricks may not have been invented in the US, but they certainly were perfected in “the land of the free and home of the brave” that no longer is except in the mind’s eye of a diminishing number of diehards, true-believers and others still unaware of the real state of things in America.

The clearest evidence was the theft of the last two presidential elections through a process of massive voter disenfranchisement, black and Latino intimidation in the inner cities, assorted other dirty tricks and rigged electronic voting machines programmed and operated by major corporations to assure the final count gave their man, George Bush, a manipulated electoral victory both times, with a little help from five corrupted Supreme Court justices who decided their votes counted more than those of the public they annulled.

The same fraud was also rampant in recent congressional elections guaranteeing both houses of Congress stayed in Republican hands allowing the interests of capital their divine right to rule the world with their political partner of choice. On the eve of another US election on November 7, the manipulators of electoral mischief are at it again, and it hardly matters how things turn out. Systemic corruption is so entrenched in Washington, it’ll be business as usual on Capital Hill no matter how many end up on either side of the aisle. Little will change when members of the 110th Congress are sworn in on January 3, 2007, assuring only disappointment for those believing otherwise.

It’s called democracy, American-style that’s now a staple at home but doesn’t stop at the border. For many years, whatever administration’s been in power, the US believes it has a prerogative to decide who holds office anywhere in the developing world where it routinely meddles in the electoral process through intimidation, bribery, black propaganda and direct funding of the candidates of its choice. Those activities are illegal in the US, and it’s unimaginable how loud the wails of protest and outrage would be if it was learned another country or foreign corporation funded political candidates at any level here or interfered in any way in this country’s electoral process.

Whatever the rules are for others, it doesn’t deter what Washington claims as its divine right anywhere in the world. It’s done it for decades as it’s now been interfering for months in the run-up to the December 3 election in Venezuela when the people of the country will decide who will lead them for another six years. There’s no suspense who that will be as the majority of Venezuelans will never allow anyone but Hugo Chavez to be their president as long as he wants the job.

So with US meddling now in high gear, the strategy becomes if you can’t beat ’em, first

discredit 'em in the run-up to election day, then be ready to roll out whatever scheme is planned to prevent the people's overwhelming choice from serving another six years in office. Observers need only watch and read the daily news reports to follow the scripted made in Washington dirty tricks campaign as it plays out. Here's a sampling of the agitprop poison spewing from Washington.

With the US corporate media as lead agitator and following months of rumors, it was learned the Bush administration is investigating the privately owned Venezuelan Smartmatic Corporation's takeover of a leading US electronic voting machine manufacturer, Sequoia Voting Systems, to learn if the parent company has links to Hugo Chavez and his government. The Venezuelan government contracted with Smartmatic to replace the country's election machinery ahead of the August, 2004 recall referendum but has no ownership stake in it. That was confirmed by its CEO, Antonio Mugica, who called the rumors "baseless allegations and conspiracy (that) will be put to rest" once the investigation is complete, but while it continues and is in the news is part of the black propaganda campaign to attack Hugo Chavez as part of Washington's strategy to delegitimize a Chavez victory in preparation for whatever scheme is planned post-December 3.

The London Independent reports another Bush administration accusation denouncing the Chavez government along with Myanmar (formerly Burma) for "failing demonstrably to make substantial efforts" to meet its international anti-narcotics agreements obligations to eliminate drugs trafficking. It's another made-in-America phony anti-Chavez pre-election smear that holds no water when held to the light. A separate US State Department report shows that from 1998 to 2004, Venezuelan drug seizures rose from 8.6 to 19.1 tons, and Caracas claims in 2005 the number rose to 58.5 tons of cocaine, 18.3 tons of marijuana, 869 pounds of heroin and 1600 pounds of crack cocaine. A little egg on the hegemon's face is noticeable, and it looks like its neocon right hand better check what its State Department left hand is doing and saying before it makes a bloody fool of itself which it did.

Venezuela's Minister of Interior and Justice, Jesse Chacon, slapped down the false accusation and flatly stated his country is neither a major producer or consumer of drugs although it's true Venezuela suspended cooperation with the US Drug Enforcement Agency (notorious for being corrupted as exposed by former agents who left for that reason) but not because the Chavez government isn't committed in the "war on drugs." Rather it's because the DEA routinely breached Venezuelan law acting as a front for CIA covert mischief to destabilize the Chavez government - another stunt CIA operatives have been pulling for decades in their role as hired assassins and masters of strong-arm troublemaking.

It's also an open secret the CIA, since its inception in 1947, has actively participated in drugs trafficking worldwide as an important source of its revenue and has now partnered with the Northern Alliance warlords in Afghanistan to turn the country into a narco-state. This year alone it brought to harvest a record 6,100 tons of opium, or 92% of the total world's supply, in contrast to the Taliban who wiped out practically the entire poppy crop and in the process angered Washington for destroying this important revenue source not just for the CIA but also for the major US money center banks.

According to Washington-think, drugs trafficking is fine as long as their operatives control and profit from it, but electoral politics is bad when Hugo Chavez does it in ways like handing out \$3 billion in Christmas bonuses to one million public workers 6 weeks in advance. That's the charge, and Chavez opponents spoke of his "spending spree" that

included free commuter train rides, a free rock concert and free T-shirts with pro-Chavez slogans. Heavens – send the man to the gallows.

What was left out of the Washington report is that these tactics and much more are routinely done in the US along with improper and illegal electoral activities hidden from public view. They include billions of corporate dollars to buy influence, slush funds for under-the-table handouts, lush jobs for political relatives who needn't even show up for work and plenty more. But most important and unmentioned is that Venezuela doesn't interfere in US or other countries' elections while the US always does it with a heavy hand as it's now doing in Venezuela. It's poured millions of dollars into the country funding the opposition, chose the candidate it wanted to oppose Chavez, and has serious mischief planned ahead to destabilize the country and likely try again to oust Hugo Chavez after his reelection and assassinate him to assure he never runs again.

Imagine how Washington would react if another country meddled in the electoral process here in any way. It would be condemned as an act of terrorism and likely dealt with harshly to include economic sanctions or worse – a little “shock and awe” maybe.

Now the latest Chavez smear is the phony accusation that the PDVSA state oil company president and Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Rafael Ramirez, improperly told company managers to back Hugo Chavez in the December election. A surreptitiously recorded and leaked video suddenly appeared and was presented by opposition candidate Manuel Rosales' spokesperson Gerardo Blyde claiming what Mr. Ramirez said violates the constitutional provision prohibiting state employees from any involvement in political activities.

Mr. Blyde has good reason to spew anti-Chavez vitriol because, as VHeadline.com commentator Patrick O'Donoghue reported on November 4, he was involved in the 2002 US-staged coup d'état ousting Hugo Chavez for two days and stood to become Venezuela's Attorney General in the Pedro Carmona government had it prevailed. He was also involved in the 2002-03 crippling oil strike that devastated the country's economy and by those actions committed acts of treason against a democratically elected government. Despite that, he's a free man and now has resurfaced as a key player in the opposition's campaign. Like Carmona, he's a criminal and stooge for Washington and the Venezuelan oligarchs who'll resort to any underhanded and illegal tactics to discredit Hugo Chavez and try to prevent his serving another term in office.

It's didn't work before and won't this time either. Mr. Ramirez is a high-level state minister and head of the state-owned oil company. He broke no law and did what anyone loyal to his government and president should do – support them and ask his employees to do the same thing in a show of solidarity and loyalty to him and the “Bolivarian project” the Venezuelan people voted for and rightfully demand. That's how things are supposed to work in a democracy. Hugo Chavez supports Mr. Ramirez and told him “to repeat the same message a hundred times in PDVSA” affirming Venezuela is living a revolution and the state-owned oil company is a revolutionary institution.

Thousands of PDVSA workers feel the same way and rallied to support Mr. Ramirez right after the video's release. Venezuelan parliamentarians in the National Assembly agree and announced they would endorse a resolution supporting the minister, rejecting any Washington and oligarch-directed efforts to destabilize the country's oil industry.

Mr. Blyde feels otherwise and said he'll complain to the country's National Electoral Council (CNE), the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU), and unmentioned, his paymaster in Washington who had to have put him up to this stunt that hasn't worked. Still Mr. Ramirez, in a show of magnanimity, said he'll respect and abide by any ruling of the CNE which is far more than US-oligarch-controlled Blyde and his candidate would do. The only rule of law for them is what they say it is. It's the same way things now work in Washington - the HQ of the Venezuelan branch of the Bush cabal.

Much more is going on besides what's covered above, most of which is sub rosa, unknown so far and very sinister and threatening to the "Bolivarian project." One thing that is known came out in an accusation by the corporate-controlled Inter American Press Association (IAPA) that the Chavez government restricts press freedom. It's a resurfaced echo of many similar past oligarch-directed complaints that are as much bunk now as in the past. Venezuelan Information and Communication Minister William Lara righteously denounced it and rightfully said his country is in the top rankings among the nations of the world with the most press freedom.

The minister got it right, but might have gone further to contrast how free the press is in Venezuela compared to the US where the dominant corporate-controlled media function as a de facto collective state-controlled ministry of information and propaganda suppressing all information vital to the people and reporting only what's friendly to a Bush crime syndicate posing as a legitimate government.

Reports are also emerging of Chavez slipping in the polls - at least the easily fabricated ones run by the oligarch opposition in preparation for one of their likely transparent schemes to be hatched right after Chavez wins big again. An example is one released by Alfredo Keller's AKSA Partners and reported by that most reliable of sources - Bloomberg.com run by the same man who's also mayor of New York. Michael Bloomberg, serving in a dual role as corporate media tycoon and mayor, suppressed the information he had after succeeding former mayor Rudolph Giuliani in 2002 about how contaminated and dangerous many square blocks were around the World Trade Center site after the 9/11 attack and likely still are as he's done little to remediate them.

The Keller poll shows Rosales' support miraculously rising (like the mythical phoenix) to 48% (after hovering around half that level) against Hugo Chavez who overnight mysteriously plummeted to just 52%. Anyone believing this also likely thinks the US financial markets Mr. Bloomberg reports on with religious reverence are free from manipulation, there really are WMDs in Iraq not yet found, Saddam brought down the twin towers and the Bush administration supports democracy, human rights and the rest in the Middle East and everywhere else. Incredibly some independent polls in the US still show a substantial percent of the public believes all that which says a lot about how uninformed and misinformed people in the country are and how dangerous that is to their own welfare.

What's really going on with the Keller poll is a set-up plot to cry foul on December 4 when the election results are tabulated showing Hugo Chavez won another convincing victory. He'll probably do it with about the same 60% or so majority he got in 2000 which most independent consensus poll numbers now show him at, but wait for the protest wails to emerge as soon as the results are announced along with whatever scheme Washington has cooked up to prevent another Chavez term in office. This is when the rubber will meet the road and the fate of President Chavez will be decided in the next round of Hugo Chavez vs. the Bush neocon cabal determined to oust him by any means.

And then there's Aleksander Boyd who's built a career out of spewing hate and lies and never found an indisputable fact about the Chavez government and Bolivarianism he didn't denounce and try to discredit. Boyd holds court on his VCrisis web site where any relationship to what he and his fellow-columnists report and the truth is merely in the eyes of his jaded beholders. Take a recent column denouncing an October Zogby poll showing Chavez's approval just below the 60% level and agreeing with other independent poll results reporting about the same number.

VCrisis calls the poll "fatally flawed" and that Zogby's client list includes.....are you seated and ready?....."Islamic fanatics and terrorists who are strategic partners of Chavez - Yassir Arafat (the writer must have forgotten he died in November, 2004), Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hizbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood, Iran, etc. (the "etc." is unidentified)." What is evident is how racist Boyd and his crew are along with spewers of hate, vitriol and lies. With that kind of reporting, we'll breathlessly await VCrisis post-December 3 cries of fraud claiming those organizations interfered to put Hugo Chavez over the top, or something like that.

All of the above adds up to a clear bottom line. With the December election less than a month away, events are building toward a climax when Washington-orchestrated fireworks are sure to erupt. Expect them to be even uglier than the tactics used in the previous three failed attempts to oust Hugo Chavez. Chavez knows it's coming and is likely well insulated and prepared. Proud supporters of his "Bolivarian project" stand with him in a powerful alliance of solidarity, are ready to help him take his revolution to the next level, and will resist any forces trying to undermine him. It won't be long to see how things will play out.

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