

Fascists, with Help from the US, Are Trying to Take Control of Latin America

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Global Research, December 08, 2019

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean, USA](#)
Theme: [Intelligence, US NATO War Agenda](#)

Clearing the FOG hosts Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese interviewed William Camacaro, a Venezuelan activist living in New York City who is active with the Solidarity Committee with Venezuela NYC and organizes food sovereignty tours to Venezuela, on the eve of the December 3 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) meeting in Colombia. This meeting is the next step in the escalation of aggression towards Venezuela by the United States and its lackey governments in South America. Camacaro explains why this step is being taken, how it relates to current events in Latin America and what people in the United States need to be doing. You can listen to the entire program on [Clearing the FOG](#).

Update: At the TIAR meeting in Bogota, fifteen countries decided to restrict the travel of top members of the democratically-elected government of Venezuela, including President Nicolas Maduro, Vice President Delcy Rodriguez, Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza and National Constituent Assembly President Diosdado Cabello.

Interview

Clearing the FOG (CtF): William, this week, you put out an alert urging people in the United States to take action on Venezuela. Can you describe what you called for and why you took that action?

William Camacaro (WC): Colombia has convened a summit for the activation of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, the TIAR, against the neighboring country Venezuela. This call constitutes a new danger to peace, democracy and the value of self-determination of the Venezuelan people.

Through this treaty, they can take military aggression against Venezuela, which will only benefit the regional planning of the ruling oligarchies and the so-called countries from the Lima group, countries that in the last two months, for example, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Panama and Peru, have been facing a very terrible situation thanks to the neoliberal measures that they have implemented and the repressive measures that have been taken to hundreds of people that have been in the streets protesting against neoliberalism.

On the other hand, Venezuela has been punished first by the Obama Administration, the first one to impose sanctions to Venezuela saying that Venezuela is an unusual and extraordinary threat to the security of the United States, and then the Trump Administration has imposed a series of sanctions against Venezuela. Venezuela has been under attack for 20 years from different USA administrations.

This treaty, called by the Colombian government, one of the strongest allies of the Trump administration in the region, is trying to basically intervene militarily in the country because they have already been intervening for two decades in different ways economically. They have been organizing coups against Venezuela, sabotaging the economy, but the last resource they have is the military. That's why the Trump administration and everybody in his cabinet, from Trump, Pence, a big number of members of the Republican party, have been mentioning that the military option is on the table.

This January, the so-called self-proclaimed Venezuelan president Juan Guaido, the president of the National Assembly, is ending his time in that position. So it's going to be very embarrassing for the United States to support someone as the Venezuelan president that has not been elected by anyone. And now, the 'president' they appointed in Venezuela is not going to be even the president of the National Assembly. That's one of the reasons we will start to see a lot of pressure in the coming days against the Venezuelan government.

CtF: Juan Guaido, who proclaimed himself president of Venezuela this past January, was handpicked by the United States. He went to George Washington University in Washington, DC and was trained by the United States. He wasn't actually even up to be the president of the National Assembly. Let's talk a little bit about what the TIAR is. It's also called the Rio treaty because it was formed in Rio de Janeiro in 1947, a post-world War II Treaty. Has it ever been used?

WC: Literally, it has never been used. The only time there have been several countries willing to use it was when the United Kingdom attacked Argentina. The United States supported the UK in the war against the Argentinian people. After that, the treaty has not been used at all. No one even wanted to call for the TIAR treaty because it was obvious the United States was never willing to use it, especially to defend anyone in South America from another superpower.

CtF: The TIAR is kind of like a junior NATO treaty, essentially a reciprocal defense agreement. There was an article in Venezuelanalysis about a leaked conversation involving the Colombian ambassador to the United States that mentioned the State Department supported the use of the Rio Treaty, the TIAR, and the White House didn't. Do you have any insights into why there would be that kind divide in the Trump Administration?

WC: They can militarily intervene in Venezuela but they have to pay the price and they don't want to pay the big price they'd have to pay to intervene militarily. That's why the United States has been calling for other countries to intervene and to be in the front line in a war against Venezuela.

John Bolton, Mike Pence, Marco Rubio, even Donald Trump, have been calling the Venezuelan Army and asking them to "do the right thing" and the entire world will be happy and appreciate their work if they overthrow Maduro. They don't want a military confrontation. Over the last month, the United States has been trying to fly over the Venezuelan air space more than a hundred fifty times and all the airplanes have been stopped. For the first time, the United States is confronting a country that they cannot fly over the airspace of that country.

They know that Venezuela has all these missiles from Russia and also from China, all this technology that's coming from those countries, even from Iran, and they don't want to pay the price. They want others to do the dirty work because it will be completely ridiculous for

the entire planet to see the country that is spending more than 700 billion dollars on the military budget that it's basically waging a war against a very small country in a very pathetic way.

CtF: Venezuela, in addition to its military and police and the assistance it's gotten from other countries, also has a very strong civilian militia. Now President Maduro recently announced that he was putting his military on high alert at the Colombian border. Why is that happening?

WC: This is happening because Colombia is calling for this military treaty to be used against Venezuela. Also playing into the situation is that since the coup d'état in Bolivia, Maduro has been basically putting weapons in the militias and they are already using the militias in several places in the country, something that has not happened before. Now it's something that is getting to be normal.

We are getting into another level of aggression because we know this coming January is going to be tough. The United States really wants Juan Guaido to continue to be the president of the National Assembly but Juan Guaido has so many problems with his own people. His credibility among his own people is very low and no one wants him. By law, that position is rotated every year. They have been putting a lot of money in the hands of Juan Guaido to try to buy votes this coming January to change the rule in the National Assembly.

CtF: There is tremendous unrest in Colombia, massive anti-neoliberal protests against President Duque. His popularity is going way down. A wing of FARC guerillas has activated again. At the UN, Colombia claimed Venezuela was allowing paramilitary groups to organize inside Venezuela to attack Colombia, and that was shown to be a lie. There's also a report of paramilitaries being ready to invade Venezuela from Colombia. In fact, the IDF, the Israeli Defense Force, reportedly had a hundred troops ready to participate in that. There is a lot going on at the Venezuelan-Colombian border. What is the potential for military conflict at the border?

WC: There is a very high possibility of conflict in that area. It's not only paramilitaries from Colombia, but there is also a strong presence by regular groups from the United States, from Israel, that are operating along the border with Venezuela with permission from the Colombian government.

All these groups are trying to create a situation to justify USA intervention in Venezuela, and they are trying to create a similar situation like in Syria when you had a terror group financed by the United States getting into the country, taking over some of the resources of that country and selling it on the international market or trying to divide the country. Colombia doesn't have enough oil, only for maybe five or six years. They have been selling their own reserves to the United States and they hope they can get that oil back or some resources back when Maduro is overthrown.

That's basically what they are waiting for and they are getting desperate. In the United States' economic warfare against Venezuela, the first thing the United States tried to do was to go to other countries like Colombia, Ecuador and ask them to sell them more oil. In that way, they didn't have to get oil from Venezuela. Now those countries, like Colombia, don't have enough oil. They are very worried because in the next coming years if Maduro is not overthrown, they will be facing a very big problem.

All these huge protests in Colombia against the economic system are occurring because they have not been able to use the war against the FARC, the guerrillas movement, as the excuse anymore. They need to face the real economic problems they have caused by the neoliberal measures that they implemented for all these years.

We need to understand that we are living in another period of time when we see the Chilean protests in the streets that have been taking place for almost two months. We see that neoliberalism has completely failed, that it's a disaster. And Chile was an entire country that the Empire was showing to say that neoliberalism is working, at least in one place. Now we know that it's not working anywhere. That's why there are all these demonstrations and not only in Colombia, but also in Ecuador and Chile and Peru. The entire continent is completely chaotic because thousands and thousands of people are getting into the streets to demonstrate against the economic measures being imposed by the international bank, the International Monetary Fund and by the United States.

CtF: This is exactly what the United States has been trying to prevent for all of these years, ever since Hugo Chavez was elected in Venezuela and put in place the Bolivarian Process using the Venezuelan resources to help the people. The United States has been targeting Venezuela. And the US' recent support for the coup in Bolivia is also a measure to counter what's happening, this fight against neoliberalism in South America. How has the success of the coup in Bolivia impacted what the US is doing in Latin America?

WC: A lot of people have been mentioning that the coup has something to do with the lithium, with all the natural resources that Bolivia has. I don't doubt it, but the coup d'etat against Evo Morales is because the Kirchners, Cristina Fernandez and Alberto Fernandez, won the elections in Argentina and the United States was looking at the possibility of the creation of a new leftist bloc in the region. They needed to intervene to make sure that we don't have Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Mexico imposing an agenda for the entire region.

I think this is a horrible setback for the movement and the continent. It is something that we need to overcome as soon as possible. The dictatorship implemented in Bolivia is one of the most fundamentalist and fascist and it is connected with the richest people in Bolivia. Not only rich people but people that have been in Bolivia maybe two generations. They came from Germany, Croatia, South Africa, the rich people who were connected to the Neo-Nazi movement in their countries, with apartheid in South Africa.

These people are very racist. They hate the majority of the people in Bolivia that are indigenous, that are Aymaran, Quechuan, the Guaranis. Also, they are taking over the entire economy. This new figure, Luis Fernando Camacho, had a meeting with Duque, the president of Colombia, just two months ago in Bogota. The presence of paramilitary groups could be explained as Colombia supporting its partner in Bolivia.

Luis Fernando Camacho is a businessman. He is already running five different ministries in Bolivia. He is already in charge of three different state-owned enterprises like for example the airline of Bolivia that now is run by his company called Amaszonas. The director of Amaszonas airlines is now running Boliviana de Aviacion.

Basically these people are going to privatize the state-owned companies and they are giving them to all these right-wing people. It's horrible what is taking place right now in Bolivia, not only the hate, not only that it's racist, and not only that it is a plutocracy, but they are also

attempting again the integration of the Latin American people and USA corporate interests in the region. So, it is a big setback for the movement in South America.

CtF: They certainly are behaving like fascists. The violence is intense and the racism against the majority indigenous people, 70 percent or so of the population, is just so outlandish and so overt. It's really interesting that Camacho of Bolivia met with the president of Colombia when Colombia and Bolivia are blaming Venezuela and Cuba for the unrest of the coup. It's such an upside-down Alice in Wonderland kind of reality. What are your thoughts on these claims by the Bolivian right-wing that Maduro is behind the protests against the coup?

WC: It's completely laughable. You remember Lenin Moreno in Ecuador was also blaming Venezuela for what was happening in Ecuador. The same thing happened at the beginning of the protests in Chile and also some key figures from the State Department have been blaming Venezuela for all the disasters that have been taking place in the entire continent.

The reality is that all the neoliberal measures they have been putting in place for more than 30 years in the entire continent are causing this mobilization of people. People are more conscious about what neoliberalism is and how it's affecting them in their life.

So, they really have been trying to stigmatize Venezuela and that's what they tried with all these accusations against the Venezuelan government. It's completely ridiculous. If we look a little bit at what happened before the coup d'état against Evo Morales, we know that Ivanka Trump was visiting Jujuy. That is an area in the north of Argentina very close to the border of Bolivia. Just a month before the coup d'état against Evo Morales, Ivanka Trump was in Jujuy in the company of the Vice Secretary of State John Sullivan and they delivered more than four hundred million dollars to build some roads in the north of Argentina. But the reality is that part of the money went to the hands of right-wing people in Bolivia to finance the coup d'état.

They were able to mobilize thousands of people from Santa Cruz to La Paz to do all the disasters they organized in Bolivia. There are images of these people flying on airplanes and celebrating how successful they were in La Paz. It's so incredible to see Camacho on one of those airplanes celebrating with all these people that they took from Santa Cruz to La Paz to go to Evo Morales' house to destroy his house. to terrorize several people from the MAS Party, from the Movimiento al Socialismo, to terrorize key people from the government.

It's important to know that when Evo Morales resigned, he resigned because his brother was beaten by the military and he was naked on the street and he was completely doused in gasoline. They said if you don't resign, your brother will be killed.

CtF: They also set Evo Morales' sister's house on fire and were threatening members of the cabinet. And that mayor who was in the street with her hair cut and the red paint poured on her. They were really fascist in their approach. We reported last week on this show that US Southern Command was in Argentina prior to the coup and there were plans to have troops on the border between Argentina and Bolivia ready to go into Bolivia if necessary to support the coup effort. The United States is clearly involved in this coup. Evo Morales has been such a vocal and clear critic of US domination of Latin America of capitalism, it's amazing that he didn't have control of his military. It was a shocking reality. He had kicked NED out, kicked USAID out. Evo had done all that but his military...

WC: Yeah, it's something that really surprised me because it's completely naive to run a

country and have a confrontation with the United States and not even have a group of people to protect yourself. Evo Morales didn't have any military group to protect his house or to protect his life. It was a big, big mistake.

CtF: It's so different from Venezuela where Chavez came from the military. They trained the military on US imperialism. They built the civilian militia. That was a major, major difference between Venezuela and Bolivia. So, William, you put out this urgent alert. What do you want people in the United States to be doing?

WC: It is very important for people in the United States to call their congresspeople in the Senate and House of Representatives. Tell them that they know the United States is looking for military intervention in Venezuela and that people completely disagree with the possibility of any military conflict with Venezuela. It's very important to mention that people also completely disagree with the sanctions that have been causing a lot of damage to the economy of Venezuela and killing people in Venezuela.

That's the real humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian crisis that Venezuela is living is caused by the United States government, by the State Department and by all the economic sanctions that have been imposed against the Venezuelan people just because the Venezuelan people decided to be free and decided to have their own country back.

CtF: The humanitarian crisis that the US is causing, the US then blames on Maduro's policies. Maduro is fighting against an economic war and people in the United States are confused by that. They blame Maduro when the reality is the economic war against Venezuela is the real problem. Now, you've also done work on food sovereignty in Venezuela. Can you talk about those trips?

WC: We have been organizing delegations around sovereignty because that's one of the targets of the USA sanctions against the Venezuelan people. The Trump Administration has been targeting all the social programs that the government has been implementing to help people have enough food on their plates. They have been attacking the program called CLAP. That is a program that provides assistance and cheap food to people in the entire country. And it's also attacking other programs that are coming from the state that are related to food.

It's important for us to see what the Venezuelan government is doing in terms of food sovereignty in the middle of this economic warfare on the country and to see what alternatives people are creating. I think that it's very important also to be very close to the common Venezuelan and to see what they really think about what's going on in the country.

CtF: As people who have visited Venezuela, we can say that what we hear and see in the United States corporate media is really the complete opposite of the reality on the ground in Venezuela. There is overwhelming support there for the Bolivarian Process and rejection of these US coup attempts. When you're contacting your members of Congress, not only is it critical to say that we shouldn't be intervening militarily in a sovereign nation of Venezuela – we have no justification for that – but we should not be imposing unilateral coercive economic measures on them. They violate international law. Also, if the US were to intervene militarily, this would become a regional conflict in South America and it would also have the potential to escalate into a global conflict because Russia has a relationship with Venezuela as does China and those are two targets of our national security strategy.

WC: That it is a very dangerous conflict because the United States went to Iraq looking for some weapons of mass destruction that never appeared and they destroyed the country. And they did the same thing in Libya and Syria. Most of the investments that were in Iraq, most of the money that was in Libya and Syria was coming from Russia, was coming from China and those countries lost billions of dollars in those wars that were organized by the United States. Basically, the same thing is happening in Venezuela.

I really believe that Russia and China are taking a strong stand and deciding that this time we're not going to do the same thing. It's a conflict that could really expand to a big level because what the United States is fighting right now is for control of the hemisphere. The United States has been losing power in the last years but especially in this administration because this administration has been confronting not only enemies, like political-economic enemies, Russia, China, but also their friends, allies, like Europeans, Germany, the French, UK, also India, that have been creating a lot of problems for the United States and a potential for international conflict.

CtF: Venezuela is a lynchpin for so many issues in Latin America that the US feels it's losing control over and they're acting in ways that are desperate and dangerous. Do you have any final thoughts for our readers?

WC: Basically, we deserve to have a planet without any conflict, not only people in South America but also people in the United States. And we deserve to have another kind of relationship especially when we are looking at all the threats that human beings are facing right now, climate change. We have a food crisis on the entire planet. We have a big threat that is weapons of mass destruction all over the planet. These are issues that we can resolve if we have the political will. If we are fighting among us, we will not be able to resolve any of those problems.

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Kevin Zeese and Margaret Flowers co-direct Popular Resistance where [this article](#) was originally published.

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