

Huge Defeat for Imperialists: The U.S. Broke Its Teeth in Venezuela

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The miserably failed “humanitarian aid” delivery into Venezuela on February 23 is another nail in the coffin of the U.S. government’s coup attempt against President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian revolutionary process in Venezuela.

Before this day, the U.S. government and their allies, including Canada, thought that their puppet, self-declared “interim President” Juan Guaidó, still had a chance. The U.S. government made a callous bet that the installation of Guaidó, together with a cruel and illegal sanctions campaign against Venezuela would be enough to force the people of Venezuela to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro. However, they were badly wrong. The heroic people of Venezuela have stood up in defence of their sovereignty, self-determination, and their President, Nicolas Maduro. Together, they have defeated the imperialist attempted coup.

Was the “Humanitarian Aid” Ever Humanitarian?

The U.S. government and Guaidó, together with major mainstream media, have been spreading lies and manipulations about Venezuela and President Maduro to justify their illegal and anti-democratic intervention. It was especially clear when it came to how they built the case for the “humanitarian aid” delivery into Venezuela scheduled for February 23, 2019.

A good place to start to uncover this deception is to ask the question – was the “humanitarian aid” ever humanitarian?

Before the “aid” was loaded onto U.S. military aircraft and flown into Colombia, it was already a disaster in the making. The aid was to be provided and delivered by the USAID (United States Agency for International Development). Both the Red Cross and the United Nations rejected the humanitarian aid scheme of the U.S. government. As a United Nations spokesperson reminded reporters in New York City, “Humanitarian action needs to be independent of political, military or other objectives.” Undoubtedly this was not the case with the USAID delivery. The “humanitarian aid” was nothing but a thinly veiled pretext for furthering the U.S. backed coup against President Maduro.

And what about the claim that the government of President Maduro is not accepting international aid?

The week before the U.S. government’s attempted “aid” delivery, Venezuela’s Health Ministry reported that 64 containers, amounting to 933-tons of medicine and medical aid arrived in Venezuela, mostly from China and Cuba. Also, in February the Red Cross

increased its budget in Venezuela to \$18 million. The United Nations continues to work with the government of Venezuela to provide food, clothing and services to people in Venezuela. This includes \$9.2 million in health and nutritional aid which the government of Venezuela requested at the end of November 2018 to alleviate some of the devastating impacts of increasing U.S. sanctions. The government of Venezuela also receives support from the UN World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) on immunization campaigns and disease control. These few examples alone are much more than the 200 tons of “humanitarian aid” that the USAID was planning on delivering on February 23. The claim that President Maduro does not accept international aid is also lie intended to demonize President Maduro to win favour for U.S. intervention.

On February 23, the people of Venezuela were not fooled by the USAID “humanitarian aid” scheme. U.S. government stooge Guaidó failed to bring enough supporters to the border to create the “aid avalanche” he promised. The Venezuelan army stood with the democratically elected government of President Maduro and refused to accept “humanitarian aid” into Venezuelan territory at the Colombia/Venezuela border, and rejected a similar stunt at the Brazil/Venezuela border. They recognized the “aid” for what it was – a provocation by the U.S. government and their counter-revolutionary right-wing allies in Colombia and Venezuela.

What About Sanctions?

The omission is just another form of lying. And, yes, there is a glaring omission when it comes to the imperialist rhetoric and reporting about Venezuela and Venezuela’s struggling economy. Sanctions.

As Alfred de Zayas, Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order from the United Nations said in an interview on the Empire Files (@EmpireFiles)

“What is particularly cynical is to cause an economic crisis that threatens to become a humanitarian crisis. That is what the United States has done through the financial blockade, through the sanctions.”

U.S., Canada, European Union and Swiss sanctions are so pervasive that even to call the USAID “humanitarian aid,” a band-aid is an overstatement. The U.S. government offered \$20 million of aid to Venezuela, while at the same time these crippling sanctions rob the people of Venezuela of more than \$30 million a day.

Since January 23, 2019, the U.S. government has further increased the already devastating sanctions to enforce its coup effort. The new restriction includes imposing strict sanctions against Venezuela’s state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA). As the U.S. government has consciously planned, this will dramatically impact Venezuela’s imports and exports and continue to drain their economy of the U.S. dollars which are required for Venezuela to participate in international trade.

Additionally, sanctions have enabled the U.S. government and their allies to steal billions of dollars that belong to Venezuela, which they are attempting to redirect to their appointed “interim President” Guaido. The stolen money includes \$1.2 billion in gold that the Bank of England refuses to give back to Venezuela, as well as billions of dollars in profits from Citgo

- the U.S.-based distribution arm of the PDSVA oil company.

Even before the PDVSA sanctions were implemented, Venezuela's imports had dropped from \$60 billion a year in 2013 to \$12 billion in 2017. At the same time, the Financial Crimes Control Network (FINCEN) of the U.S. Treasury has also been ordered to monitor any financial transactions that the government of Venezuela makes. In this way, the U.S. and their imperialist allies prevent Venezuela from paying for imports, even when it has the funds. For example, when the government of Venezuela went to purchase 300,000 doses of insulin, Citibank closed all their accounts and refused to complete the transaction.

Is There an International Consensus Against President Maduro?

No, there is not an "international consensus" against the government of President Maduro. Although the U.S government claims to have the support of 50 countries, that means that they do not have the support of the other 143 countries that are recognized by the United Nations. Most of the world continues to stand with Venezuela and the democratically elected government of Maduro. Maduro's support includes almost the entire continent of Africa, except Morocco, and the entire region of Asia and Oceania, except Australia. There is, in fact, not even a consensus in support of the coup from Europe, where Italy, Greece, Norway, Slovakia, Cyprus and Belarus have all refused to join with the United States. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.S. government and Canada were even forced to create the so-called Lima Group of countries because they could not convince enough member-states in the Organization of American States to support their campaign to overthrow the government of President Maduro.

As just one example of international solidarity with Venezuela, CARICOM, an organization that represents 15 states in the Caribbean released a statement on February 25. The statement read, "The Community maintains that the solution must come from among the Venezuelan people and abides by the internationally recognized and accepted principles of non-interference and non-intervention in the affairs of states, respect for sovereignty, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy."

If No One Supports President Maduro How is He Still President?

When was the last time you saw photos and videos tens of thousands of people mobilizing in the streets of cities all over Venezuela in support of President Maduro? When was the last time you heard an interview with someone in Venezuela calling for an end to cruel U.S. sanctions?

However, if there is one thing that can be shown from the failed U.S.-led coup in Venezuela, it is that the democratically elected government of President Maduro continues to be very popular. The coup against Venezuela has failed because the mass majority of people in Venezuela support the government, and want to defend, and continue to extend, the gains they have made in the 20 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

What are some of these gains? By redirecting Venezuela's wealth from the pockets of international corporations and the wealthiest Venezuelans into social programs, the Bolivarian revolutionary process has brought millions of people out of extreme poverty. There have been remarkable gains in housing, healthcare, and education. Including, the eradication of illiteracy and the Great Housing Mission (GMVV) which has constructed and delivered 2.5 million homes to Venezuela's poorest and most marginalized people since

2011.

Despite the imperialist attempt to strangle their economy and starve the people of Venezuela, Venezuela continues to rank high on the Human Development Index (HDI). Based on 2017 data, the 2018 HDI reports that Venezuela has a “high human development,” putting the country 78th of 189 countries. It means Venezuela has a higher HDI than both Brazil and Colombia which are key right-wing allies in the U.S. war drive.

Because these well-established statistics do not fit into the false narrative of the U.S. government, they have been almost completely left out of mainstream media reporting on Venezuela. It's a media blackout. The gains of the Bolivarian revolutionary process and the voices of people in Venezuela that support President Maduro have been silenced by imperialist governments and their lackeys in mainstream media.

Do the Governments of the US and Canada Care About People in Venezuela?

To answer this, let's follow some of what the U.S. has said and done since the February 23 “humanitarian aid” failure. On February 25, the U.S. government organized a summit in Colombia to maintain momentum for puppet Guaidó and their attempted coup. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence was there, along with countries of the Lima Group, including Canada and 11 Latin American right-wing governments. Although the Lima Group stopped short of supporting U.S. military intervention in Venezuela, this summit further exposed that the U.S. government and their allies have no interest in the “human rights” of the people of Venezuela.

To which, the Foreign Minister of Canada, Chrystia Freeland replied, “We are discussing with our partners now ways that sanctions list can be expanded in order to have even more bite.” The government of Canada's quick support for U.S. sanctions and aggression against Venezuela is of no surprise. As with the United States, the government of Canada could care less about the human rights of people in Venezuela. Take a look at the Twitter accounts of Chrystia Freeland or U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton; they are all too happy to share evidence that the people of Venezuela are struggling under their sanctions and brutality.

The government of Canada is every bit as interested as the United States in overthrowing President Maduro and reversing the gains of the Bolivarian revolutionary process. How else can the government of Canada protect the interests of Canadian mining and resource extraction companies in Venezuela and throughout Latin America? Surely, letting a country like Venezuela nationalize its natural resources and use those profits to build social services instead of lining the pockets of foreign corporations is out of the question.

To support the U.S. government in this dangerous proposal, Juan Guaidó and his coup supporters promoted the concept of the “Responsibility to Protect.” Most recently, “Responsibility to Protect” was used for the bloody imperialist assault against Haiti in 2004 and Libya in 2011. Right-wing U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, in fact, made the direct connection between Venezuela and Libya when on February 24 he tweeted a photo of the murder of Gadhafi within a long line of tweets on Venezuela.

The people of Haiti, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and every other country that the U.S. government has destroyed with invasions, sanctions, bombing, and covert and overt military operations would certainly disagree that the United States cared at all for their

“human rights” and “freedom.”

Build a United Movement in Solidarity with Venezuela

No lie from the mouth of anyone in the government of the U.S. or Canada and no amount of media disinformation can erase the simple fact the people of Venezuela have withstood a tremendous imperialist assault and continue to stand up for President Maduro and the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

This defeat, however, does not mean that the U.S. government and their allies, including the government of Canada, will stop their attempts to overthrow the government of President Maduro and reverse the gains made by poor, working and oppressed people in the last 20 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process. Far from it.

As people living in the U.S. and Canada and around the world, it is our responsibility to stand against imperialist war and sanctions against Venezuela. We must build a stronger and more united movement to face this ongoing assault. We must continue to show the world that Venezuela is not alone.

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