

Rex Tillerson Already Talking Regime Change in Venezuela

By [Telesur](#)

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The new U.S. administration of Donald Trump has made it public that it will seek a regime change policy in Venezuela disguised in “transition to democracy” rhetoric, the country’s potential new Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said in an interview this week.

“If confirmed, I would urge close cooperation with our friends in the hemisphere, particularly Venezuela’s neighbors Brazil and Colombia, as well as multilateral bodies such as the OAS, to seek a negotiated transition to democratic rule in Venezuela,” the former executive in ExxonMobil told Latin America Goes Global.

He further claimed that the economic crisis in the oil-rich South American country was “largely a product of its incompetent and dysfunctional government, first under Hugo Chavez, and now under his designated successor, Nicolas Maduro.”

The government of President Maduro has, however, blamed the recent crisis on an economic war by right-wing politicians as well as corporations who are hoarding products and halting production to put pressure on the socialist administration.

Meanwhile, Tillerson struck a less aggressive tone when pressed about how he would deal with the standoff between the government and the opposition-led national assembly in Venezuela.

“The U.S. should continue to support legitimate dialogue to resolve the political crisis between the Maduro government and the opposition that now controls the National Assembly.”

But then he called for sanctions against what he called “human rights violators” when asked about political prisoners while also slamming Maduro’s government for “undemocratic practices.”

The right-wing website also asked the nominee for U.S. top diplomat post “about the controversial and misguided decision to normalize relations with Cuba” to which he did not suggest a full rollback from Barack Obama’s steps on Cuba.

“I will engage with Cuba but continue to press for reform of its oppressive regime. I will support human rights defenders and democracy activists in Cuba, empower civil society, defend freedom of expression, and promote improved internet access and I will ask our allies to do the same,” he said.

He added that he would engage in bilateral and multilateral talks with Havana in order to “press Cuba to meet its pledge to become more democratic and consider placing conditions on trade or travel policies to motivate the release of political prisoners.”

However, when the interviewer pressed further Tillerson said he would stand by statements made by Vice President Mike Pence stating that the Trump administration would reverse Obama’s Cuba rapprochement policy.

“Yes. There will be a comprehensive review of current policies and executive orders regarding Cuba to determine how best to pressure Cuba to respect human rights and promote democratic changes.”

Tillerson and Venezuela, in fact, have a bitter history and some say he might pursue personal revenge against the socialist government as he takes the international diplomatic stage in Washington.

In 2007, late President Hugo Chavez ordered the nationalization of 22 major multinational corporations operating in the country including ExxonMobil, then headed by Tillerson.

He rejected the compensation deal offered by the government of US\$1 billion and took Venezuela to the international arbitration court demanding instead US\$10 billion. But the rarely defeated CEO lost and his company settled for US\$1.6 billion.

“(Tillerson) took it very personal with Chavez,” said Ghassan Dagher, a Venezuelan oil industry consultant to the New York Times in December.

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