

Trump Neocons Target Cuba

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On Friday, the Trump Neocons and the Treasury Department and its Goldman Sachs alumnus boss imposed sanctions against 35 ships and two companies involved in the legal transport of oil from Venezuela to Cuba.

.@POTUS is taking action against a vital source of the Maduro regime's wealth. Today the U.S. will sanction 34 vessels owned or operated by PDVSA, as well as 2 additional companies that transport Venezuelan crude oil to Cuba. Venezuela's oil belongs to the Venezuelan people!

— Vice President Mike Pence (@VP) [April 5, 2019](#)

The legitimate Venezuelan National Assembly called for international support of its decree. The Department of the Treasury has sanctioned companies and vessels facilitating illegal oil transfers from the Maduro regime to Cuba. This is only a first step. <https://t.co/ovyIOAPPHs>

— John Bolton (@AmbJohnBolton) [April 6, 2019](#)

Cuba has been “illegal” for sixty years. In other words, it has successfully if tragically resisted the imposition of the neoliberal order following the Cuban Revolution.

It's safe to say the average American knows virtually nothing about Cuba and its history. They don't know about Fulgencio Batista, the brutal military leader who enforced a neoliberal (and Mafia) status quo in Cuba. At the time, foreign corporations, primarily American, owned 70% of the arable land, and Batista served as a middleman for transnational business deals.

“By the late ’50s, U.S. financial interests included 90 percent of Cuban mines, 80 percent of its public utilities, 50 percent of its railways, 40 percent of its sugar production and 25 percent of its bank deposits—some \$1 billion in total,” writes [Natasha Geiling](#).

In 1952, unable to gain the support of the Cuban people in his bid for the presidency (his party was in last place), Batista staged a military coup. He was aligned with the Cuban elite,

the owners of sugar plantations, and received logistical, military, and financial support from the US government.

“He aligned himself with the mafia from the United States who controlled drugs, gambling and prostitution rings in the U.S. The Batista government was favored by American-based corporations that had invested in Cuba,” writes [Timothy Alexander Guzman](#).

In order to crush dissent to his dictatorial regime, Batista imposed iron-clad media censorship. He ordered his Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities to kidnap, torture, and murder political activists.

Batista created an anti-Communist secret police to silence the public with violence, torture and public executions. It is estimated that there were between 10,000 to 20,000 people murdered under the Batista regime with financial and military support from the Washington. During Batista’s reign of terror, the July 26 Movement organized by Fidel Castro and other anti-government groups throughout Cuba were forming a rebellion against the Batista government.

In 1959, Castro rejected the characterization that his movement was communist, preferring instead to call it humanismo. However, in order for the US to intervene (as did later with the failed Bay of Pigs invasion), it portrayed Castro as a communist and a threat to US national security (which, of course, means it was a threat to predatory banks and corporations).

“The Soviet Union, the socialist camp, the People’s Republic of China, and North Korea helped us resist, with essential supplies and weapons, the implacable blockade of the United States, the most powerful empire ever to exist,” Castro said.

On October 19, 1960, in the waning months of the Eisenhower administration, the US place a crippling embargo on Cuba. This resulted in Castro nationalizing US and transnational business interests.

The [Council on Foreign Relations](#) explained how it and the government planned to tame Castro:

“Since 1961, the official U.S. policy toward Cuba has been two-pronged: economic embargo and diplomatic isolation.”

At the same time, Eisenhower was working secretly with the CIA to assassinate Castro and re-install a neoliberal autocracy.

The CIA plan was dubbed Trinidad and it was based on successful CIA coups in Iran and Guatemala. Trinidad envisioned an amphibious invasion. The idea was to carve out a beachhead and establish a council that would gain international recognition and support by the US and the Organization of American States.

After Kennedy was elected, the CIA produced a revised plan, codenamed Zapata, later known as the Bay of Pigs plan, and it turned out to be a spectacular failure. This plan and

other unsuccessful attempts to destabilize Cuba resulted in Castro's move toward communism and the imposition of a police state and widespread political repression.

Relations between Cuba and the US thawed a little during the Obama administration, but after Trump was elected and the neocons began dictating foreign policy the old anti-Communist animosity returned with a vengeance.

"[The Obama administration] made a deal with a government that spread violence and instability in the region and nothing they got, think about it, nothing they got, they fought for everything and we just didn't fight hard enough, but now, those days are over," [Trump said during a speech in Miami](#). "We now hold the cards. The previous administration's easing of restrictions of travel and trade does not help the Cuban people. They only enrich the Cuban regime."

The "violence and instability" Trump mentioned includes Cuba sending doctors to Venezuela.

According to the Gray Lady of Propaganda, [The New York Times](#), this medical aid isn't about helping needy Venezuelans, but a cynical political move.

"In interviews, 16 members of Cuba's medical missions to Venezuela—a signature element of relations between the two countries—described a system of deliberate political manipulation in which their services were wielded to secure votes for the governing Socialist Party, often through coercion," the Times reported last month.

Now that Washington has targeted oil shipments between Venezuela and Cuba, it is likely only a matter of time before a tanker is seized or sunk by the US military.

Rabid "exceptional nation" neocons are running US foreign policy again and the possibility of armed conflict between the US and Cuba is heightened to a level not seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis. That one nearly resulted in a nuclear war.

I doubt this engineered crisis will terminate in a nuclear showdown. However, considering Trump's belief nukes can and should be used, and the venomous pronouncements of his neocons toward not only Venezuela and Cuba, but also Russia and China, it's not difficult to imagine the unimaginable.

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