

# Undermining Democracy in Latin America: El Salvador, Venezuela and Beyond

Global Research News Hour Episode 60

By [Michael Welch](#), [Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#), and [Prof. James Petras](#)

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Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)  
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*"Having lost eighteen of nineteen elections, their chances of taking power or replacing the government through electoral channels ...are virtually nil, and so what I think they've decided on as a strategy is to create chaos, insecurity, and especially engage in violence that cuts the link between the government and the people."*

– Professor James Petras

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There is a long history of US covert intervention throughout the world in order to overthrow governments which seek to put forward programs or other initiatives which benefit their own citizens over the interests of US-based corporations.

So for instance, in 1953, when the elected Prime Minister Mossadeq of Iran moved to renationalize the country's oil reserves, thereby undermining the interests of the British controlled Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the CIA in concert with Britain's MI6 engineered a coup to oust him and install the brutal Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The coup plot included bolstering pro-Shah forces and organizing anti-Mossadeq protests. [1]

Likewise in Guatemala in 1954, the CIA plotted the overthrow of the elected President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán following his initiation of socio-economic reforms, interpreted by the US as 'targetting directly against American interests in the country.' [2][3]

Perhaps most famously, the CIA directed [the coup in Chile](#) which toppled a democratic government and installed a brutal dictatorship in 1973.

As anti-government protests continue to wreak havoc in Venezuela, also no friend of US imperial interests, it is compelling to wonder if the world is witnessing a familiar pattern of foreign interference.

Direct military interventions are becoming increasingly unpopular, as witnessed by the failure to galvanize a planned US coordinated attack on Syria last year.

Is the US now implementing a covert 'plan B' in Latin America to achieve their foreign policy goals?

[Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#) is a geo-political analyst, award-winning author, and research associate with the Centre for Research on Globalization. He recently travelled to El Salvador as an international elections monitor to observe that country's election process. In our conversation, Nazemroaya talks about the links between the right-wing Salvadoran party ARENA, and the opposition in Venezuela. He also elaborates on the challenges of establishing self-determination in Latin American countries already so dominated by US economic and military interests. Likewise, he asserts the situation is more complex than the simplistic left-right divide embraced by other geo-political analysts.

[James Petras](#), Bartle (Emeritus) Professor of Sociology at Binghamton University is absolutely convinced that the events currently sweeping Venezuela and its beleaguered President Nicolas Maduro are US-backed. He believes that should the protesters prevail, Venezuela could be on the path to fascism. Petras, also a frequent contributor to the Global Research website presents his analysis in the final half hour.

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The [Global Research News Hour](#), hosted by Michael Welch, airs on [CKUW 95.9FM](#) in Winnipeg Fridays at 1pm CDT. The programme is also broadcast weekly (Monday, 5-6pm ET) by the [Progressive Radio Network](#) in the US, and is available for download on the [Global Research](#) website.

Notes:

- 1) BBC, August 20, 2013, "CIA documents acknowledge its role in Iran's 1953 coup"; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23762970>
- 2) [http://216.12.139.91/docs/DOC\\_0000919933/DOC\\_0000919933.pdf](http://216.12.139.91/docs/DOC_0000919933/DOC_0000919933.pdf),
- 3) Doyle and Kornbluh, The National Security Archive, "CIA and Assassinations: The Guatemala 1954 Documents"; <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/>

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