

# Venezuela: Media Smear of Newly Elected President Nicolas Maduro

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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The media has vilified Chavez relentlessly. After his December 1998 election, New York Times Latin American correspondent Larry Roher, called him a “populist demagogue, an authoritarian....caudillo (strongman).” He lied saying so.

In death as in life, denunciation continued. Chavez was hemispheric villain number one. Independent leaders aren’t tolerated. The threat of a good example concerns Washington and media scoundrels most. They go all-out against it.

Candidate Nicolas Maduro was treated the same way. Following his electoral victory, expect unjustifiable condemnation to follow. It’s standard scoundrel media practice.

Pre-election, The [New York Times](#) quoted Washington Office on Latin America’s (WOLA) David Smilde, saying:

“He’s known as a yes man, and he’s somebody that has never shown an independent streak.”

Joy Olson is WOLA’s executive director. She’s a frequent scoundrel media commentator. She avoids discussing what matters most.

Smilde is a senior WOLA fellow. He specializes in Venezuela. He and Olson distort reality. They claim Venezuela’s “oil-financed social policies are of questionable sustainability.”

“Lack of transparency and accountability threaten them.” Venezuela’s “enormous fiscal deficit (needs) to be addressed.”

The Times quoted an unnamed diplomat, saying:

“I always saw (Maduro) glued to Chavez. I always saw him as a messenger, and I never had a signal that would make me think he was a leader.”

The Times said it’s “not clear what path (he’ll) follow on his own.”

“Critics say” as foreign minister, he “judged” people “by their loyalty to Mr. Chavez.”

Anti-Chavista Eloy Torres was quoted saying “(t)he diplomatic profession was politicized in the extreme. Today there are no more professionals; there are propagandists of the revolutionary process.”

On April 11, [Washington Post](#) editors headlined “The reckoning after Venezuela’s election,” saying:

Maduro's "manifestly lacking in charisma....(He'll) go to extreme lengths to link himself to his mentor...."

Declaring him acting president after Chavez's death "g(ave) him far-reaching powers over spending and state media."

"He regularly....hurls slanders at opposition leader" Capriles.

"The armed forces and the state oil company....unabashedly mobilized behind" him.

"The national election commission....ignored complaints about these obvious misuses of state resources, just as the sworn-to-Chavez supreme court has repeatedly enabled blatant constitutional violations."

Maduro "recently declared that the response (to him losing) would be a 'popular uprising.' "

"He may come to rue his expected triumph. Mr. Chavez left behind an extraordinary mess."

Throughout his tenure, Chavez endured this type vilification. Managed news misinformation and lies substituted for truth and full disclosure. Expect Maduro to fare no better. Independent leaders are scorned.

Doing the right thing isn't tolerated. Media liars attack relentlessly. Chavez challenged them straightaway. Expect Maduro to follow suit.

On April 12, [Chicago Tribune](#) editors headlined "Chavez gone but candidates ensure he's not forgotten," saying:

"So what's his face doing on all those campaign posters?" Why do political rallies "begin with a recording of (him) singing the national anthem."

"What's with the television ad (showing his) smiling visage winks from the heavens?"

"It's all designed (to help his) hand-picked successor, interim President Whatsisname."

"We get it, we get it. He's marketing himself as the second coming of Hugo Chavez."

"We just don't get why voters would buy it."

Tribune editors scorned Chavez viciously. They're treating Maduro the same way. It doesn't surprise. Expect much more vilification ahead.

Pre-election, [Miami Herald](#) editors headlined "Venezuela's chance to move forward," saying:

Sunday's election "promises to open a tumultuous new chapter" in Venezuela's history. Chavez's name isn't on the ballot, "but his presence is everywhere."

"This election is all about him and the legacy of a decade-and-a-half of misrule."

A litany of misinformation, exaggeration, and lies followed. It didn't surprise. It's standard scoundrel media practice.

“For Venezuelans, the choice is clear,” Miami Herald editors claimed.

“They can move forward, restoring the democracy that Venezuela once was, or they can watch their country continue to deteriorate under a Chavez apprentice like the official candidate, Nicolas Maduro, the hand-picked political heir....”

Chavez “created a political machine that sharply curtailed the possibility that the official presidential candidate could lose.”

“The way (he won) and consolidated his grip on Venezuela is not secret. He controlled all the levers of political power....”

“He stifled the independent news media and systematically dismantled the independent institutions that could restrain his power, including the judiciary.”

“(H)e failed to create a path to prosperity for anyone except his political cronies....”

Miami Herald editors matched the worst of Rupert Murdoch’s demagoguery, right-wing extremism, and deplorable misinformation. Hopefully their readers took note.

Wall Street Journal ones endure this type treatment daily. Mary O’Grady’s their America’s commentator. She’s a notorious right-wing attack dog. Journalism isn’t her long suit. Nor is truth and full disclosure.

She’s beholden to monied interests. They own her. Her credibility is sorely lacking. She substitutes disinformation for facts. She formerly worked for Advest, Inc., Thomson McKinnon Securities and Merrill Lynch before its demise.

She’s a Journal editorial board member. She’s closely linked to the Heritage Foundation. It’s a notorious right-wing think tank. It supports neoliberal harshness. Wealth, power and privilege alone matter. O’Grady marches in lockstep.

She wins awards for commentary deception. Lying pays well. Truth-telling is orphaned. It doesn’t surprise.

Her columns appear Mondays. Her latest [headlined](#) “Venezuela’s Cuban Election,” saying:

“....Cuba-trained ideologue” Maduro represented the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

“As we went to press, returns were not yet in.”

“The chavistas have been using state power to cheat, intimidate and spend themselves first across the finish line for more than a decade.”

“International observers were prohibited from sending missions to Venezuela, and Mr. Capriles was denied access to almost all television and radio stations during the campaign.”

## Fact check

Venezuela's the hemisphere's most open society. America pales by comparison. Free expression is cherished. It's constitutionally mandated.

Venezuela's Law of Social Responsibility affirms it. Censorship doesn't exist. Dissent is tolerated. So is responsible programming and journalism.

Corporate owners dominate Venezuela's media. Short of advocating sedition or treason, they're free to publish or air what they wish. They take full advantage. They do irresponsibly. They get away with it repeatedly. Press freedom is cherished.

Maduro was unfairly criticized. His Bolivarian message got short shrift. Capriles got lots of coverage. It's standard corporate media practice.

Sunday's election was closely monitored. The Carter Center sent a delegation. So did 170 international organizations. Over 3,400 observers participated. O'Grady lied claiming otherwise.

She falsely said "Havana made sure it held considerable sway over" Sunday's election.

She quoted Spanish newspaper ABC. It's scandalously right-wing. Maduro calls it "Francoist." Its anti-Chavista reports are scurrilous.

It claimed Cuba "sen(t) a detachment of agents for electoral control that could reach 2,500 officers...."

Election monitors called Sunday's process open, free and fair. It's the hemisphere's best. Jimmy Carter calls it the world's best. It shames America's sham process.

Voters get the best democracy money can buy. Venezuelans get the real thing. Don't expect O'Grady and other media scoundrels to explain.

She claims Cuban doctors, nurses, other medical professionals, teachers, and others performing volunteer services provide "cover to hide" Cuba's control.

She blew her own cover quoting Cuba's chief of missions. He said they're there "to ensure our commitment; up until now we have been giving our all. (We) now are ready to give even our lives, our blood, if (it's) needed for this revolution."

Bolivarianism's real. It's vital. It's revolutionary. It's participatory democracy at its best. It's social democracy benefits everyone. Don't expect O'Grady or other media scoundrels to explain.

She said in "a fair fight," Capriles "might have won easily....The Maduro campaign relied heavily on emotion to counteract apathy for its candidate."

She falsely claimed the PSUV had pass codes able "to sabotage the voting process....The head of the opposition coalition said (it wouldn't) affect vote tallies, but it could be used to slow the process."

At 11:20PM Sunday night, 99.2% of millions of votes were tallied. O'Grady's predicted slowdown didn't happen.

“Electronic voting machines provide plenty of other opportunities for shenanigans,” she said. America’s corporate-controlled ones for sure do.

Manipulation controls things. Vetting isn’t done. Verifiable receipts aren’t provided. Reliable recounts aren’t possible. Votes cast for candidate A can count twice for candidate B. There’s no way to check.

Corporate run machines are inherently flawed. They’re designed that way. They’re used to steal.

Venezuela uses Smartmatic touchscreen electronic voting machines. They’re reliable. They’re designed to eliminate tampering.

They provide verifiable paper ballot receipts. They’re a permanent record. CNE saves them. They’re available if credible recounts are needed.

O’Grady claims otherwise. Sunday’s election “told us very little about the real preferences of the Venezuelan electorate,” she said.

Her commentaries are deplorably disingenuous. Her readers are systematically lied to. Why they follow her, they’ll have to explain.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net).

His new book is titled “Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity.”

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanII.html>

Visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com).

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Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

## About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net). His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com). Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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