5-16-19

[The following articles appear in reverse chronological order. I have quoted the first report fully (sent by Sue Skidmore) to be sure it is available. Most of the articles are offered by the link to each. And most of the articles are from the journal, Monthly Review. The articles extend from February to May 16. --Dick]

5-16 Breaking News from Sue Skidmore and Ted Swedenburg:
The last four of the Venezuelan Embassy Protection Collection EPC have been arrested by the USA in violation of the Vienna Convention
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1071027692917703/wp/1804800209666288/

Fascism in Plain Sight in the Nation’s Capital

- Sue Skidmore <earthpax@gmail.com>

5-16-19, 4:53 AM (4 hours ago)

Sue lives in Springfield, MO, is active in peace and justice advocacy, and has arranged for visits by Ray McGovern to Springfield several times (as has OMNI). --Dick.

'Turnkey Tyranny’ on the Streets of Washington

May 9, 2019 • by Ray McGovern 138 Comments
We are at the point Edward Snowden described as “turnkey tyranny.” And on Wednesday night the key was turned a bit more dramatically. Ray McGovern explains.

Venezuela Embassy Protection Collective Defies ‘No Trespass’ Order May 15, 2019 • by Medea Benjamin & Ann Wright  [Medea and Ann have visited Fayetteville several times—Ann is from Bentonville--, sponsored by OMNI.]

https://consortiumnews.com/2019/05/15/venezuela-embassy-protection-collective-defies-no-trespass-order/


Video showing when the police and secret service cut off the power at the Venezuelan Embassy
https://www.facebook.com/MintpressNewsMPN/videos/316349332392376/
UzpSTEwMDAwNjE5Nzk1ODoyMzEyMjEwNjkyMzI3NDq1/
NAZIS wearing 3 piece suits want the US to bombard the Venezuelan Embassy
Mike Pompeo gave the Secret Service the script to read to the people who call asking the Secret Service to turn the power back on in the Venezuelan Embassy
War against a legal and fairly elected president in Venezuela is about to break out -- the Secret Service is being used to accomplish this NAZI - esque way of abusive tyranny to oust a fairly elected president for USA regime change.

pscp.tv Max Blumenthal @MaxBlumenthal
At the Venezuelan embassy, where @SecretService has sanctioned a right-wing riot. Am going to ask some officers why they won’t protect the embassy right now.

At this moment, the violent mob that you have allowed to continually commit acts of violence against persons and property at the Venezuelan embassy is actively working to smash in the doors while your (secret service) officers give permission to the assault and explicitly refuse to intervene.

consortiumnews.com
Activists at Venezuelan Embassy Under Threat From Violent Mobs

Fascism in Plain Sight in the Nation’s Capital (same article as TurnKey Tyranny ) By Ray McGovern

I just got word that Gerry Condon, President of Veterans For Peace, was bloodied and “taken to ground,” as they like to say, for trying to get food to people inside the occupied Venezuelan
embassy this evening. See: https://twitter.com/RealAlexRubi/status/1126258040221634566…

This link should take you directly to a photo of Gerry Condon on the sidewalk after the attack: pic.twitter.com/Z6R27pu1Wh

We are at the point Edward Snowden described as “turnkey tyranny.” Last night the key was turned a bit more, but — at least until now — it has been an almost imperceptibly gradual process, like the proverbial frog in the pan, as the water starts to boil. And, of course, this has happened before.


“There are few things as odd as the calm, superior indifference with which I and those like me watched the beginnings of the Nazi revolution in Germany, as if from a box at the theater. ... Perhaps the only comparably odd thing is the way that now, years later....”

The above are the words of Sebastian Haffner (pen name for Raimund Pretzel), who as a young lawyer in Berlin during the 1930s experienced the Nazi takeover and wrote a first-hand account. His children found the manuscript when he died in 1999 and published it the following year as “Geschichte eines Deutschen” (The Story of a German).

The book became an immediate bestseller and has been translated into 20 languages—in English as “Defying Hitler.” I recently learned from his daughter Sarah, an artist in Berlin, that today is the 100th anniversary of Haffner’s birth. She had seen an earlier article in which I quoted her father and e-mailed to ask me to “write some more about the book and the comparison to Bush’s America. ... This is almost unbelievable.” [Emphasis added.]

More about Haffner below. Let’s set the stage first by recapping some of what has been going on here in the U.S. [in late 2007] that may have resonance for readers familiar with the Nazi ascendancy, noting how “odd” it is that the frontal attack on our Constitutional rights is met with such “calm, superior indifference.” Reflect on the key role played by the media.

Collect on Everyone

After suppressing for two and a half years the explosive story of the Bush/Cheney surveillance of Americans in gross violation of the Fourth Amendment, top New York Times officials decided to let the rest of us in on the fact that the George W. Bush administration had been eavesdropping on American citizens without the court warrants required by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 1978. Not to mention the U.S. Constitution.

The Times had learned of this well before the election in 2004 and acquiesced to White House entreaties to suppress the damaging information. In late fall 2005 when Times correspondent James Risen’s book, State of War: the Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration, revealing the warrantless eavesdropping
was being printed, *Times* publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., recognized that he could procrastinate no longer.

It would simply be too embarrassing to have Risen’s book on the street, with Sulzberger and his associates pretending that this explosive eavesdropping story did not fit Adolph Ochs’s trademark criterion: All The News That’s Fit To Print. (The Times’ own ombudsman, Public Editor Byron Calame, branded the newspaper’s explanation for the long delay in publishing this story “woefully inadequate.”)

When Sulzberger told his friends in the White House that he could no longer hold off on publishing in the newspaper, he was summoned to the Oval Office for a counseling session with the president on Dec. 5, 2005. Bush tried in vain to talk him out of putting the story in the Times. The truth would out; part of it, at least. ...

What followed struck me as bizarre. The day after the Dec. 16 Times feature article exposing the Fourth-Amendment-trashing program, the president of the United States publicly admitted to a demonstrably impeachable offense.

Authorizing illegal electronic surveillance was a key provision of the second article of impeachment against President Richard Nixon. On July 27, 1974, this and two other articles of impeachment were approved by bipartisan votes in the House Judiciary Committee.

Bush took a frontal approach, Far from expressing regret, he bragged about having authorized the surveillance “more than 30 times since the September the 11th attacks,” and said he would continue to do so. The president also said:

“Leaders in Congress have been briefed more than a dozen times on this authorization and the activities conducted under it.”

On Dec. 19, 2005, then-Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and then-NSA Director Michael Hayden held a press conference to answer questions about the as yet unnamed surveillance program. Gonzales was asked why the White House decided to flout FISA rather than attempt to amend it, choosing instead a “backdoor approach.” He answered:

“We have had discussions with Congress...as to whether or not FISA could be amended to allow us to adequately deal with this kind of threat, and we were advised that that would be difficult, if not impossible.” ...

It was not difficult to infer that the surveillance program must have been of such scope and intrusiveness that, even amid highly stoked fear, it didn’t have a prayer for passage. It turns out we didn’t know the half of it. …

Bear in mind that when this illegal surveillance program began, it had nothing to do with terrorism, an issue that did not really appear on the new administration’s radar screen until a week before 9/11. … So this until-recently-unknown pre-9/11 facet of the “Terrorist Surveillance Program” was not related to Osama bin Laden or to whomever he and his associates might be speaking. It had to do with us.
We know that the Democrats briefed on the “Terrorist Surveillance Program” include House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, (the one with the longest tenure on the House Intelligence Committee), Rep. Jane Harman, D-California, and former and current chairmen of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Bob Graham, D-Florida, and Jay Rockefeller, D-West Virginia, respectively. May one interpret their lack of public comment on the news that the snooping began well before 9/11 as a sign they were co-opted and then sworn to secrecy?

It is an important question [with considerable relevance to the situation today]. Were the appropriate leaders in Congress informed that within days of George W. Bush’s first inauguration the NSA electronic vacuum cleaner began to suck up information on you and me, despite the FISA law and the Fourth Amendment? Are they all complicit?

With respect to Nazis and their enablers: You don’t have to be a Nazi. You can just be, well, a sheep.

In his journal, Sebastian Haffner decries what he calls the “sheepish submissiveness” with which the German people reacted to a 9/11-like event, the burning of the German Parliament (Reichstag) on Feb. 27, 1933.

Haffner finds it quite telling that none of his acquaintances “saw anything out of the ordinary in the fact that, from then on, one’s telephone would be tapped, one’s letters opened, and one’s desk might be broken into.”

But it is for the cowardly politicians that Haffner reserves his most vehement condemnation. Do you see any contemporary parallels here?

In the elections of March 4, 1933, shortly after the Reichstag fire, the Nazi party garnered only 44 percent of the vote. Only the “cowardly treachery” of the Social Democrats and other parties to whom 56 percent of the German people had entrusted their votes made it possible for the Nazis to seize full power. Haffner adds: “It is in the final analysis only that betrayal that explains the almost inexplicable fact that a great nation, which cannot have consisted entirely of cowards, fell into ignominy without a fight.” [Emphasis added.]

The Social Democratic leaders betrayed their followers—“for the most part decent, unimportant individuals.” In May, the party leaders sang the Nazi anthem; in June the Social Democratic party was dissolved. The middle-class Catholic party Zentrum folded in less than a month, and in the end supplied the votes necessary for the two-thirds majority that “legalized” Hitler’s dictatorship.

As for the right-wing conservatives and German nationalists: “Oh God,” writes Haffner, “what an infinitely dishonorable and cowardly spectacle their leaders made in 1933 and continued to make afterward. ... They went along with everything: the terror, the persecution of Jews. ... They were not even bothered when their own party was banned and their own members arrested.”
In sum: “There was not a single example of energetic defense, of courage or principle. There was only panic, flight, and desertion. In March 1933, millions were ready to fight the Nazis. Overnight they found themselves without leaders. ... At the moment of truth, when other nations rise spontaneously to the occasion, the Germans collectively and limply collapsed. They yielded and capitulated, and suffered a nervous breakdown. ... The result is today the nightmare of the rest of the world.”

So what about today? This is what can happen when virtually all are intimidated. Our Founding Fathers were not oblivious to this; thus, James Madison:

“I believe there are more instances of the abridgement of freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments by those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations. ... The means of defense against foreign danger historically have become the instruments of tyranny at home.”

We cannot say we weren’t warned.

twitter.com
Alex Rubinstein on Twitter
“https://t.co/Z6R27pu1Wh”

Margaret Flowers MD & Kevin Zeese are currently living and working in the Venezuelan embassy where our Embassy Protection Collective has been since April 11. We are surrounded by US-trained regime change right-wing extremists who have a physical presence surrounding the building 24/7. They use loud music, sirens, banging pots and pans, harassment, intimidation and threats of violence against us and our supporters. When they assault and injure our folks, the police let them go and arrest our folks instead. They are blocking our people from entering the building and deliveries of food and supplies. The Secret Service has a public statement denying this, but the reality is they stand by while our folks are assaulted and damage is done to the building. The Secret Service also refuses to guarantee our safety. They tell us to talk to Venezuela or they just hang up on us. We are low on food and need clean clothes and other personal items. This is all being done because the US coup failed in Venezuela. We are here with the full permission and support of the elected government of Venezuela, which is recognized by the UN and over 140 countries. The SS can’t evict us because they have no legal basis to do that. They are trying to starve and harass us out because that is the only way they can install their puppet. We are determined to stay here until Venezuela can find a protectorate for the embassy. We are receiving many messages of support from social movements in Venezuela. We feel a responsibility to prevent our government from conducting a coup, violating the Vienna convention and setting a dangerous precedent that threatens every country and their embassies. If the US can ignore an election, install their own leader and turn over assets to that leader in Venezuela, then which country will be next? If the US can violate the Vienna Convention, what embassy, including US embassies abroad, will be safe? That is why we are here and we won’t leave, no matter what these extremists do until there is a peaceful transition of the US and Venezuelan
Veterans For Peace Board President Gerry Condon was violently arrested in front of the Venezuelan Embassy yesterday afternoon attempting to deliver food to people inside.

Over the last several days, VFP members from around the U.S. have joined the vigil outside the Embassy of Venezuela in support of VFP member Ken Ashe and other peace activists who are under siege inside the Embassy. The activists are in the Embassy at the invitation of the democratically elected government of Venezuela.

On Tuesday night, five VFP members participated in a successful delivery of food, medicines, and clothing to our friends inside the Embassy. Despite intimidation and physical blocking from right-wingers, we remained nonviolent, and achieved our objective.

But Wednesday afternoon, while attempting a second food delivery, Gerry Condon was surrounded by Secret Service and thrown to the ground. See this Twitter thread to see how violently he was arrested while remaining completely peaceful.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

**Help us by taking action now!**

**Call the Secret Service**

Call the Secret Service and tell them that you object to their violent treatment of peaceful protesters attempting to legally deliver food to the embassy: 202-406-8800.

**Help More VFP Members Get to the Embassy**

More VFP members are on the way. Some have requested and are receiving travel assistance funds from Veterans For Peace. San Diego VFP has contributed $500 for travel assistance. Chapter 27 in Minneapolis has contributed funds for food for the Embassy Protection Collective (those inside the Embassy).

To donate to VFP efforts, click here!

**For those folks not in D.C., Veterans For Peace urges all members to participate in this call to action from About Face:**

Last Tuesday, opposition politician and self-appointed president of Venezuela Juan Guaido called for Venezuelan military leaders to stop defending President Maduro in an escalation of the attempted coup. While it is clear to us that the crisis in Venezuela continues to be devastating and in dire need of resolution, it is also clear to us that yet another coup supported by the United States will only lead to more disastrous outcomes.

That's why we have joined calls to end the sanctions on Venezuela (recently linked to 40,000 deaths in the country), and to resume diplomacy and foreclose the possibility of any military intervention by the US.

Fortunately there are options available to us to pressure our Congress members: H.R. 1004 and S.J. Res. 11, which were crafted to hold the Trump administration back from "introducing armed hostilities to Venezuela." In this moment, reminding our elected representatives that we won't let history repeat itself in Latin America is vitally important.

Please let them know TODAY that as a constituent, you want them to take action to prevent yet another war waged by the U.S. for private gain and to end the devastating sanctions on Venezuela.

Contact your elected leaders by calling the Congressional Switchboard at 202-224-3121
Washington’s hybrid war on Venezuela – a very 21st-century attempt at regime change. Mronline.org (5-8-19)
Rather than carry out conventional war, over recent months U.S. officials have sought to promote internal divisions, sabotage, and economic collapse within Venezuela. Here’s the full story of Washington’s hybrid war on the country. Source

mronline.org

Trump, emulating Hitler

Against this plan led today by Trump and his collaborators, free peoples from all over the world are on the front line with Venezuela. Therefore, international solidarity with their struggle is an inescapable moral imperative for all women and all men of good will. Source

Neoliberal fascism
Undoubtedly we live in the age of neoliberalism. There might also be a link between Neoliberalism and fascism. If one agrees with the rather enticing idea that Hayek’s ideology pamphlet The Road to Serfdom is the ur-texts of neoliberalism, then neoliberalism was indeed invented during the dying days of German Nazism and Italian fascism. Source

U.S. State Department publishes, then deletes sadistic Venezuela hit list boasting of economic ruin
The Grayzone has obtained a list of “key outcomes” on Venezuela deleted out of apparent embarrassment by the State Department. It boasts of wrecking the nation’s economy, destabilizing its military, and puppeteering its political opposition. Source
Activists defy right-wing siege at Venezuelan embassy in Washington DC. Mronline.org (5-7-19).

Clashes outside the Venezuelan embassy in Washington DC are continuing with Juan Guaido supporters growing increasingly hostile and violent. Source

mronline.org, 5-5-19
Chavez the Radical XXI: socialism must be created at the grassroots level In this installment of Tatuy TV’s “Chavez the Radical,” Chavez discussed the role of the commune in the construction of socialism in Venezuela. Source

It’s only a coup if the U.S. Government says so
Media side with Trump cronies rather than common sense in labeling coup a ‘protest’. Source


Opening paragraph:
“As the human rights catastrophe in Venezuela continues to grow—and access to reliable resources all but disappears—it’s imperative that Human Rights Watch continues to speak out on behalf of its citizens.”

The catastrophe’s cause? The government or the long developing coup by the US?

Paragraph 2:
“Severe food and medicine shortages, a ruthless government crackdown, violent crime, and hyperinflation are forcing Venezuelans to leave their country….” It’s the Maduro government’s fault. And more of the same throughout the essay. Maybe a Trump assistant wrote it.

From: James Petras <jpetras@binghamton.edu>
Date: Sun, Apr 14, 2019 at 8:50 PM
Why Venezuela has not been Defeated
James Petras

Introduction
Over the past half-decade, a small army of US analysts, politicians, academics and media pundits have been predicting the imminent fall, overthrow, defeat and replacement of the Venezuelan government. They have been wrong on all counts, in each and every attempt to foist a US client regime.

In fact, most of the US induced ‘regime changes’ has strengthened the support for the Chavez – Maduro government.

When the US promoted a military-business coup in 2002, a million poor people surrounded the presidential palace, allied with the military loyalists and defeated the coup. The US lost their assets among their business and military clients, strengthened President Chavez, and radicalized his social program. Likewise, in 2002-03 when state oil company executives launched a lock-out. They were defeated, and hundreds of hardcore US supporters were fired and Washington lost a strategic ally.

A more recent example is the overbearing role of President Trump’s bellicose proclamation that the US is prepared to invade Venezuela. His threat aroused massive popular resistance in defense of national independence, even among discontented sectors of the population.

Venezuela is in the vortex of a global struggle which pits the imperial aspirations of Washington against an embattled Venezuela intent on defending its own, and like countries, in support of national and social justice.

We will proceed by discussing the multi-sided means and methods adopted by Washington to overthrow Venezuela’s government and replace it by a client regime.

We will then analyze and describe the reasons why Washington has failed, focusing on the positive strengths of the Venezuelan government.

We will conclude by discussing the lessons and weaknesses of the Venezuelan experience for other aspiring nationalist, popular and socialist governments.

US Opposition: What Venezuela Faces
The US assault on Venezuela’s state and society includes:

(a) A military coup in 2002

(b) A lockout by the executives of the Venezuelan oil company
(c) The exercise of global US power – organized political pressure via clients and allies in Europe, South and North America

(d) Escalating economic sanctions between 2013 – 2019

(e) Street violence between 2013 – 2019

(f) Sabotage of the entire electrical system between 2017 -2019

(g) Hoarding of goods via corporations and distributors from 2014 – 2019

(h) Subversion of military and civilian institutions 2002 – 2019

(i) Regional alliances to expel Venezuelan membership from regional organizations

(j) Economic sanctions accompanied by the seizure of over $10 billion dollars of assets

(k) Sanctions on the banking system

The US direct intervention includes the selection and appointment of opposition leaders and ‘dummy’ representatives overseas.

In brief the US has engaged in a sustained, two decades struggle designed to bring down the Venezuelan government. It combines economic, military, social and media warfare. The US strategy has reduced living standards, undermined economic activity, increased poverty, forced immigration and increaser criminality. Despite the exercise of US global power, it has failed to dislodge the government and impose a client regime.

**Why Venezuela has Succeeded?**

Despite the two decades of pressure by the world’s biggest imperial power, which bears responsibility for the world’s highest rate of inflation, and despite the illegal seizure of billions of dollars of Venezuelan assets, the people remain loyal, in defense of their government. The reasons are clear and forthright.

The Venezuelan majority has a history of poverty, marginalization and repression, including the bloody massacre of thousands of protestors in 1989. Millions lived in shanty towns, excluded from higher education and health facilities. The US provided arms and advisers to buttress the politicians who now form the greater part of the US opposition to President Maduro. The US- oligarch alliance extracted billions of dollars from contracts from the oil industry.
Remembrance of this reactionary legacy is one powerful reason why the vast majority of Venezuelans oppose US intervention in support of the puppet opposition.

The second reason for the defeat of the US is the long-term large-scale military support of the Chavez-Maduro governments. Former President Chavez instilled a powerful sense of nationalist loyalty among the military which resists and opposes US efforts to subvert the soldiers.

The popular roots of Presidents Chavez and Maduro resonate with the masses who hate the opposition elites which despise the so-called ‘deplorables’. Chavez and Maduro installed dignity and respect among the poor.

The Venezuelans government defeated the US-backed coups and lockouts, these victories encouraged the belief that the popular government could resist and defeat the US-oligarch opposition. Victories strengthened confidence in the will of the people.

Under Chavez over two million modern houses were built for the shanty town dwellers; over two dozen universities and educational centers were built for the poor, all free of charge. Public hospitals and clinics were built in poor neighborhoods as well as public supermarkets which supplied low-cost food and other necessities which sustain living standards despite subsequent shortages.

Chavez led the formation of the Socialist Party which mobilized and gave voice to the mass of the poor and facilitated representation. Local collectives organized to confront corruption, bureaucracy and criminality. Together with popular militias, the community councils ensured security against CIA fomented terror and destruction.

Land reform and the nationalization of some mines and factories secured peasant and workers support – even if they were divided by sectarian leaders.

**Conclusion**

The cumulative socio-economic benefits consolidate support for the Venezuelan leadership despite the hardships the US induces in recent times. The mass of the people have gained a new life and have a lot to lose if the US-oligarchy returns to power. A successful US coup will likely massacre tens of thousands of popular supporters of the government. The bourgeoisie will take its revenge on those many who have ruled and benefited at the expense of the rich.

There are important lessons to be learned from the long-term large-scale successful resistance of the Venezuelan government’s experience but also its limitations.
Venezuela, early on, secured the loyalty of the army. That’s why the Chavista government has endured over 30 years while the Chilean government of Salvador Allende was overthrown in three years.

The Venezuelan government retained mass electoral support because of the deep socio-economic changes that entrenched mass support in contrast to the center-left regimes in Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador which won three elections but were defeated by their right-wing opponents, including electoral partners, with a downturn in the economy, and the flight of middle-class voters and parties.

Venezuela’s linkages with allies in Russia, China and Cuba provided ‘life jackets’ of economic and military support in the face of US interventions, something the center-left governments failed to pursue.

Venezuela built regional alliances with nearly half of South America, weakening US attempts to form a regional or US invasion force.

Despite their strategic successes the Venezuelan government has committed several costly mistakes which increased vulnerability.

(1) Failure to diversify their exports, markets and banking system. The US sanctions exploited these weaknesses.

(2) Failure to carry out monetary reforms to reverse or contain hyperinflation.

(3) Failure to maintain the hydro-electoral system and secure it from sabotage.

(4) Failure to invest in and recruit new technical professional to upgrade the operation of the financial system and prosecute financial corruption in the banking system. Venezuela worked with high officials who engaged in financial and real estate transactions of a dubious nature.

(5) The failure to recruit and train working class and professional political cadres capable of oversight over management.

Venezuela has taken steps to rectify these errors but the question is whether they have time and place to realize radical reforms?
Venezuela confronts fabricated chaos
Against all imperialist logic, the Venezuelan people refuse to be subjugated. Source

The U.S. Government has been monitoring Venezuela’s electricity system for over a decade. Mronline.org (4-12-19).
The North American intelligence agencies and their government’s attention and monitoring of the electricity situation in Venezuela is long-standing. This was confirmed by more than 1,000 documents released by Wikileaks which mention the status of the National Electric System in Venezuela and the Simón Bolívar Hydroelectric Plant located in Guri. Source

U.S. is manufacturing a crisis in Venezuela so that there is chaos and ‘needed’ intervention. Mronline.org (4-11-19)
America has for years been waging an economic war against Venezuela, including debilitating sanctions which have dramatically affected the state’s ability to purchase medicines, and even mundane replacement parts needed in buses, ambulances, etc. Source

An open letter to the Congressional Black Caucus on the U.S.’s attacks on Venezuela and Cuba. Mronline.org (4-10-19)
Greetings. We write to urge you to support the international and domestic efforts to thwart the United States’ unlawful attempts to change the existing governments in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Cuba. Source

Mronline.org 4-4-19
Venezuela, again
Latin America has suffered these coup attempts from America for generations, and still, it continues. A conversation on the history and the new ways and attempts. Source

mronline.org 4-3-19
Venezuela in the Crisis
The solution of the Venezuelan “crisis” lies in good faith negotiations between the government and the opposition, an end to the economic war, and the lifting of sanctions. Source

multi-national corporations.” I tried to call him but not in Directory. There is an Allison Juzeler listed from Bella Vista, but phone no longer in service.

**mronline.org 3-21-19**

**Giving a voice to the Venezuelan people**
Venezuelan sociologist and former government minister Reinaldo Iturriza calls on the international left to place itself firmly on the side of Venezuela’s popular struggles.

**Source**

**Solidarity isn’t a slogan, it’s a process: a conversation with Vijay Prashad**
In this exclusive interview, a prominent Indian intellectual examines how imperialism operates in our time and proposes specific forms of solidarity with Venezuela.

**3 FROM mronline.org 3-8-19**

**The worldwide struggle against fascism: a conversation with Nestor Kohan (Part 2)**
An important Latin American political theorist argues that right-wing “internationalism” requires a leftist response that also reaches beyond national boundaries.

**Source**

‘Useful to keep them nervous’: LISTEN as top Trump aide blabs U.S. Venezuela plans.
Vovan and Lexus, Russian telephone pranksters known for their trolling of politicians from around the world, have struck again, targeting U.S. special representative for Venezuela Elliott Abrams to find out more about the U.S.-backed effort to unseat that country’s legitimate government. Sputnik got ahold of the full audio from the talks.

**Source**

**Interview with Stalin Pérez Borges: “It will be very difficult to defeat us.”**
Let me finish this interview with our motto: “Fight, fight, don’t stop fighting for a government of the workers and of the people.”

**Source**
Joao Pedro Stédile: “Venezuela is extremely important because it is the battle of this century”

It is a fundamental task for the class struggle that we succeed in liberating Lula so that he becomes the principal spokesman, he is the one who has the capacity to help mobilize the masses against the system and the project of the extreme right.  

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**March 2019 (Volume 70, Number 10)**

by The Editors  
(Mar 01, 2019)

Topics: Imperialism  
Places: Americas, Venezuela  

[The following two pages provided the best succinct yet deep analysis of US intervention in Venezuela I had read by March 2019. –Dick]

“Notes from the Editors.”

“As we write these notes in the first week of February 2019, the United States is openly directing a political-economic coup in Venezuela. At the same time, it has announced that it is unilaterally withdrawing from the Intermediate-Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Together, these events, taking place in late January and early February, mark a new escalation of U.S. imperialism, threatening the entire world.

On January 23, only weeks after the inauguration of Nicolás Maduro into a new term as president of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, a right-wing politician who had never run for president and whose name was unknown to more than 80 percent of the Venezuelan population, proclaimed himself president of Venezuela. He denounced the elected president Maduro—for whom more than two thirds of voters and 31 percent of the Venezuelan electorate cast their votes in the 2018 Venezuelan elections (as opposed to a minority of voters and only 26 percent of the U.S. electorate in favor of Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. elections)—as an
“usurper” (Ben Norton, “Internal U.S. Gov’t Document Outlines Program of ‘Economic Warfare’ on Venezuela,” Grayzone, January 30, 2019; Joe Emersberger, “When Is a Democracy Not a Democracy?” Mint Press News, January 28, 2019). Guaidó was immediately declared the legitimate president of Venezuela by the United States. Washington proceeded to impose what was, in effect, an embargo on Venezuelan oil coming into the United States, while seizing control of the assets of Citgo, the Venezuela-owned oil company in the United States, in the name of the coup plotters. Meanwhile, the Bank of England, at U.S. urging, removed the Venezuelan government’s access to its $1.2 billion in gold reserves. The present ongoing coup attempt organized in Washington is simply the latest in a series of such attempts by the U.S. government to overthrow the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela over the last two decades. It can be seen as having three interrelated motives: (1) the destruction of Venezuelan socialism, (2) regaining control of Venezuela’s oil (the largest petroleum reserves in the world), and (3) reasserting U.S. hegemony over Latin America. The United States has backed three successful Latin American coups in the last decade: Honduras (2009), Paraguay (2012), and Brazil (2016). Venezuela, however, is the hardest nut to crack since it is ruled by an elected socialist government and backed by the largest mass of the population and most of Venezuela’s poor, who strongly support the revolutionary process and are virulently opposed to U.S. imperialism.

To understand the nature of the January 2019 coup unleashed against Venezuela, it is important to see it in terms of its basis in economic warfare designed to undermine the sovereignty of the Venezuelan state. Former United Nations (UN) special rapporteur, Alfred de Zayas, declared in a UN report on Venezuela, completed in August 2018, that the “economic sanctions and blockades” like those being imposed by the United States on Venezuela in defiance of international law were “comparable with medieval sieges of towns. Twenty-first century sanctions attempt to bring not just a town but sovereign countries to their knees” (United Nations, Report of the Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order on his Mission to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Ecuador, August 3, 2018, 14; “Venezuela Crisis: Former UN Rapporteur Says US Sanctions Are Killing Citizens,” Independent, January 26, 2019). U.S. imperial planning, in this respect, has been lodged heavily in the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), commonly known as “the imperial brain trust” and as “Wall Street’s think tank” (see Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter, Imperial Brain Trust [Monthly Review Press, 1977] and Laurence H. Shoup, Wall Street’s Think Tank [Monthly Review Press, 2019]). In September 2018, CFR President Richard N. Haass—who in 2000 wrote an article entitled “Imperial America” on the need for the resurrection of U.S. imperial domination of the globe, and subsequently served as director of policy planning for the Department of State in the

But it is through its promotion of U.S. economic warfare under the rubric of geoeconomics that the CFR has played a central role in paving the way to the coup in Venezuela. The strategy is to employ more systematic techniques of “smart” economic sanctions to destroy the country, as articulated particularly by CFR authors Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris in their *War by Other Means* (Harvard University Press, 2016), which has become the manual of CFR’s Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies devoted to promoting U.S. economic warfare (inspired by the U.S. Office of Economic Warfare in the 1940s). Blackwill was himself an advisor to George W. Bush on Iraq, serving as a presidential envoy to Iraq, and was critically responsible for the privatization of Iraqi oil. Blackwill and Harris note in their book that, forty years ago, cross-border economic flows were mostly trade based, while now they are financially based, allowing for massive disruption of such flows by the United States and other advanced economies and their corporations, representing the “capitals of capital” (*War by Other Means*, 53). The primary target of U.S. geoeconomic warfare, according to Blackwill and Harris, should be China, which has been offering generous loans to Venezuela in return for oil. Attacking Venezuela, with which China is economically aligned, is thus seen as part of the long-term strategy of undermining China geoeconomically—in addition to reasserting U.S. control over Venezuela and its oil and crushing any idea of a successful socialism.

Amy Myers Jaffe, a fellow of the CFR’s Greenberg Center for Geoeconomics, took part in the writing of CFR policy documents with respect to oil privatization in U.S.-occupied Iraq. In the context of the current coup in Venezuela, Jaffe wrote a January 28, 2019, CFR article entitled, “No Easy Path for Venezuela’s Oil in the Struggle for a Transition in Power,” strongly in support of Guaidó’s right-wing political coup and already planning the takeover of Venezuelan oil. Comparing the situation in Venezuela to Iraq, Jaffe argues that the United States, after a successful coup overthrowing the Bolivarian Republic under Maduro, will have to pour billions of dollars into propping up Venezuela’s oil industry and increasing production, especially in the face of what she says will be “multiple renegade armed groups operating inside Venezuela, including Cuban mercenaries.” She strongly implies that this will require the stability offered by U.S. troops. Key to the success of the coup, she observes, will be that “U.S. actions have already in effect embargoed imported Venezuelan crude to Citgo and other U.S. buyers,” as well as seizing Venezuelan oil and gold assets abroad, severing the country from much of its economic wealth. What made this strategy possible is what Blackwill and
Meghan O’Sullivan in 2014 referred to in an article for *Foreign Policy* as the new U.S. petropower arising from fracking (Shoup, *Wall Street’s Think Tank*, 198). The increased energy independence and leverage of the United States over world oil now gives it the latitude to crush a petrostate such as Venezuela without damaging the U.S. economy. In response to U.S. sanctions, the Venezuelan government, out of necessity, recently moved away from denominated its petroleum sales in dollars. Two other petrostates previously adopted this strategy: Iraq and Libya. Both were annihilated in U.S. regime-change actions.”

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