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Venezuela Ablaze

By Robert Hunziker
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The title “Venezuela Ablaze” implies sinister forces at work. Whether those sinister forces are for, or against, or within the Bolivarian Revolutionary government of Venezuela is the crux of the matter. Which is it?

Questions come to mind when news about Venezuela depicts a nation under siege. For certain, the mainstream press in America is not on the President Nicolás Maduro bandwagon. From coast-to-coast, American media claims Maduro is a horrible despicable dictatorial creepy monster that flogs his own people and stifles democracy, same as all tyrants throughout history.

But, is that really the truth?

After all, the United States has such a horrible fouled reputation of dastardly influence south of the border, whom to believe? For decades the CIA planted news stories and assassinated leaders and manipulated economies to benefit aristocratic landed interests over the interests of “the people” (Proof: John Perkins, Confessions of an Economic Hit Man, Penguin Group, 2004).

South America is a training ground for the CIA ever since Allen Dulles dreamed up the idea in the 1950s (Dulles likely ordered JFK’s assassination – Read: David Talbot’s The Devil’s Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America’s Secret Government, HarperCollins Publishers, 2016).

It's easy to imagine sinister forces at work in Venezuela. After all, the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela easily fits the script of Costa-Gavras' historical film drama *Missing* (Universal Pictures, 1982) starring Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek based upon the true story of a conservative God-fearing father (superbly played by Lemmon) traveling to Chile to find his "missing" son during the U.S.-backed Chilean coup of 1973, when socialist President Salvador Allende was tossed out of office (likely murdered but supposedly shot himself whilst in the presidential palace under fire by Pinochet's henchmen) in a bloody coup, including cameo appearances by the irrepressible Henry Kissinger & CIA operatives in darkened shadows.

In subsequent years, the Freedom of Information Act clearly shows Kissinger playing footsy with brutal dictator Augusto José Ramón Pinochet Ugarte, authorizing covert work via CIA goon squads, disrupting the socialist government with killings galore, American kids not excluded, which, post factum, turns *Missing* into a true life documentary. At the time, and in the spirit of defending democracy, America was on a "killing spree of anything that moved, so long as it was shades of red."

So, 44 years after the United States sponsored a bloody coup in Chile, and also intervened, including death squads and caches of armaments, in countless countries south of the border, the big mondo question is whether it's happening again in Venezuela. After all, ever since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the United States has furtively claimed protector ship over every inch of ground south of the border. By now, it's part of U.S.A. DNA.

Reuters, The New York Times, The Washington Post, World News Tonight, wherever a breaking story of Venezuela appears nowadays, it's bloodshed, protests, no food, people starving, and worse... Venezuela ablaze! President Maduro is reviled time and again as a brute.

On the other hand, that's strange in the face of the principles of Chavismo, established by Hugo Chávez, including nationalization, social welfare programs for all citizens, and opposition to neoliberalism, especially policies of the IMF and World Bank. Chavismo promotes participatory democracy and workplace democracy. For example, Chávez invested the nationalized oil income in the development of social programs in favor of the most impoverished of the country. Which all sounds kinda okay. The question therefore: Does Maduro violate those principles or uphold them?

Still and all, tens-upon-hundreds and thousands of poets, writers, artists, international analysts, journalists, social and political activists have joined in supporting the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro and the revolutionary Chavista legacy. They also speak of condemning an alleged coup attempt by right wing forces operating both inside and outside of Venezuela, surprise!

Intellectuals from around the world have signed onto "IN VENEZUELA, THEY SHALL NOT PASS," an international movement to speak the truth and preserve the Bolivarian Revolution.

Why do so many intellectuals, writers, journalists, and analysts from around the world support Maduro and condemn the OAS and the U.S. as well as allege that right-wingers are undermining Maduro in Venezuela, 'planting demonstrations', and so forth?

Do intellectuals, in general, support strong-armed tactics or the principles of equality and democracy and evenhandedness? Do they see the latter or the former in Maduro? In fact, thousands upon thousands from sea-to-sea claim to see the latter.

After all, the battle for the soul of Venezuela is at hand, and the battle for South America's incipient Bolivarian Revolution is at great risk, a revolutionary movement that the great masses in Venezuela embrace with fervor under Chávez. He lifted them out of the gutter.

But then again, it's the same old story with South & Central America, whom to believe is the major issue regarding stuff that happens, whether reported by American media and department of state or a broad coalition of the world's intelligentsia. Whom to believe?