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Washington's "Democracy Promotion" Fails Spectacularly in Venezuela



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The *Los Angeles Times* [reports](#) that “the audacious gamble by the U.S. government to...restore democracy” suffered a “spectacular failure” in Venezuela. What this State Department stenographer masquerading as a newspaper considers a “democratic” setback consisted of failing to impose unknown US [security asset](#) Juan Guaidó as Venezuela’s president.

This man just got the boot from his own fractious opposition group, which voted 72-29 to [disband](#) his “interim government.” *The Hill* [reports](#) that the pretend president still claims the post and retains a “powerful network of support,” although not in his home country.

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Guaidó's support comes from outside of Venezuela consisting of the likes of Democratic US Senators Dick Durbin and Bob Menendez along with the Biden State Department plus fellow neo-cons on the other side of the aisle. Now that the former swing state of Florida has gone solidly Republican, Biden can no longer excuse US regime-change policy by claiming that the rightwing Sunshine State voters are forcing his hand. They wouldn't vote for him either way.

Mr. Guaidó threatened: "We will stay on the street until Venezuela is liberated!" This venue is especially appropriate because Guaidó self-appointed himself president in January 2019 on a Caracas street corner. His "interim government" has never held any power nor served even basic state functions such as issuing visas.

Guaidó's clique did enrich itself with stolen Venezuelan assets handed over to them by the US. As Richardo Vaz of *Venezuelanalysis* observes: "The 'interim government' offered the opposition a remarkable scenario: the opportunity for unfettered corruption without needing to take power."

At the same time, the opposition cheered sanctions against their own people. These illegal unilateral coercive measures, mainly by the US, were intentionally designed to cripple the Venezuelan economy. The government lost 99% of its 2021-22 income. Predictably and deliberately, these measures caused harm such as over 100,000 deaths.

When is an election fraudulent?

According to the *LA Times*, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's 2018 election was "widely considered fraudulent," which means in Washington-speak that the US didn't accept the result while the rest of the world did. This judgement contrasts with former US President Jimmy Carter's assessment: "The electoral system in Venezuela is the best in the world."

However, the US adds the imperial caveat that to be considered "free and fair" an election must be won by the side favored by Washington. Accordingly, the US now recognizes the National Assembly as the only legitimate Venezuelan governmental body. But it is not the currently elected National Assembly. Rather it is the one that dates way back to 2015, the last time the opposition won a majority of the seats.

US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said with a straight face, "Mr. Guaidó remains a member of that 2015 National Assembly." Apparently legal tenure limits don't apply to pretenders such as Guaidó whose term has ended.

Now that Guaidó is voted out, the opposition paper parliament made Dinorah Figuera its head. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Ms. Figuera resides in Spain where she has a

job caring for the elderly. The *AP* characterized the body she supposedly presides over as a “symbolic shadow.”

President Maduro commented on the parallel government – really a Zoom meet-up cosplaying as a sovereign state – noting that the US remains “trapped in a senseless policy towards Venezuela by supporting non-existent institutions.” He offered renewing normalization of relations with Washington on January 1. And by the US government, he was referring to the current administration and not to the 18th century Continental Congress.

But Washington’s continued failure to recognize the democratically elected government of Nicolás Maduro, now that its pretend president Guaidó is no longer accepted even by his own opposition bloc, is a setback to normalization of bilateral relations.

This is in spite of signs of a thaw such as a high-level US official delegation meeting with Maduro last March, a prisoner exchange, and some small recent easing of oil sanctions which allows Chevron to make its first oil shipment from Venezuela in years.

Counter-balancing these openings and portending a chilly near-term was the unanimous passage by the US Senate of the BOLIVAR Act on December 16, precluding any relaxation of sanctions.

Advances in Venezuela, despite US efforts to the contrary

Regardless of US efforts to overthrow the government and cause the populace to turn against their elected officials in the face of punishing sanctions, President Maduro has endured and resisted.

Even the follow-the-flag *Washington Post* must acknowledge that “a recent poll from Andrés Bello Catholic University and pollster Delphos indicated that more respondents would vote for Maduro than Guaidó.” Of course, no one ever voted for Guaidó in the first place because the US-anointed “interim president” had never run for national office.

The opposition will hold primaries to try to find a unity candidate to oppose Maduro in 2024. Nevertheless, their prospects are not bullish according to Jesús Torrealba, who formerly headed the MUD opposition coalition. “What kind of confidence can you build,” he asked about his fellow opposition politicians, “when you have some actors accusing others of being thieves and others accused of being traitors.”

The *Wall Street Journal* observes that the opposition is in disarray and lacks popular support, while Maduro is enjoying his greatest popularity ever. Further, the current surge of so-called “pink tide” left-leaning governments in Latin America has buoyed Caracas’s

boat with regional integration and independence from the northern hegemon on the agenda.

According to *Últimas Noticias*, Venezuela will continue to strengthen alliances with Iran, China, and countries in Africa, while prioritizing regional unity, particularly with Colombia and Brazil.

Economic turnaround under the US blockade

Meanwhile the abysmal state of the economy precipitated by the US blockade is showing signs of improvement, although conditions remain critical and still a considerable way to pre-sanctions recovery. Hyperinflation has been overcome and the contraction of the GDP has been reversed. According to the Venezuelan Central Bank, economic growth was 18% the first nine months of 2022.

Significantly for an historically oil rentier economy, “For the first time in more than 100 years, [this] is a growth of the non-oil economy that produces food, goods, services, and wealth, and that pays taxes,” according to President Maduro. From dependency on imported food, the Venezuelan president continued, “today we produce 94% of the food that goes to Venezuelan homes.”

Over 70% of the 2022 budget was allocated to social programs. The government built over three million houses between 2015 and 2022, which coincides with the period of maximum sanctions. This is double the amount built in the preceding 1999-2015 period in half the number of years.

If so much could be accomplished under such adverse conditions, one can only imagine what could be achieved if the knee of US imperialism were lifted from the neck of the Venezuelan people.

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