The Making of Juan Guaidó: How the US Regime Change Laboratory Created Venezuela’s Coup Leader

Juan Guaidó is the product of a decade-long project overseen by Washington’s elite regime change trainers. While posing as a champion of democracy, he has spent years at the forefront of a violent campaign of destabilization.

By Dan Cohen and Max Blumenthal

Before the fateful day of January 22, fewer than one in five Venezuelans had heard of Juan Guaidó. Only a few months ago, the 35-year-old was an obscure character in a politically marginal far-right group closely associated with gruesome acts of street violence. Even in his own party, Guaidó had been a mid-level figure in the opposition-dominated National Assembly, which is now held under contempt according to Venezuela’s constitution.

But after a single phone call from US Vice President Mike Pence, Guaidó proclaimed himself president of Venezuela. Anointed as the leader of his country by Washington, a previously unknown political bottom-dweller was vaulted onto the international stage as the US-selected leader of the nation with the world’s largest oil reserves.
Echoing the Washington consensus, the New York Times editorial board hailed Guaidó as a “credible rival” to Maduro with a “refreshing style and vision of taking the country forward.” The Bloomberg News editorial board applauded him for seeking “restoration of democracy” and the Wall Street Journal declared him “a new democratic leader.” Meanwhile, Canada, numerous European nations, Israel, and the bloc of right-wing Latin American governments known as the Lima Group recognized Guaidó as the legitimate leader of Venezuela.

While Guaidó seemed to have materialized out of nowhere, he was, in fact, the product of more than a decade of assiduous grooming by the US government’s elite regime change factories. Alongside a cadre of right-wing student activists, Guaidó was cultivated to undermine Venezuela’s socialist-oriented government, destabilize the country, and one day seize power. Though he has been a minor figure in Venezuelan politics, he had spent years quietly demonstrated his worthiness in Washington’s halls of power.

“Juan Guaidó is a character that has been created for this circumstance,” Marco Teruggi, an Argentinian sociologist and leading chronicler of Venezuelan politics, told The Grayzone. “It’s the logic of a laboratory – Guaidó is like a mixture of several elements that create a character who, in all honesty, oscillates between laughable and worrying.”

Diego Sequera, a Venezuelan journalist and writer for the investigative outlet Misión Verdad, agreed: “Guaidó is more popular outside Venezuela than inside, especially in the elite Ivy League and Washington circles,” Sequera remarked to The Grayzone, “He’s a known character there, is predictably right-wing, and is considered loyal to the program.”

While Guaidó is today sold as the face of democratic restoration, he spent his career in the most violent faction of Venezuela’s most radical opposition party, positioning himself at the forefront of one destabilization campaign after another. His party has been widely discredited inside Venezuela, and is held partly responsible for fragmenting a badly weakened opposition.

“‘These radical leaders have no more than 20 percent in opinion polls,” wrote Luis Vicente León, Venezuela’s leading pollster. According to León, Guaidó’s party remains isolated because the majority of the population “does not want war. ‘What they want is a solution.’”

But this is precisely why Guaidó was selected by Washington: He is not expected to lead Venezuela toward democracy, but to collapse a country that for the past two decades has been a bulwark of resistance to US hegemony. His unlikely rise signals the culmination of a two decades-long project to destroy a robust socialist experiment.

**Targeting the “troika of tyranny”**

Since the 1998 election of Hugo Chávez, the United States has fought to restore control over Venezuela and is vast oil reserves. Chávez’s socialist programs may have redistributed the country’s wealth and helped lift millions out of poverty, but they also earned him a target on his back.

In 2002, Venezuela’s right-wing opposition briefly ousted Chávez with US support and recognition, before the military restored his presidency following a mass popular mobilization. Throughout the administrations of US Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, Chávez survived numerous assassination plots, before succumbing to cancer in 2013. His successor, Nicolas Maduro, has survived three attempts on his life.
The Trump administration immediately elevated Venezuela to the top of Washington’s regime change target list, branding it the leader of a “troika of tyranny.” Last year, Trump’s national security team attempted to recruit members of the military brass to mount a military junta, but that effort failed.

According to the Venezuelan government, the US was also involved in a plot, codenamed Operation Constitution, to capture Maduro at the Miraflores presidential palace; and another, called Operation Armaggeddon, to assassinate him at a military parade in July 2017. Just over a year later, exiled opposition leaders tried and failed to kill Maduro with drone bombs during a military parade in Caracas.

More than a decade before these intrigues, a group of right-wing opposition students were hand-selected and groomed by an elite US-funded regime change training academy to topple Venezuela’s government and restore the neoliberal order.

**Training from the “export-a-revolution’ group that sowed the seeds for a NUMBER of color revolutions”**

On October 5, 2005, with Chávez’s popularity at its peak and his government planning sweeping socialist programs, five Venezuelan “student leaders” arrived in Belgrade, Serbia to begin training for an insurrection.

The students had arrived from Venezuela courtesy of the Center for Applied Non-Violent Action and Strategies, or CANVAS. This group is funded largely through the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA cut-out that functions as the US government’s main arm of promoting regime change; and offshoots like the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. According to leaked internal emails from Stratfor, an intelligence firm known as the “shadow CIA,” CANVAS “may have also received CIA funding and training during the 1999/2000 anti-Milosevic struggle.”

CANVAS is a spinoff of Otpor, a Serbian protest group founded by Srdja Popovic in 1998 at the University of Belgrade. Otpor, which means “resistance” in Serbian, was the student group that gained international fame — and Hollywood-level promotion — by mobilizing the protests that eventually toppled Slobodan Milosevic.

This small cell of regime change specialists was operating according to the theories of the late Gene Sharp, the so-called “Clausewitz of non-violent struggle.” Sharp had worked with a former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst, Col. Robert Helvey, to conceive a strategic blueprint that weaponized protest as a form of hybrid warfare, aiming it at states that resisted Washington’s unipolar domination.
Otpor was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, USAID, and Sharp’s Albert Einstein Institute. Sinisa Sikman, one of Otpor’s main trainers, once said the group even received direct CIA funding.

According to a leaked email from a Stratfor staffer, after running Milosevic out of power, “the kids who ran OTPOR grew up, got suits and designed CANVAS… or in other words a ‘export-a-revolution’ group that sowed the seeds for a NUMBER of color revolutions. They are still hooked into U.S. funding and basically go around the world trying to topple dictators and autocratic governments (ones that U.S. does not like ;).”

Stratfor revealed that CANVAS “turned its attention to Venezuela” in 2005, after training opposition movements that led pro-NATO regime change operations across Eastern Europe.

While monitoring the CANVAS training program, Stratfor outlined its insurrectionist agenda in strikingly blunt language: “Success is by no means guaranteed, and student movements are only at the beginning of what could be a years-long effort to trigger a revolution in Venezuela, but the trainers themselves are the people who cut their teeth on the ‘Butcher of the Balkans.’ They’ve got mad skills. When you see students at five Venezuelan universities hold simultaneous demonstrations, you will know that the training is over and the real work has begun.”
**Birthing the “Generation 2007” regime change cadre**

The “real work” began two years later, in 2007, when Guaidó graduated from Andrés Bello Catholic University of Caracas. He moved to Washington, DC to enroll in the Governance and Political Management Program at George Washington University, under the tutelage of Venezuelan economist Luis Enrique Berrizbeitia, one of the top Latin American neoliberal economists. Berrizbeitia is a former executive director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who spent more than a decade working in the Venezuelan energy sector, under the old oligarchic regime that was ousted by Chávez.

That year, Guaidó helped lead anti-government rallies after the Venezuelan government declined to renew the license of Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV). This privately owned station played a leading role in the 2002 coup against Hugo Chávez. RCTV helped mobilize anti-government demonstrators, falsified information blaming government supporters for acts of violence carried out by opposition members, and banned pro-government reporting amid the coup. The role of RCTV and other oligarch-owned stations in driving the failed coup attempt was chronicled in the acclaimed documentary *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*.

That same year, the students claimed credit for stymying Chavez’s constitutional referendum for a “21st century socialism” that promised “to set the legal framework for the political and social reorganization of the country, giving direct power to organized communities as a prerequisite for the development of a new economic system.”

From the protests around RCTV and the referendum, a specialized cadre of US-backed class of regime change activists was born. They called themselves “Generation 2007.”

The Stratfor and CANVAS trainers of this cell identified Guaidó’s ally – a libertarian political organizer named Yon Goicoechea – as a “key factor” in defeating the constitutional referendum. The following year, Goicochea was rewarded for his efforts with the Cato Institute’s Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty, along with a $500,000 prize, which he promptly invested into his political network.

Friedman, of course, was the godfather of the notorious neoliberal Chicago Boys who were imported into Chile by dictatorial junta leader Augusto Pinochet to implement policies of radical
“shock doctrine”-style fiscal austerity. And the Cato Institute is the libertarian Washington DC-based think tank founded by the Koch Brothers, two top Republican Party donors who have become aggressive supporters of the right-wing across Latin America.

WikiLeaks published a 2007 email from American ambassador to Venezuela William Brownfield sent to the State Department, National Security Council and Department of Defense Southern Command praising “Generation of ’07” for having “forced the Venezuelan president, accustomed to setting the political agenda, to (over)react.” Among the “emerging leaders” Brownfield identified were Freddy Guevara and Yon Goicoechea. He applauded the latter figure as “one of the students’ most articulate defenders of civil liberties.”

Flush with cash from libertarian oligarchs and US government soft power outfits, the radical Venezuelan cadre took their Otpor tactics to the streets, along with a version of the group’s logo, as seen below:

“Galvanizing public unrest…to take advantage of the situation and spin it against Chavez”

In 2009, the Generation 2007 youth activists staged their most provocative demonstration yet, dropping their pants on public roads and aping the outrageous guerrilla theater tactics outlined by Gene Sharp in his regime change manuals. The protesters had mobilized against the arrest of an ally from another newfangled youth group called JAVU. This far-right group “gathered funds from a variety of US government sources, which allowed it to gain notoriety quickly as the hardline wing of opposition street movements,” according to academic George Ciccariello-Maher’s book, “Building the Commune.”

While video of the protest is not available, many Venezuelans have identified Guaidó as one of its key participants. While the allegation is unconfirmed, it is certainly plausible; the bare-buttocks protesters were members of the Generation 2007 inner core that Guaidó belonged to, and were clad in their trademark Resistencia! Venezuela t-shirts, as seen below:
That year, Guaidó exposed himself to the public in another way, founding a political party to capture the anti-Chavez energy his Generation 2007 had cultivated. Called Popular Will, it was led by Leopoldo López, a Princeton-educated right-wing firebrand heavily involved in National Endowment for Democracy programs and elected as the mayor of a district in Caracas that was one of the wealthiest in the country. Lopez was a portrait of Venezuelan aristocracy, directly descended from his country’s first president. He was also the first cousin of Thor Halvorssen, founder of the US-based Human Rights Foundation that functions as a de facto publicity shop for US-backed anti-government activists in countries targeted by Washington for regime change.

Though Lopez’s interests aligned neatly with Washington’s, US diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks highlighted the fanatical tendencies that would ultimately lead to Popular Will’s marginalization. One cable identified Lopez as “a divisive figure within the opposition… often described as arrogant, vindictive, and power-hungry.” Others highlighted his obsession with street confrontations and his “uncompromising approach” as a source of tension with other opposition leaders who prioritized unity and participation in the country’s democratic institutions.
By 2010, Popular Will and its foreign backers moved to exploit the worst drought to hit Venezuela in decades. Massive electricity shortages had struck the country due the dearth of water, which was needed to power hydroelectric plants. A global economic recession and declining oil prices compounded the crisis, driving public discontentment.

Stratfor and CANVAS – key advisors of Guaidó and his anti-government cadre – devised a shockingly cynical plan to drive a dagger through the heart of the Bolivarian revolution. The scheme hinged on a 70% collapse of the country’s electrical system by as early as April 2010.

“This could be the watershed event, as there is little that Chavez can do to protect the poor from the failure of that system,” the Stratfor internal memo declared. “This would likely have the impact of galvanizing public unrest in a way that no opposition group could ever hope to generate. At that point in time, an opposition group would be best served to take advantage of the situation and spin it against Chavez and towards their needs.”

By this point, the Venezuelan opposition was receiving a staggering $40-50 million a year from US government organizations like USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy, according to a report by the Spanish think tank, the FRIDE Institute. It also had massive wealth to draw on from its own accounts, which were mostly outside the country.

While the scenario envisioned by Statfor did not come to fruition, the Popular Will party activists and their allies cast aside any pretense of non-violence and joined a radical plan to destabilize the country.

Towards violent destabilization

In November, 2010, according to emails obtained by Venezuelan security services and presented by former Justice Minister Miguel Rodríguez Torres, Guaidó, Goicoechea, and several other student activists attended a secret five-day training at a hotel dubbed “Fiesta Mexicana” hotel in Mexico. The sessions were run by Otpor, the Belgrade-based regime change trainers backed by the US government. The meeting had reportedly received the blessing of Otto Reich, a fanatically anti-Castro Cuban exile working in George W. Bush’s Department of State, and the right-wing former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe.
Inside the meetings, the emails stated, Guaidó and his fellow activists hatched a plan to overthrow President Hugo Chavez by generating chaos through protracted spasms of street violence.

Three petroleum industry figureheads – Gustavo Torrar, Eligio Cedeño and Pedro Burelli – allegedly covered the $52,000 tab to hold the meeting. Torrar is a self-described “human rights activist” and “intellectual” whose younger brother Reynaldo Tovar Arroyo is the representative in Venezuela of the private Mexican oil and gas company Petroquimica del Golfo, which holds a contract with the Venezuelan state.

Cedeño, for his part, is a fugitive Venezuelan businessman who claimed asylum in the United States, and Pedro Burelli a former JP Morgan executive and the former director of Venezuela’s national oil company, Petroleum of Venezuela (PDVSA). He left PDVSA in 1998 as Hugo Chavez took power and is on the advisory committee of Georgetown University’s Latin America Leadership Program.

Burelli insisted that the emails detailing his participation had been fabricated and even hired a private investigator to prove it. The investigator declared that Google’s records showed the emails alleged to be his were never transmitted.

Yet today Burelli makes no secret of his desire to see Venezuela’s current president, Nicolás Maduro, deposed – and even dragged through the streets and sodomized with a bayonet, as Libyan leader Moammar Qaddafi was by NATO-backed militiamen.

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.Burelli contacted the Grayzone after the publication of this article to clarify his participation in the “Fiesta Mexicana” plot.

Burelli called the meeting “a legitimate activity that took place in a hotel by a different name” in Mexico.

 Asked if OTPOR coordinated the meeting, he would only state that he “likes” the work of OTPOR/CANVAS and while not a funder of it, has “recommended activists from different countries to track them and participate in the activities they conduct in various countries.”

Burelli added: “The Einstein Institute trained thousands openly in Venezuela. Gene Sharpe’s philosophy was widely studied and embraced. And this has probably kept the struggle from turning into a civil war.”
The alleged Fiesta Mexicana plot flowed into another destabilization plan revealed in a series of documents produced by the Venezuelan government. In May 2014, Caracas released documents detailing an assassination plot against President Nicolás Maduro. The leaks identified the anti-Chavez hardliner Maria Corina Machado – today the main asset of Sen. Marco Rubio – as a leader of the scheme. The founder of the National Endowment for Democracy-funded group, Sumate, Machado has functioned as an international liaison for the opposition, visiting President George W. Bush in 2005.

“I think it is time to gather efforts; make the necessary calls, and obtain financing to annihilate Maduro and the rest will fall apart,” Machado wrote in an email to former Venezuelan diplomat Diego Arria in 2014.

In another email, Machado claimed that the violent plot had the blessing of US Ambassador to Colombia, Kevin Whitaker. “I have already made up my mind and this fight will continue until this regime is overthrown and we deliver to our friends in the world. If I went to San Cristobal and exposed myself before the OAS, I fear nothing. Kevin Whitaker has already reconfirmed his support and he pointed out the new steps. We have a checkbook stronger than the regime’s to break the international security ring.”

**Guaidó heads to the barricades**

That February, student demonstrators acting as shock troops for the exiled oligarchy erected violent barricades across the country, turning opposition-controlled quarters into violent fortresses known as guarimbas. While international media portrayed the upheaval as a spontaneous protest against Maduro’s iron-fisted rule, there was ample evidence that Popular Will was orchestrating the show.

“None of the protesters at the universities wore their university t-shirts, they all wore Popular Will or Justice First t-shirts,” a guarimba participant said at the time. “They might have been student
groups, but the student councils are affiliated to the political opposition parties and they are accountable to them.”

Asked who the ringleaders were, the guarimba participant said, “Well if I am totally honest, those guys are legislators now.”

Around 43 were killed during the 2014 guarimbas. Three years later, they erupted again, causing mass destruction of public infrastructure, the murder of government supporters, and the deaths of 126 people, many of whom were Chavistas. In several cases, supporters of the government were burned alive by armed gangs.

Guaidó was directly involved in the 2014 guarimbas. In fact, he tweeted video showing himself clad in a helmet and gas mask, surrounded by masked and armed elements that had shut down a highway that were engaging in a violent clash with the police. Alluding to his participation in Generation 2007, he proclaimed, “I remember in 2007, we proclaimed, ‘Students!’ Now, we shout, ‘Resistance! Resistance!'”

Guaidó has deleted the tweet, demonstrating apparent concern for his image as a champion of democracy.

On February 12, 2014, during the height of that year’s guarimbas, Guaidó joined Lopez on stage at a rally of Popular Will and Justice First. During a lengthy diatribe against the government, Lopez urged the crowd to march to the office of Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz. Soon after, Diaz’s office came under attack by armed gangs who attempted to burn it to the ground. She denounced what she called “planned and premeditated violence.”
In a televised appearance in 2016, Guaidó dismissed deaths resulting from *guayas* – a *guarimba* tactic involving stretching steel wire across a roadway in order to injure or kill motorcyclists – as a “myth.” His comments whitewashed a deadly tactic that had killed unarmed civilians like Santiago Pedroza and decapitated a man named Elvis Durán, among many others.

This callous disregard for human life would define his Popular Will party in the eyes of much of the public, including many opponents of Maduro.

**Cracking down on Popular Will**

As violence and political polarization escalated across the country, the government began to act against the Popular Will leaders who helped stoke it.

Freddy Guevara, the National Assembly Vice-President and second in command of Popular Will, was a principal leader in the 2017 street riots. Facing a trial for his role in the violence, Guevara took shelter in the Chilean embassy, where he remains.

Lester Toledo, a Popular Will legislator from the state of Zulia, was wanted by Venezuelan government in September 2016 on charges of financing terrorism and plotting assassinations. The plans were said to be made with former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe. Toledo escaped Venezuela and went on several speaking tours with Human Rights Watch, the US government-backed Freedom House, the Spanish Congress and European Parliament.

Carlos Graffe, another Otpor-trained Generation 2007 member who led Popular Will, was arrested in July 2017. According to police, he was in possession of a bag filled with nails, C4 explosives and a detonator. He was released on December 27, 2017.

Leopoldo Lopez, the longtime Popular Will leader, is today under house arrest, accused of a key role in deaths of 13 people during the *guarimbas* in 2014. Amnesty International lauded Lopez as a “prisoner of conscience” and slammed his transfer from prison to house as “not good enough.” Meanwhile, family members of *guarimba* victims introduced a petition for more charges against Lopez.

Yon Goicoechea, the Koch Brothers posterboy, was arrested in 2016 by security forces who claimed they found found a kilo of explosives in his vehicle. In a New York Times op-ed, Goicoechea protested the charges as “trumped-up” and claimed he had been imprisoned simply for his “dream of a democratic society, free of Communism.” He was freed in November 2017.

David Smolansky, also a member of the original Otpor-trained Generation 2007, became Venezuela’s youngest-ever mayor when he was elected in 2013 in the affluent suburb of El Hatillo. But he was stripped of his position and sentenced to 15 months in prison by the Supreme Court after it found him culpable of stirring the violent *guarimbas*. 

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**Tweet:** Hoy, en Caricuao. Llevo 15 años trabajando con @jguaido. Confío en él. Conozco la constancia y la inteligencia con la que se ha construido a sí mismo. Está haciendo las cosas con bondad, pero sin ingenuidad. Hay una posibilidad abierta hacia la libertad. pic.twitter.com/Lidm8y5RTX

— Yon Goicoechea (@YonGoicoechea) January 20, 2019
Facing arrest, Smolansky shaved his beard, donned sunglasses and slipped into Brazil disguised as a priest with a bible in hand and rosary around his neck. He now lives in Washington, DC, where he was hand picked by Secretary of the Organization of American States Luis Almagro to lead the working group on the Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis.

This July 26, Smolansky held what he called a “cordial reunion” with Elliot Abrams, the convicted Iran-Contra felon installed by Trump as special US envoy to Venezuela. Abrams is notorious for overseeing the US covert policy of arming right-wing death squads during the 1980’s in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. His lead role in the Venezuelan coup has stoked fears that another blood-drenched proxy war might be on the way.

Cordial reunión en la ONU con Elliott Abrams, enviado especial del gobierno de EEUU para Venezuela. Reiteramos que la prioridad para el gobierno interino que preside @jguaido es la asistencia humanitaria para millones de venezolanos que sufren de la falta de comida y medicinas.

pic.twitter.com/vHfktVKgV4

— David Smolansky (@dsmolansky) January 26, 2019

Four days earlier, Machado rumbled another violent threat against Maduro, declaring that if he “wants to save his life, he should understand that his time is up.”

**A pawn in their game**

The collapse of Popular Will under the weight of the violent campaign of destabilization it ran alienated large sectors of the public and wound much of its leadership up in exile or in custody. Guaidó had remained a relatively minor figure, having spent most of his nine-year career in the National Assembly as an alternate deputy. Hailing from one of Venezuela’s least populous states, Guaidó came in second place during the 2015 parliamentary elections, winning just 26% of votes cast in order to secure his place in the National Assembly. Indeed, his bottom may have been better known than his face.

Guaidó is known as the president of the opposition-dominated National Assembly, but he was never elected to the position. The four opposition parties that comprised the Assembly’s Democratic Unity Table had decided to establish a rotating presidency. Popular Will’s turn was on the way, but its founder, Lopez, was under house arrest. Meanwhile, his second-in-charge, Guevara, had taken refuge in the Chilean embassy. A figure named Juan Andrés Mejía would have been next in line but reasons that are only now clear, Juan Guaido was selected.

“There is a class reasoning that explains Guaidó’s rise,” Sequera, the Venezuelan analyst, observed. “Mejía is high class, studied at one of the most expensive private universities in Venezuela, and could not be easily marketed to the public the way Guaidó could. For one, Guaidó has common mestizo features like most Venezuelans do, and seems like more like a man of the people. Also, he had not been overexposed in the media, so he could be built up into pretty much anything.”

In December 2018, Guaidó sneaked across the border and junketed to Washington, Colombia and Brazil to coordinate the plan to hold mass demonstrations during the inauguration of President Maduro. The night before Maduro’s swearing-in ceremony, both Vice President Mike Pence and Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland called Guaidó to affirm their support.
A week later, Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. Rick Scott and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart – all lawmakers from the Florida base of the right-wing Cuban exile lobby – joined President Trump and Vice President Pence at the White House. At their request, Trump agreed that if Guaidó declared himself president, he would back him.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met personally with Guaidó on January 10, according to the Wall Street Journal. However, Pompeo could not pronounce Guaidó’s name when he mentioned him in a press briefing on January 25, referring to him as “Juan Guido.”

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo just called the figure Washington is attempting to install as Venezuelan President "Juan *Guido*" – as in the racist term for Italians. America’s top diplomat didn’t even bother to learn how to pronounce his puppet’s name. pic.twitter.com/HsanZXuSPR

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By January 11, Guaidó’s Wikipedia page had been edited 37 times, highlighting the struggle to shape the image of a previously anonymous figure who was now a tableau for Washington’s regime change ambitions. In the end, editorial oversight of his page was handed over to Wikipedia’s elite council of “librarians,” who pronounced him the “contested” president of Venezuela.

Guaidó might have been an obscure figure, but his combination of radicalism and opportunism satisfied Washington’s needs. “That internal piece was missing,” a Trump administration said of Guaidó. “He was the piece we needed for our strategy to be coherent and complete.”

“For the first time,” Brownfield, the former American ambassador to Venezuela, gushed to the New York Times, “you have an opposition leader who is clearly signaling to the armed forces and to law enforcement that he wants to keep them on the side of the angels and with the good guys.”

But Guaidó’s Popular Will party formed the shock troops of the guarimbas that caused the deaths of police officers and common citizens alike. He had even boasted of his own participation in street riots. And now, to win the hearts and minds of the military and police, Guaido had to erase this blood-soaked history.

On January 21, a day before the coup began in earnest, Guaidó’s wife delivered a video address calling on the military to rise up against Maduro. Her performance was wooden and uninspiring, underscoring her husband’s political limits.

While Guaidó waits on direct assistance, he remains what he has always been – a pet project of cynical outside forces. “It doesn’t matter if he crashes and burns after all these misadventures,” Sequera said of the coup figurehead. “To the Americans, he is expendable.”

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Filed under: Donald Trump, featured, Hugo Chavez, john bolton, juan guaido, mike pence, National Endowment for Democracy, Nicolas Maduro, otpor, regime change, USAID, Venezuela
Space is Virgin territory @virgingalactic
Más de 15 mil pozos petroleros. Producción alcanza 3.8 millones de barriles/día de crudo y gas. Las más grandes reservas de petróleo del mundo.

César Bunster. Encargado Relaciones Internacionales. Partido Comunista de Chile. Desde 1999, cuando la elección del comandante Hugo Chávez inició el proceso bolivariano, Venezuela viene enfrentando los embates del imperialismo norteamericano. A la par con la profundización y consolidación del proceso revolucionario en Venezuela que se ha traducido en importantes beneficios para su pueblo -por ejemplo, desde el 2011 a la fecha se han construido alrededor de 1.7 millones de viviendas sociales (viviendas dignas de 70 m², mucho mejores que las que en nuestro país construye el sector privado)– Estados Unidos (EU) ha ido redoblando sus ataques y multiplicando sus estrategias injerencistas. En la actualidad, con Donald Trump a la cabeza, EU ha logrado orquestar una gigantesca campaña económica, política y mediática, a nivel mundial, contra el proceso bolivariano.

Varios gobiernos de nuestra región se han sumado a esa campaña imperial con declaraciones que cuestionan la legitimidad y carácter democrático del Gobierno bolivariano y de las medidas que ha ido implementando soberanamente, conforme a su Constitución y sus leyes, para resolver los problemas que enfrenta; problemas que en buena medida son producto de estrategias injerencistas que EU ya ha utilizado en otros países para provocar el estrangulamiento económico, fomentar el descontento social, apoyar la desestabilización y debilitamiento de la democracia, organizar grupos
terroristas y finalmente, provocar el derrocamiento violento y sanguinario de gobiernos democráticamente elegidos.

Por cierto, los chilenos y chilenas conocemos de primera mano y fuimos víctimas de esta campaña hace más de 40 años. Precisamente por esto último hubiésemos esperado de nuestro Gobierno una postura constructiva en apoyo de la paz, el diálogo y la no injerencia; una actitud similar a la que asumimos como país acompañante del proceso de paz en Colombia. Eso sí que nos hubiese ganado prestigio en la comunidad de naciones.

¿Qué impulsa, entonces, a Estado Unidos a declararle esta verdadera “guerra” a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, país diez veces más pequeño en términos de tamaño y número de habitantes? Para obtener esa respuesta, basta considerar los siguientes datos e imaginarse los negocios suculentos que las empresas, principalmente estadounidenses, podrían hacer en Venezuela, depredando sus cuantiosos recursos naturales y privatizando todos los activos e infraestructura actualmente en manos del Estado de ese país:

• Valor de los activos nacionales e internacionales de PDVSA (Superior a 230 mil millones de dólares), cifra que no incluye los yacimientos de gas y crudo.
• 310 mil millones de barriles de crudo económicamente explotables. Más de 500 mil millones factibles de explotar a futuro.
• Más de 15 mil pozos petroleros activos. Producción actual alcanza los 3.8 millones de barriles/día de crudo, líquidos y gas.
• Capacidad de refinación activa superior a 2.8 millones de crudo al día. 1.3 millones en Venezuela y 1.5 millones en el exterior. Para 2019 se espera superar la capacidad de 1.5 millones en Venezuela.
• Más de 200 trillones de pies cúbicos (TCF) de gas en reservas probadas y posibilidad de incorporar más de 50 trillones en los próximos 5 años.
• 22 empresas mixtas, en asociación con capitales foráneos y nacionales para explotación de gas y petróleo cuya capacidad de producción supera los 3.5 millones de barriles de crudo y equivalentes, al día.
• Cuatro grandes refinerías, una mediana, más una grande en construcción, todas en territorio nacional.
• Cinco grandes y medianas refinerías en el Caribe, Europa y los EU
• Cinco grandes centros de industria petroquímica, más uno en construcción.
• 1.700 estaciones surtidoras de combustibles y lubricantes en todo el territorio nacional.
• Más de 5 mil kilómetros de gasoductos y oleoductos en Venezuela y en el exterior.
• Más de 50 buques tanqueros. Algunos con capacidad superior a 2 millones de barriles.
• Capacidad de almacenamiento de crudo superior a 8 millones de barriles.
• Seis puertos de embarque de petróleo y productos petroquímicos.
• Más de mil kilómetros de gasoductos en el exterior.
• Extensos yacimientos vírgenes de oro, cobre, coltán, torio, bauxita, mineral de hierro, diamantes, cobre, níquel, caolin, sílice, rocas fosfóricas, basalto, feldespato, granito y mármol.
• Banca Pública. Seis bancos con más de 1.300 sedes en Venezuela y en el exterior.
• Tres empresas de seguros. Dos de ellas arruinadas por sus propietarios, hoy puestas en valor por el Estado.
• 6 represas hidroeléctricas con potencial de generación superior a 15 mil MW. Otra en construcción.
• 30 plantas de generación termoeléctrica con capacidad superior a 9 mil MW
• Dos parques eólicos con capacidad para generar 50 MW, en proceso de expansión.
• Sistema de distribución de Alimentos
• Treinta y nueve universidades públicas gratuitas con despliegue nacional en más de doscientas sedes.
• Más de 8 mil kilómetros de fibra óptica
• Fábrica de satélites en construcción
• Un gran centro de control satelital
• Una gran empresa de industrias militares.

En un espacio geográfico de apenas 300 kilómetros de radio- en el Globo Orinoquense – Venezuela dispone de las siguientes riquezas:

• Las más grandes reservas de petróleo del mundo.
• Extensas reservas de gas.
• El bosque artificial maderable más extenso del mundo.
• Una de las más grandes reservas auríferas.
• Cinco grandes plantas procesadoras de mineral de hierro y bauxita
• Capacidad de generación hidroeléctrica desarrollada superior a 15 mil MW.
• Biodiversidad catalogada entre las primeras veinte en el mundo.

Sin lugar a dudas, son éstos los intereses que busca Estados Unidos en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.

**RELATED POSTS**

**NYT confirmó que oposición quemó “ayuda humanitaria”**
El líder opositor, Juan Guaidó, quien se proclamó presidente encargado de Venezuela dijo el jueves en entrevista a Reuters que a China y Rusia lo que más les conviene es un cambio de gobierno, que les dé estabilidad a su país aliado en Latinoamérica.

China y Rusia hasta ahora le han manifestado su respaldo al gobierno de Nicolás Maduro en medio de una crisis de gobernabilidad, una vez que inició su segundo mandato el 10 de enero y ha sido considerado ilegítimo por decenas de naciones encabezadas por Estados Unidos y Europa.

El también presidente de la Asamblea Nacional se dirigió a los acreedores de Venezuela, entre los que se encuentran Rusia y China, y les dijo que “el gobierno será responsable con los mercados”.

Guaidó agregó que su equipo evalúa todas las opciones para tomar control de Citgo, la filial de PDVSA en Estados Unidos en búsqueda de fondos para su gobierno interino. En un futuro liderazgo
opositor, el jefe del Congreso aseguró que la gigante petrolera venezolana seguirá en manos del Estado.

**Citgo niega estar en bancarrota**

Citgo negó el jueves un reporte que sostuvo que estaba considerando la posibilidad de declararse en quiebra en Estados Unidos, en medio de una disputa entre Washington y el gobierno de izquierda del país sudamericano.

El Wall Street Journal había reportado más temprano el jueves que Citgo, con sede en Houston y uno de los mayores refinadores en Estados Unidos, consideraba varias opciones, entre ellas solicitar protección judicial para proteger sus operaciones, ya que se le avecinaría una crisis en su directiva y reclamos de acreedores sobre sus activos.

“Citgo no tiene intención de entrar en un procedimiento de bancarrota”, dijo a Reuters un portavoz de la compañía por correo electrónico. “Continuamos manteniendo un balance sólido, niveles de deuda planos y liquidez de más de 1,000 millones de dólares en el nuevo año”, agregó.

Citgo está en medio de un tira y afloja en momentos en que el gobierno de Donald Trump intenta usar a la empresa como palanca para sacar del poder al presidente venezolano Nicolás Maduro.

La decisión de Washington de esta semana de imponer sanciones a la industria petrolera de Venezuela ha provocado que ambas partes tomen medidas agresivas para controlar Citgo, que tiene sus raíces en Estados Unidos desde hace 100 años, pero ha sido propiedad de PDVSA por tres décadas.

*Con información de Reuters.*

**También te puede interesar sobre este tema:**


En entrevista con Forbes México, el líder de la oposición detalla su proyecto contra la crisis en Venezuela.
¿Quién es quién en la "nueva directiva" de Citgo designada por Guaidó?

La mayoría de los nombrados tienen vínculos estrechos con empresas petroleras norteamericanas.

La Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela aprobó este miércoles en sesión plenaria la designación de una "nueva junta directiva" de Citgo, la filial de Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) en EE.UU.

La designación de los directivos fue aprobada por unanimidad en el Parlamento venezolano, de mayoría opositora y en condición de "desacato", por lo cual sus actos son jurídicamente nulos.

"¡Anuncio histórico!

Desde la @AsambleaVE designamos la nueva Directiva de CITGO, conformada por Luisa Palacios, Ángel Olmeta, Édgar Rincón, Luis Urdaneta, Andrés Padilla y Rick Esser.

Comienza el rescate de nuestra industria petrolera. #CITGOParaLosVenezol @jguaido 13 de febrero de 2019"

La mayoría de los directivos "nombrados" tienen vínculos estrechos con empresas norteamericanas en sectores como petróleo, alimentos y finanzas.
La designación se produce una semana después de que el senador estadounidense, Marco Rubio, revelara que Guaidó tenía prevista la designación de una nueva directiva de Citgo, "y eso será reconocido por la ley estadounidense".

**Luisa Palacios**

Graduada de periodismo (1992) en la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Palacios fue jefa de mercados emergentes e investigación latinoamericana en la consultora de finanzas y valores Medley Global Advisors.

También ha trabajado en varias instituciones financieras, entre ellas Barclays Capital y Japan Bank of International Cooperation. Es invitada frecuente en televisoras norteamericanas para hablar sobre la dinámica petrolera en América Latina y el Caribe, con énfasis en las reservas petroleras de Venezuela, y es la única mujer de la "nueva directiva" aprobada este miércoles por el Parlamento venezolano.

**Ángel Olmeta**

Ángel Olmeta fue directivo de Citgo y Pdvsa entre 1986 y 1990, época en la que imperaba la política de "apertura petrolera", basada en medidas para justificar una gradual privatización del sector y la reducción de la participación del Estado en la industria estatal venezolana.

**Edgar Rincón**

Becado por PDVSA para estudiar en el exterior antes de que Hugo Chávez ganara la presidencia, Rincón fue formado en la escuela de negocios de Michigan (EE.UU.) y ha trabajado en conglomerados petroleros norteamericanos.

El último puesto de relevancia lo ocupó como ejecutivo de Nabors Industries, una transnacional con sede de Texas y con operaciones de perforación petrolera en yacimientos situados en Irak y Kuwait.
Luis Urdaneta
Al igual que Olmeta, Urdaneta ocupó cargos altos cargos ejecutivos en PDVSA y Citgo en la era de la "apertura petrolera", antes de 1998.
De hecho, Urdaneta fue vicepresidente de la industria petrolera venezolana y también llegó a presidir la junta directiva de Citgo. Actualmente es director de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración Petrolera, que promueve negocios y asesoría en materia petrolera.

Andrés Padilla
Padilla es un gerente empresarial con formación en la escuela de negocios en Florida, EE.UU. Ha trabajado en empresas con sede en Venezuela, que importan insumos y materia prima para la elaboración de alimentos.

Venezuela: Parlamento en desacato designa nueva "junta directiva" de Citgo
También fue director de finanzas de una transnacional norteamericana en Venezuela que participaba en negocios de comunicación inalámbrica. Además, fue gerente de empresas estadounidenses que están dedicadas a los sectores automotriz y manufactura.

Rick Esser
Con más de 20 años de experiencia en los procesos de refinación de crudo, Rick Esser figura como actual vicepresidente de cumplimiento y director de estrategia del holding CITGO Petroleum, según reseña la subsidiaria de PDVSA en su portal web.
De acuerdo a la información divulgada por la página oficial de Citgo, Esser se unió a la empresa refinadora de crudo en 1997 y, desde entonces, ha ocupado varios cargos, entre ellos gerente de suministro, de distribución y comercio de productos; gerente de suministro de crudo y vicepresidente de suministros y marketing.

Manuel Palma

EXCLUSIVA: El líder opositor venezolano Juan Guaidó concede una entrevista a RT

Tema: Venezuela tras la autoproclamación de Guaidó

Etiquetas: Economía Maduro Petróleo Trump Venezuela estados_unidos
Venezuela: EEUU confiesa que el golpe es por el petróleo

“Confesión de parte: John Bolton confirma que el golpe es petrolero. Desde el segundo 48: Hará una gran diferencia para los Estados Unidos económicamente si podemos tener empresas petroleras invirtiendo de verdad y produciendo las capacidades petroleras en Venezuela”, escribió el miércoles el ministro venezolano de Exteriores, Jorge Arreaza, en su cuenta de Twitter.

Esta declaración del máximo diplomático venezolano se produjo en reacción a las afirmaciones formuladas por Bolton en una entrevista, transmitida el martes por el canal de noticias estadounidense Fox Business, en las que el funcionario estadounidense manifestó que la Administración de EE.UU. está abordando con las empresas petroleras estadounidenses el que produzcan el petróleo en Venezuela.

De igual modo, Bolton declaró que para llevar a cabo tal cometido es necesario derrocar al presidente venezolano, Nicolás Maduro, maniobra que definió como una “oportunidad de negocios”.

El canciller venezolano, Jorge Arreaza, en una rueda de prensa en Caracas (la capital de Venezuela), 28 de enero de 2019. (Foto: AFP)
Confesión de parte: John Bolton confirma que el golpe es petrolero. Desde el segundo 48: Hará una gran diferencia para los Estados Unidos económicamente si podemos tener empresas petroleras invirtiendo de verdad y produciendo las capacidades petroleras en Venezuela”, dice el ministro de Exteriores de Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza.

**Maduro: EEUU presiona a Venezuela por expectativas petrolíferas | HISPANTV**

Las presiones que ejerce EE.UU. contra Venezuela tienen raíces en las expectativas petrolíferas de Washington, denuncia el presidente chavista, Nicolás Maduro.

Anteriormente, el canciller venezolano **había advertido** que el propósito del aludido plan golpista podría ser el petróleo de Venezuela. Arreaza había asegurado que las sanciones impuestas por el Departamento del Tesoro de EE.UU. contra la compañía venezolana Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) tenían por meta quedarse con el crudo del país sudamericano.

Tales sanciones implican el congelamiento de 7000 millones de dólares y el bloqueo de todos los pagos que hagan empresas estadounidenses que compren petróleo venezolano.

**El pasado miércoles, del opositor Juan Guaidó**, jefe de la Asamblea Nacional (AN) de Venezuela — declarada en desacato en 2016 —, se autoproclamó “presidente encargado” en un conato de golpe de Estado respaldado por EE.UU.

En este sentido, Caracas condenó tal plan injerencista y golpista de la Administración del presidente estadounidense, Donald Trump, respecto a Venezuela y anunció la ruptura de relaciones con Washington para contrarrestar dicho complot.

fmd/anztqirba

**Etiquetas** Derecha Venezolana Disturbios Venezuela Elecciones Venezuela Golpismo en Venezuela Oposición Venezolana Tensiones Venezuela-EEUU Nicolás Maduro PDVSA Donald Trump John Bolton Chavismo
Drilling Into the U.S. Government’s Rosy Projections for Shale Gas & Tight Oil Production Through 2050

Shale gas and tight oil from low permeability reservoirs have provided a new lease on life for U.S. oil and gas production. The question is, how sustainable is shale production in the long term given optimistic forecasts of robust production through 2050 and beyond?

This report endeavors to answer that question by assessing the viability of the projections of the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) in its Annual Energy Outlook 2017, which are widely used by policymakers, industry, and investors to make long-term plans.

Download Report

About the Author

J. David Hughes is an earth scientist who has studied the energy resources of Canada for nearly four decades, including 32 years with the Geological Survey of Canada as a scientist and research manager. He developed the National Coal Inventory to determine the availability and environmental constraints associated with Canada’s coal resources. As Team Leader for Unconventional Gas on the Canadian Gas Potential Committee, he coordinated the publication of a comprehensive assessment of Canada’s unconventional natural gas potential.

Over the past decade, Hughes has researched, published and lectured widely on global energy and sustainability issues in North America and internationally. His work with Post Carbon Institute includes a series of papers (2011) on the
challenges of natural gas being a “bridge fuel” from coal to renewables; *Drill, Baby, Drill* (2013), which took a far-ranging look at the prospects for various unconventional fuels in the United States; *Drilling California* (2013), which critically examined the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s (EIA) estimates of technically recoverable tight oil in the Monterey Shale, which the EIA claimed constituted two-thirds of U.S. tight oil (the EIA subsequently wrote down its resource estimate for the Monterey by 96%); and *Drilling Deeper* (2014), which challenged the U.S. Department of Energy’s expectation of long-term domestic oil and natural gas abundance with an in-depth assessment of all drilling and production data from the major shale plays through mid-2014. Separately from Post Carbon, Hughes authored *A Clear View of BC LNG* in 2015, which examined the issues surrounding a proposed massive scale-up of shale gas production in British Columbia for LNG export, and *Can Canada increase oil and gas production, build pipelines and meet its climate commitments?* in 2016, which examined the issues surrounding climate change and new export pipelines.

Hughes is president of Global Sustainability Research, a consultancy dedicated to research on energy and sustainability issues. He is also a board member of Physicians, Scientists & Engineers for Healthy Energy (PSE Healthy Energy) and is a Fellow of Post Carbon Institute. Hughes contributed to *Carbon Shift*, an anthology edited by Thomas Homer-Dixon on the twin issues of peak energy and climate change, and his work has been featured in *Nature, Canadian Business, Bloomberg, USA Today*, as well as other popular press, radio, and television.
Venezuela

**Exclusivo: Pence cruzó reproches con Guaidó en la cumbre de Bogotá**

El vice de Estados Unidos reprochó al venezolano que no se produjo la deserción masiva de militares esperada. Temen que la oposición al régimen de Maduro pierda su momentum.

_LPO (Ciudad de México) 27/02/2019_

La cumbre regional de Bogotá que encabezó Mike Pence, dejó al vicepresidente de Donald Trump un gusto amargo. El fracaso del operativo de ingreso de ayuda humanitaria a Venezuela, que se suponía iba a marcar el principio del fin del régimen de Nicolás Maduro, fue el topping de un postre amargo.

Fuentes al tanto de lo ocurrido confirmaron a LPO que Pence trazó al presidente "encargado" Juan Guaidó, un duro diagnóstico de todo lo que estaba fallando en la ofensiva contra el régimen chavista.

El mayor reclamo fue por la continuidad de la adhesión de las fuerzas armadas a Maduro. Hasta ahora sólo unos trescientos efectivos han abandonado al gobierno, sobre un total de 300 mil hombres armados. Nada.

Guaidó había prometido al gobierno de Estados Unidos que si la mayoría de los líderes del mundo lo reconocían como la máxima autoridad de Venezuela, al menos la mitad de los oficiales iban a desertar. No ocurrió. Estados Unidos logró que nada menos que 50 presidentes reconocieran al presidente de la Asamblea venezolana, pero hasta ahora las fuerzas armadas siguen junto a Maduro.
**Pence trazó al presidente "encargado" Juan Guaidó, un duro diagnóstico de todo lo que estaba fallando en la ofensiva contra el régimen chavista. El mayor reclamo fue por la continuidad de la adhesión de las fuerzas armadas al régimen.**

Por eso, Guaidó empezó un escrache a través de sus cuentas de redes sociales, de los principales mandos del Ejército venezolano, para forzar su deserción. Hasta ahora no se ha comprobado que esa nueva táctica, ni la amplificación mediática de las pocas deserciones que se producen, haya conmovido los cimientos de la alianza de los militares venezolanos con el régimen chavista.

*Con la presencia de Pence, el Grupo de Lima rechazó una intervención militar en Venezuela*

En esa charla tensa en Bogotá, también hubo cuestionamientos de los funcionarios de Estados Unidos a otro de los supuestos que Guaidó transmitió al inicio de la ofensiva contra el régimen: La base social de Maduro está desintegrada. La crisis reveló que en efecto el apoyo de su Gobierno menguó, pero no es inexistente.

En ese sentido hubo reproches compartidos por la actitud poco comprometida de los millonarios venezolanos que viven en el exterior. Se esperaba un aporte más decidido de dinero para financiar el pase de policías, militares y políticos a la esfera de Guaidó. Hasta ahora no ocurrió. Por eso en centros de decisión importantes de la comunidad internacional empiezan a alertar que la oposición venezolana podría perder el momentum que ganó con la irrupción de Guaidó.

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Esto se vio en la reunión del Grupo Lima en Bogotá, que terminó sin ninguna definición importante sobre que curso de accionar tomar, luego del fracaso del operativo de envío de ayuda humanitaria. Guaidó había apostado a que Pence anunciara el uso de la fuerza para remover a Maduro del poder, pero el vicepresidente enrió esas expectativas.

Sobre el final del diálogo que Pence y Guaidó mantuvieron en Bogotá, se trató un tema muy delicado: Cómo garantizar la seguridad personal del presidente "encargado", que creen que está muy comprometida si regresa a Caracas.

Un de las ideas que se evaluó es ver que tan factible era conseguir que el presidente "encargado" se asegurara el control de una parte del territorio de Venezuela, donde los militares locales garanticen la seguridad y lo reconozcan como máximo autoridad.

Se trata claro de un tema delicadísimo, porque Estados Unidos viene de sufrir las graves consecuencias de implementar ese tipo de estrategias de fragmentación territorial en Siria y Libia.
NOTICIAS DE NEGOCIOS FEBRUARY 26, 2019 / 9:21 PM / 13 DAYS AGO

Citgo Petroleum corta lazos con matriz venezolana PDVSA: fuentes

Por Marianna Parraga

(Reuters) - La refinería estadounidense Citgo Petroleum Corp está cortando formalmente los lazos con su casa matriz, la estatal Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), para cumplir con las sanciones impuestas por Washington al país sudamericano, dijeron el martes a Reuters dos fuentes con conocimiento de la decisión.

Ejecutivos de la firma con sede en Houston establecieron una fecha límite del 26 de febrero para finalizar las relaciones corporativas con PDVSA, tras las sanciones diseñadas para bloquear el acceso del mandatario socialista Nicolás Maduro a los ingresos petroleros de la nación y respaldar un gobierno de transición formado por el líder opositor y autoproclamado presidente encargado Juan Guaidó.

Estados Unidos, Canadá y una docena de otros países han reconocido a Guaidó como presidente legítimo de Venezuela, pero Maduro aún controla las Fuerzas Armadas, las instituciones públicas y PDVSA, responsable del 90 por ciento de los ingresos por exportaciones del miembro de la OPEP.

Citgo ha detenido los pagos a su matriz, las suscripciones a servicios corporativos, las comunicaciones por correo electrónico y ha minimizado las menciones a PDVSA en materiales de publicidad y su sitio de internet.

Una portavoz de Citgo no respondió pedidos de comentarios.

La compañía intenta librarse de las sanciones que le han obstaculizado el acceso a financiamiento. Además está dando prioridad al refinanciamiento de un crédito rotativo y de un préstamo que debe completarse en julio, afirmaron las fuentes.

“Nos dijeron que debíamos poner la casa en orden para el 26 de febrero y así evitar entrar en conflicto con las sanciones”, afirmó una de las fuentes.

Una nueva junta directiva de Citgo fue designada este mes por parte de la Asamblea Nacional venezolana bajo el mando de la consultora Luisa Palacios, que la semana pasada nombró un equipo ejecutivo dirigido por Rick Esser, el nuevo vicepresidente ejecutivo de la compañía.

Citgo es el mayor activo venezolano en el exterior. Es el octavo mayor refinador en Estados Unidos, con capacidad para procesar unos 750.000 barriles por día de crudo y suministrar combustibles a una red de 5.000 estaciones de servicio en 30 estados de ese país.

Reporte de Marianna Parraga en Ciudad de México, Editado en Español por Manuel Farías

Nuestros Estándares: Los principios Thomson Reuters
The Blueprint for Saving Venezuela

By Srdja Popovic & Slobodan Djinovic

June 02, 2017

Venezuela’s ongoing political crisis reached new heights at the end of March when a wave of anti-government protests erupted throughout the country after the Supreme Court took over legislative powers from the National Assembly. The opposition responded by launching a nationwide protest campaign against what they call a “coup on democracy,” and within the week the court overturned its decision. Weeks later, with protests escalating, the system seems to have been shaken for the first time in a decade. Meanwhile, numerous opposition representatives have been jailed, and at least three dozen civilians have been killed so far in protest-related violence.

Venezuela has been hit with a severe economic crisis over the past few years, and the International Monetary Fund predicts that the inflation rate could easily reach 1,660 percent next year, which would be the highest in the world. The new normal in the country is one of skyrocketing crime and a lack of basic necessities in stores.
Venezuela is a towering case study of how bad governance, corruption, and autocracy can turn a country with the world’s largest oil reserves and tremendous human capital into a disaster.

The opposition United Round Table, or MUD, is surprisingly united despite differences in its constituent platforms and clashes among a barrage of egotistical leaders. Still, in order to end the chaos and turn these actions into real change, Venezuela’s opposition and the international community should take a few lessons from successful pro-democracy movements.

1. **Successful movements have a vision and clear plan of action.** Gandhi wanted independence from the British; the American civil rights movement demanded anti-discrimination legislation; the color revolutions in former Soviet states fought for changes in their national leaderships, and so on. These were all tangible goals -- they gave activists something to build a strategy around.

So the Venezuelan opposition needs a plan -- not only for how they will make the regime commit to elections, and how they will then win those elections, but also for how to survive the victory and prevent the country from falling apart in the long term.

2. **Successful movements must target the right pillars of support.** The turning point in every successful nonviolent movement is flipping certain key institutions. Autocracies are always supported by coercive pillars. In Venezuela, these are the Constitutional Court, the police, and the military.

When the Constitutional Court stripped the country’s National Assembly of its powers in March, we saw prompt reactions both from the opposition in Venezuela and from leaders of regional countries, the United States, and Europe telling the judges of this court to do the right thing and overturn the decision. The decision also sparked surprising dissent from within the Chavista regime: Venezuelan Attorney General Luisa Ortega Diaz strongly criticized the ruling. In a public statement on March 31, Diaz stressed that it was her unavoidable historical duty as a Venezuelan citizen and the nation’s top judicial authority to denounce what she called the supreme court’s rupture of the constitutional order. The combination of opposition reaction, international pressure, and loyalist dissent brought about changes.

Following massive opposition protests in 2014, the Maduro government has begun to rely more and more on “colectivos” -- ideologically organised paramilitaries who intimidate, attack, rob, and even kill protesters. The use of this tactic opened a window of opportunity for the opposition to begin talking to people serving in military and police forces, many of whom probably look at the colectivos with disgust. Some members of the military have already defected and have even posted protest videos on social networks. More than 60 were recently detained for alleged disobedience.

But to build a successful strategy, Venezuela’s opposition will need to talk to police using music, hugs, and flowers, and not by throwing Molotov cocktails, stones, and even bombs made of feces at them. It may be time to shift to “pull tactics”-- methods that draw a greater swath of the population into the movement. As an example, take the amazing video messages that the son of Venezuela's human rights ombudsman, Tarek William Saab, posted to his father online, calling on him to "do the right thing." This message was soon followed by a similar statement from the nephew of Venezuela’s deputy defense minister. That post was shared by hundreds of thousands on social media. One of the most famous Venezuelans in the world, Gustavo Dudamel, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, spoke out recently as well, issuing a powerful statement on his social media profile and again at a concert dedicated to one of his disciples who had been killed in the demonstrations.
As Serbian protesters found out in the 1990s, using lighthearted tactics such as chasing officials while banging pots and pans, or offering police flowers and free music during a women’s march, works better than any of the “push tactics” to spur defections from security forces. Shifting to low-risk tactics like boycotts and strikes will also decrease the odds of violence in the streets. In every movement we have observed, violence justifies the use of oppression and lowers the number of potential participants. Polls show that Venezuelans want change. The wisdom is in keeping them active and safe at the same time.

3. Successful movements expand the battlefield and pull third parties toward their goals. Venezuela’s crisis has caused regional instability, and there are reportedly links between the Venezuelan government and drug smuggling into the United States and other Latin American countries. Furthermore, Venezuela’s economy is sinking fast, and the country now has the largest number of political prisoners in Latin America. The regime is on the defensive regionally. Venezuela, once perceived as a leader of a leftist anti-Western coalition of Latin American countries, filed two weeks ago to leave the Organization of American States (OAS). Brazil, Argentina, and Peru, historically strong regional allies of Venezuela, have called for Caracas to release political prisoners and to provide for free and fair elections. The U.S. Treasury Department announced sanctions against eight members of the Venezuelan Supreme Court, including its chief, in an effort to support the Venezuelan people “in their efforts to protect and advance democratic governance.” Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro immediately slammed U.S. President Donald Trump, ordering him to stop “meddling” in the South American country.

Other players interested in restoring democracy in Venezuela may also have a role to play as the situation progresses. If they want to be effective they must understand that talks, declarations, and selfies with opposition leaders will have no effect. Rather they must focus their efforts on investigating and pressuring people affiliated with the regime. Venezuela may soon see targeted sanctions that focus on top regime members with criminal records or on those accused of human rights violations. It is the “sniper” sanctions that are effective -- those targeting specific individuals from the inner circle of authoritarian regimes. These have worked in the past much better than “shotgun sanctions” like those the international community ineffectively imposed over our country, Serbia, and on Iraq during the 90s, or later on in Iran and Libya.

When nephews of the president’s wife were arrested and prosecuted for drug trafficking -- and when Maduro’s Vice President Tareck El Aissami’s $3 billion-worth of drug-related assets were tracked and frozen -- there was a real impact. The introduction of targeted sanctions -- freezing accounts of Milosevic’s allies in Serbia and imposing a travel ban on more than 800 of them so they couldn’t travel and meet their kids who were studying abroad in expensive schools -- was a turning point for many erstwhile supporters of the Serbian dictator.

4. Successful movements often join forces with religious institutions. The church has been an important pillar in many successful movements. “Once people decide to be free, nothing can stop them.” This is a famous quote from Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu, one of most prominent men of God that led the nonviolent movement in South Africa. Similar figures include Martin Luther King Jr., cardinal Jaime Sin of the Philippines, Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez of Chile, or, in Poland, the iconic figure of Jerzy Popiełuszko, “the messenger of truth,” whose sacrifice encouraged hundreds of thousands to oppose a totalitarian regime. Successful movements can craft mighty relationships with religious institutions when defending freedom and democracy. After many appeals by cardinals to Pope Francis, and even “regime affiliated mobsters” breaking into procession in Basilica St.
Teresa and attacking Archbishop of Caracas Jorge Urosa Savino, it may be time for the Venezuelan opposition to coin a joint strategy of protecting Christian values with the Roman Catholic Church.

Change in Venezuela, despite what at this moment seems like violent a stalemate, may be closer than we perceive. We are living in a world where topics like terrorism, international crises, and the rise of populism are making headlines all over the world, but it may well be the time put democracy, freedom, and human rights back atop the list of global priorities. Without these values, Venezuela may soon become a tragic example of a state that failed completely despite having every reason to succeed.

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