

## **U.S. Imperialism, Hands Off Venezuela!**

The reckless destabilization campaigns of U.S. imperialism have grown more transparent than ever in the Andes region of Latin America.

For some time now U.S.-trained paramilitaries working for the Colombian government have been smuggling food supplies out of Venezuela in hopes of causing a food shortage and confrontation with Venezuelan authorities.

Now that the Colombian shock forces have shot and wounded Daniel Veloz Santaella, Alexis Rodriguez Arias and Miguel Nuñez Martinez, and Venezuelan troops have been sent to secure the border with Colombia, U.S. officials are characterizing the situation as a “humanitarian crisis” and are resurrecting their open calls for counter-revolution. Already the State Department has rushed Lilian Tintori – agent provocateur and wife of CIA favorite Leopoldo Lopez – to Washington to hold an emergency meeting with John Kerry to discuss the prospects of escalation in Caracas.

In the open and through the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are investing in Lopez and his cronies with millions of taxpayer dollars each year even while spending millions more to finance other hand-picked agents in Venezuela.

At this time, several of the counter-revolutionary “leaders” have been placed under arrest and Venezuelan troops are successfully securing the border against further attacks by the Colombian paramilitary shock forces.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the approach of officials from Washington and Colombia has been to work to prevent peaceful resolution. Although Colombian President Santos did not issue a formal declaration of war, it is no secret that Colombian paramilitaries executed the August 20 attack in Venezuela and shot Santaella, Arias and Martinez. But Colombian

President Santos is refusing either to take responsibility for ordering the attacks or to take responsibility for ordering an investigation aimed at capturing and extraditing the Colombian special forces to Venezuela.

The fact that thousands of U.S.-trained Colombian paramilitaries are schooled in such deceptive shock tactics is well documented. Units of these death squads operate and use these tactics freely in Colombia, directly under orders from the Colombian head of state and his U.S. “advisers.” Such paramilitary groups are typically composed of off-duty and retired soldiers as well as civilian spies and mercenaries. The U.S. spends tens of millions of taxpayer dollars every year to run the School of the Americas and other military training institutions in Latin America which train Colombian paramilitaries in such functions as execution of guerrillas, kidnapping, terrorist bombings, torture, blackmail, and assassination. After graduation their income is usually provided partially by the Colombian military (financed by U.S. taxpayers to the tune of \$1,200 per day), big drug-dealers, and U.S. corporations.

The right of Venezuela to self-defense after an armed attack linked directly with Bogotá is not only an obvious necessity, it is also a right enshrined in international law.

As long as Washington is given any space to impose an agenda for the “resolution” of a dispute between other countries, there will be no peaceful resolution. This is not a new lesson, but it is a very important one in the current situation.

Washington has already proved that it will do everything in its power to insert animosity into the equation in Venezuela. It is only the strength of the Bolivarian power and the struggle of the people in defense of their sovereign rights that prevents the U.S. from launching all out war.

The war plans of the U.S. government are and will continue to be thwarted by the struggle of the peoples. The just stand of the Venezuelan government is winning the support and rallying the peoples of Venezuela, Colombia and everywhere. Already the American people are warning against the danger of another U.S.-organized coup in Venezuela and speaking out against the fascist logic that tries to portray the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as the source of the conflict with Colombian President Santos.

U.S. imperialism is trying to turn the clock back to the days of old-style colonialism in Latin America. By asserting itself as the judge and jury of the peoples of Venezuela and Colombia, the Obama administration hopes also to establish a precedent for the U.S. to once again act as policeman of the region.

The friendship and solidarity amongst the peoples of Latin America will not be undermined by the latest machinations of U.S. imperialism. In order to strengthen the movement of the American people against the aggressive war plans of “our own” government we must organize our struggle independent of and in opposition to both of the parties of war and imperialism – the Democrats and the Republicans. We must get organized and develop our own independent political movement. We must create a broad people’s forum organized to bring the burning issues of war and peace to the center of public opinion and to rely on the people themselves in sorting out the way forward.

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