



Fire This Time!

Bill C-51 Must be Stopped Decisively!

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A Successful Month for the Ayotzinapa Campaign in Vancouver

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DECEPTION, LIES & BETRAYAL



Government of Canada Abandons Veterans

Canada's longest war may officially be over, but the deaths haven't stopped. A recent report by the Department of National Defense showed that the Canadian Forces have lost more soldiers to suicide over the last decade than were killed in combat in Afghanistan.

At least one hundred and seventy-eight Canadian soldiers have taken their own lives over the last decade - and that isn't counting retired soldiers. This isn't just another statistic. These are young lives cut short, families torn apart by the policies and failures of the government of this country.

In light of these tragic events, I have one question for our Members of Parliament: how can your conscience allow you sleep at night, knowing that you are failing those who put their lives on the line for the war you sent them to fight? Shame on you.

Some have questioned whether it is right to rest the blame of these suicides on the mission in Afghanistan, pointing out that half of those who took their own lives did not serve in Afghanistan. To those journalists and military pundits who have argued this, shame on you as well.

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Must be Stopped Decisively!

By Thomas Davies

**We Must Stop Bill C-51 Now!
Bill C-51 Must be Defeated Decisively!
Bill C-51 is the Beginning of the End of Our Civil Liberties!**

March 15, 2015 was a day the Canadian government was hoping would not happen. A National Day of Action against the increasingly controversial Bill C-51 took place with over 70 well attended actions organized from coast to coast. The initial strategy of naming the bill, “ANTI-TERRORISM 2015” and riding a wave of Islamophobia to justify it did not last past the initial confusion when it was introduced in parliament without any public consultation. Legal experts, human rights organizations, indigenous, labour, student and faith groups, as well as tens of thousands of concerned people have taken to the streets, airwaves and everywhere else in between to denounce the bill which is the most wholesale attack on democratic and human rights in Canada in more than 100 years.

Now known popularly as the “Secret Police Bill”, if passed, Bill C-51 would see the Canadian government granting itself unprecedented powers to spy on, disrupt and detain anyone falling under the purposefully

vague and undefined accusation of “supporting terrorism”. It would also grant CSIS the power to purposely break laws and disregard human rights, as long they can find a judge to allow it. Many are left asking, “What’s the point of making a law in the first place then?”

The newest national opinion poll also



shows an important shift of public opinion against Bill C-51. Among people aware of the controversial bill, 50 per cent now disapprove of it. Just 38 per cent now approve. This is down from 82 per cent support when the bill was introduced in February. As well, 61

per cent of respondents were also opposed to provisions in Bill C-51 that would allow security services to infiltrate and track environmentalist groups, First Nations and oil pipeline protesters.

Proposed New Amendments to Bill C-51 – A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing...is Still a Wolf

Now, the Conservative government is trying to introduce some weak amendments in a new attempt to stall the growing wave of opposition. In response, almost immediately 7 leading human rights organizations in Canada issued a joint statement outlining why Bill C-51 must still be defeated. Amnesty International, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association, the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, La Ligue des Droits et Libertés and the National Council of Canadian Muslim all continue to say that despite the amendments, “The Bill has to go.”

The Harper Conservative government promises the new amendments:

- Clarify that protest or dissent will not be targeted by the bill, by deleting the word “lawful” from protests which are exempt from C-51’s broad reach.
- Clarify that CSIS agents will not have the authority to arrest people as part of new legislated powers to “disrupt” threats to national security.
- Limit national security information

sharing among 17 government and security agencies, rather than “with any person for any purpose.”

- Delete wording that could allow the minister of Public Safety to order an airline to “do anything that, in the Minister’s



opinion, is reasonable and necessary” to prevent someone on the “no-fly” list from travelling.

Responding as part of the joint statement, Ziyaad Mia of the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association said, “We have highlighted that Bill C-51 is replete with provisions that violate the Charter of Rights and other provisions in Canadian law. That has been repeated consistently by legal academics, former parliamentarians and numerous other expert witnesses who have appeared before the Committee. The government has refused to disclose the advice it has received from its own lawyers about the Bill’s compliance with the Charter.”

Writing in the Globe and Mail Newspaper in response to the amendments, law professors Kent Roach and Craig Forcese said, “In sum, the government has not made its security case. Meanwhile, the major liberties concerns in C-51 remain, including: the privacy issues; a new speech crime that comes without defences and will reach speech far removed from threats of terrorist violence...”

An Answer Without A Question

Completely lost in the entire debate, by all major political parties and new sources, whether they support Bill C-51 or not, is questioning why Canada needs a severe new anti-terrorism Bill to begin with. How real is the threat of, as Prime Minister Stephen Harper actually called it, the “jihadist monster’s tentacles”?

Comedian Rick Mercer addressed the use

of hysteria and fear to justify Bill C-51 in a recent piece titled, “The Politics of Fear”. In his usual tongue in cheek manner he said, “You wanna go down the fear road, there’s a lot of things you ought to be afraid of...Do you have any idea how many Canadians

are killed every year in the summer, doing summer things? It is our deadliest season. And yet we are encouraged to go outdoors. That needs a rethink...If you go the online and research all the frightening things in this world you will realize Stephen Harper is right, we have every reason to be afraid. But if we give into that fear, we would never debate a bill, go outdoors or take a shower again.”

How is it self-evident that a new bill is justified? 3 people have died in terrorist attacks in Canada. If the Canadian government was so concerned about the lives of people living in Canada it would not continue to refuse an inquiry into the over 1200 missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. If the Canadian government was so concerned about the lives of people in Canada there would be no ongoing crisis of veteran suicides.

Yet all they can produce for us is a fear campaign and a terrible new “anti-terrorism bill”.

Would Oversight Really Solve Everything?

Much of the criticism of

Bill C-51, especially by the NDP and Liberal Party, has focused on the lack of oversight within the bill. True enough, there is no structure of oversight. However, even if there was oversight, would that still justify the attack on our democratic and human rights?

Both critics and supporters of Bill C-51 have called on the government to create civilian oversight for Canada’s spies. Canada is the only member of the “Five Eyes” security partnership — including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand — without such an oversight body. However, have those oversight bodies stopped any of those countries, especially the United States, from consistent and blatant disregard of human and democratic rights? Even a brief search into what Edward Snowden, a former administrator for the CIA and National Security Agency (NSA) in the United States, leaked to the public is proof that the existence of “oversight” bodies does not actually equal the safeguarding of human rights.

Bill C-51: Legalizing State Terrorism

It is not widely known that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) was actually created in 1984 an attempt to appease the public outcry when details came to light that the RCMP had been and engaged for over in a systematic campaign of dirty tricks consisting of break-ins, arson and theft targeted at left-leaning press and political parties during the 1970’s. Vancouver journalist John Sawatsky, who exposed many of these activities, wrote that, “Illegal activity was accepted with enthusiasm since it was exciting, was good for one’s career and contributed to



Vancouver protest against Bill C-51

the fight against communism.” This led to the disbandment of the RCMP’s Security Service and finally the creation of CSIS as an independent organization with powers only of investigation and without enforcement.

Now “Communism” has been replaced by “Terrorism” as the new bogey-man to justify any and all manner of human rights

Bill C-51 authorizes these violations specifically! Not content to go back to the 1970’s, Stephen Harper proposes we now go beyond 1215 in our understanding of liberties and rights.

Don't Stop Now!

“To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity.” -

Nelson Mandela



Vancouver protest against Bill C-51

violations, and under Bill C-51 CSIS would receive the explicit direction to “disrupt” organizations and individuals. This would be sanction for state terrorism, and if the RCMP acted with such massive disregard for human rights even without a specific mandate in the 1970’s, imagine what CSIS will be capable of in 2015 if it receives one!

Rolling Back 800 Years of Rights

This year will see celebrations marking the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, an agreement King John of England was forced to sign recognize certain rights on June



Toronto protest against Bill C-51

15, 1215. It became the foundation of Western understanding of law and liberties, especially with provisions such as:

“No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.”

“To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.”

We should not disregard the fact that the Conservative government of Prime Minister Harper are now proposing amendments to Bill C-51. If the public outcry didn't exist, they would feel no obligations whatsoever to do this. Importantly, this growing opposition to Bill C-51 has not been led by major political parties. The Liberal Party has already said it will support Bill C-51. It took the NDP almost one month, after

every other progressive and non-progressive organization had already out against it, before they finally decided they would oppose the bill. Both parties are now focusing on proposing amendments.

The question is: Why would we accept amendments on our human rights? Human rights are non negotiable, and Bill C-51 seeks to drown them in the in the dark pool of fear and hysteria. Bill C-51 cannot be amended, only defeated. Defending our rights now is challenging, but ultimately much easier than trying to win them back if we have lost them. The exciting unity of so many diverse organizations and individuals must grow and continue to educate, organize and mobilize to demand, “Scrap Bill C-51!”

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Vancouverites Educate, Organize and Mobilize Against Bill C-51...

March 14, 2015. Vancouver protest against Bill C-51, part of a National Day of Action.

By Alison Bodine

Since it was first introduced, public outcry against Bill C-51 has been growing steadily in Canada, as more and more people learn of its real consequences. In Vancouver, people from many different backgrounds have come out onto the streets to protest and discuss this bill, which, if passed, would see the government of Canada grant itself unprecedented powers to spy on, disrupt and detain anyone falling under the purposefully vague and undefined accusation of "supporting terrorism".

Many of the activities that have taken place, including the weekly picket actions, have been organized in the Vancouver area by the newly formed Working Group to Stop Bill C-51.

To get involved in the working group e-mail stoppolicestatebillc51@gmail.com

You can also show your support by joining with the Working Group through the Facebook page, at "Stop Bill C-51" and twitter @StopBillC51.

Below is a summary of the overall activities that have been organized by various groups in Vancouver as part of building a united and strong opposition to Bill C-51.

5 Pickets in 5 Weeks

For three consecutive weeks the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 organized picket actions at the busy Broadway and Commercial Sky train station. These actions were held on

the first three Mondays of March, March 2, March 9 and March 16. Each picket action included a march with banners, signs and powerful chanting that moved around the intersection, as well as a program with speakers, and the handing out information about Bill C-51 to hundreds of people passing by.

On Monday, March 23 the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 picket moved to Lougheed Skytrain Station in Burnaby. Coming to this station proved to be a great opportunity to continue outreach about the consequences of Bill C-51 and to let more people how to get involved in the campaign to stop it.

The following Monday, March 30, the picket moved once again, this time to the Downtown Vancouver Stadium Skytrain station. Here also there was increasingly positive reception from everyone passing by.

Discussion Continues

After weeks of growing public opposition to Bill C-52, the SFU Institute for the Humanities hosted a panel discussion with the title "C-51 The Anti-terror Bill." Over 250 people filled the room at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Downtown Vancouver for a 5-person panel that included the Micheal Vonn, the Policy Director for the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), as well as three law professors and an immigration lawyer Zul Soleiman. The panel

and the ensuing discussing demonstrated the breadth of the opposition to Bill C-51, with people from all walks of life in attendance.

Actions go Canada-wide

The first Canada-wide day of action was marked with a rally at the Vancouver Public Art Gallery in downtown Vancouver. On Saturday, March 14 a diverse and passionate crowd of over 2000 people protested at a rally against Bill C-51, which was followed by a march throughout many downtown locations while distributing information and gathering petition signatures against Bill C-51. This day of action saw 70 coordinated actions take place from coast to coast to protest the proposed bill.

What's next?

The next Canada-wide day of action is taking place on Saturday, April 18th at the Vancouver Art Gallery (750 Hornby Street), in Downtown Vancouver. Come out to this action to add your voice to the growing opposition to defeat this terrifying legislation.

Weekly picket actions organized by the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 are also continuing. The next one is Tuesday April 7 at the New Westminster Skytrain station, starting at 4pm.

We must unite together in order to stop this law dead in its tracks!



Vancouver Rallies against Bill C-51!

Bill C-51: An Assault on Native Rights in Canada



By Aaron Mercredi

Since Bill C-51 was first introduced by the Conservative government in January, hundreds of protests have sprung up in communities across Canada. People from all backgrounds have poured on to the streets in collective opposition to the federal government's latest attacks on our rights. While the Conservative government introduced the bill as a measure to protect Canada against terrorism, it clearly targets anyone who is in opposition to the government or any of its policies. This creates serious consequences for anyone in Canada, and it has added problems for Indigenous people who are standing up for their inherent and legal rights.

Native People Standing Up = Terrorism

"We believe this bill is less about Jihadists under every bed ... and more about increasing the output of the tar sands, and facilitating the heavy oil pipeline proposals across the country, and will serve to severely undermine the constitutional and human rights of Indigenous peoples."

- Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, appearing before the House Public Safety Committee on Bill C-51

The biggest fight for dignity and justice in Canada has been the long-fought struggle of Indigenous nations for their land, resources and self-determination. This struggle has characterized every aspect of Canadian history and its development. Every action that the Canadian government and its predecessors made towards Indigenous people has been to expand, maintain and control the rich land and resources that Canada exploits its wealth from. The early direct wars, the reserve system, the Indian

Act, the residential schools (and the list goes on)...these were all tools used in this effort. Today, Indigenous people continue to pose a threat to big business, resource companies and the government who have a lot to gain and a lot to lose on Native land. Bill C-51 is their way of stacking the deck



in their favour.

To be clear, Bill C-51 is a threat to the rights of anyone in this country; rights that people have fought long and hard for. It tramples on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and broadens the powers of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and its cyber-security partner, Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC). While CSIS was created as a civilian spy agency whose only purpose was to observe and collect information, under the new bill, CSIS will now be allowed to 'take measures' to reduce threats in Canada. What exactly those measures will be are not revealed under the new bill and, considering this bill does not also improve public oversight of CSIS' operations, we cannot expect to be told what these measures are after the bill has passed. Essentially, there will be a new

secret police force in Canada.

One of the most significant parts of Bill C-51 is the fact that its definition of 'terrorism' is extended and interpreted to include 'an activity that undermines the sovereignty, security or territorial integrity of Canada' that includes 'terrorism,' 'interference with critical infrastructure,' and 'interference with the capability of the Government in relation to...the economic or financial stability of Canada.' This loose definition basically covers all forms of dissent against the government of Canada and the huge oil, gas and pipeline projects it is trying to push through on Indigenous land. Native people who blockade a highway, road or rail line would be interfering with Canada's 'critical infrastructure' and now have a new set of government arsenal used against them, no matter how justified they were in taking the action in the first place. While this bill is so concerned with Canada's 'sovereignty, security and territorial integrity', the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Indigenous nations obviously holds no value.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation Chief Donny Morris shared his worry that lives would be lost with Bill C-51. In 2008, he and six other community leaders were imprisoned for peacefully protesting development on their traditional land in Northern Ontario by Platinex Inc. In an interview with CBC he said "...we got sentenced. We got sent to jail, what's going to stop an officer from taking that next step?"

Chief Donny Morris has reason to worry because, even before talk of Bill C-51, Indigenous people faced violence from the Canadian state. All we have to do is

look at this country's recent history. In what became known as the 'Oka Crisis' in 1990, nearly 3,000 Canadian soldiers were deployed against Mohawk warriors who were trying to prevent the expansion of a golf course on to their burial ground. In 1995, Dudley George, an unarmed Indigenous activist, was shot and killed by an Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) sniper during the occupation of Ipperwash Provincial Park which demanded the return of stolen Native land. Also in 1995, more than 400 RCMP officers with the support of the Canadian military, laid siege to Secwepemc warriors at Gustafsen Lake in British Columbia, firing thousands of rounds of ammunition and an IED. In 2006, heavily armed OPP officers botched a raid on Six Nations community members who were reclaiming a suburban development outside of Caledonia, Ontario. Just two years ago, heavily armed RCMP tactical units in New Brunswick raided a Mi'kmaq-led anti-fracking camp near Elsipogtog. In all of these cases, the Indigenous activists were portrayed in the media and by the government as 'extremists' and 'terrorists' to enforce the anti-Native racism in Canada and justify the government's heavy force.

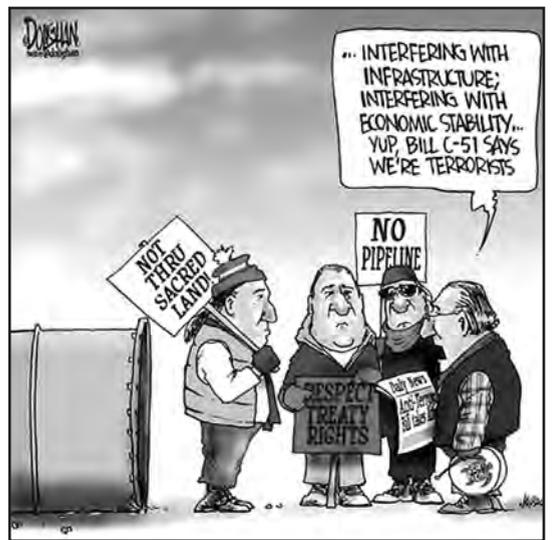
Another aspect of Bill C-51 is to isolate Native people who stand up for their rights by criminalizing those who 'promote terrorism'. Once again, with the loose definition of 'terrorism', Indigenous people who promote the defense of their homelands and non-Indigenous people who even show solidarity with Native people on social media could be covered under this legislation. This is a direct attempt by the government to not only criminalize Native protests, but create the climate of fear among non-Native people to be careful of what they support, further isolating Native people in their struggles.

Native People Won't Back Down

Bill C-51 is not the first omnibus bill that has threatened Native people in this country. In late 2012, the Conservative

government introduced Bill C-45 which removed federal protection of forests and waterways, absolved companies from being accountable for damage they inflict on the environment and fish habitat, and made sweeping changes to the Indian Act, among many other attacks on Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. In response, the Idle No More movement was born and its Native-led round dances, drum circles and rallies spread through every community and reserve across the country. The shock waves of Idle No More were felt in shopping malls, streets, highways and living rooms across Canada as the government was trying to find a way to deal with the rising Native anger. Ultimately, Bill C-45 passed in to law, but not without a fight and a larger awakening of Indigenous people and their rights.

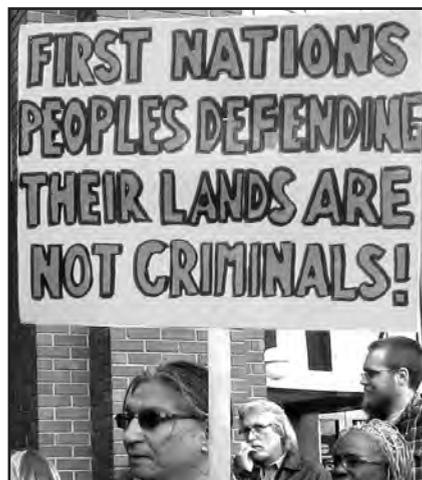
While Bill C-45 was a huge attack on Native peoples' lands and governance, Bill C-51 will take away Native peoples' rights to prevent that from happening voice of opposition. This is why many Indigenous people are joining in to fight against it. While protests have been



has joined in the many groups that will legally challenge the bill if it passes. Pamela Palmeter, Indigenous lawyer, activist and chair of the Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University, also appeared before the committee, and outlined the hypocrisy of the government in introducing this bill in violation of a nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and Indigenous nations. UBCIC President Grand Chief Stewart Phillip also attended and confronted the government on its real motivations behind the bill: security of profits, not of people.

Native Rights are Human Rights! Defeat Bill C-51!

Bill C-51 doesn't discriminate solely against Native people. Whether you are Muslim, an immigrant, refugee, worker or student, this legislation is aimed at silencing the voices and tying the hands of oppressed people in this country. This is why people are standing up now. In a recent statement by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Grand Chief Stewart said "As an act of civil disobedience, I was arrested at Burnaby Mountain because I believe mega-projects, like Kinder Morgan and Enbridge pipelines, do not respect the Indigenous laws and inherent authority of Indigenous Peoples to protect their territories, land and waters from the very real potential and increased risk of oil spills and increased coast tanker traffic along our coast. I believe under the draconian measures of Bill C-51, I would be identified as a terrorist. Regardless, I will continue to do what is necessary to defend the collective birthright of our grandchildren." This resolve is demonstrated across Canada, from the Unist'ot'en Blockade Camp to the rallies against Bill C-51. We need to push further to stop this legislation that only pushes the agenda of Canada's Native genocide forward.



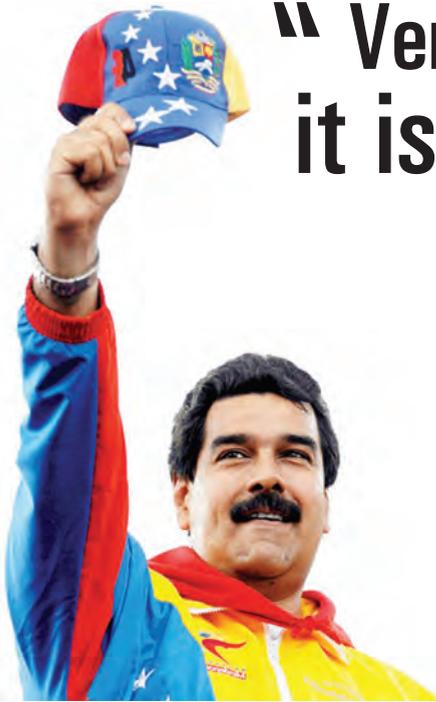
Edmonton protest to stop Bill C-51



Indigenous activists respond to being named 'national security threat' by RCMP and protest to stop Bill C-51

taking place across the country, Indigenous leaders have been part of the opposition during the parliamentary hearings. Appearing before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde called on Stephen Harper to withdraw the bill and re-introduce it only after adequate consultation with First Nations and

“Venezuela is Not a Threat, it is a Hope.”



A Letter to the People of the United States from Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

We are the people of Simon Bolivar, a believer in peace and respect for all nations in the world.

Freedom and Independence

More than two centuries ago our fathers founded a Republic on the basis that all persons are free and equal under the law.

Our nation suffered the greatest sacrifices to guarantee to the South Americans their right to choose their rulers and apply their own laws today.

Therefore we always remember the historical legacy of our father, Simon Bolivar; a man who dedicated his life for us to inherit a Homeland of justice and equality.

We believe in Peace, National Sovereignty and International Law

We are a peaceful people. In two centuries of independence we have never attacked another nation. We are a people that lives in a region of peace, free of mass destruction weapons, and with the freedom to practice all religions. We uphold respect for the international laws and the sovereignty of all peoples of the world.

We are an Open Society

We are a working people, which cares for the family, and professes religious freedom. Between us live immigrants from all around the world, who are respected in their diversity. Our press is free and we are enthusiastic users of social networking in the internet.

We are Friends of the People of the United States of America:

The history of our people has been connected since the beginning of our struggles to conquest freedom. Francisco de Miranda, a Venezuelan hero, shared with George Washington and Thomas Jefferson during the first years of the fledgling American nation the ideals of justice and freedom, which were fundamental concepts in our independence struggles. We share the idea of that freedom and independence are key to the development of our nations.

Relations between our peoples have always been of peace and respect. Historically we have shared trade relations in strategic areas. Venezuela has been a responsible and reliable supplier of energy for the American people. Since 2005, Venezuela has provided subsidized heating oil to low-income communities in the United States through our company CITGO. This contribution has helped tens of thousands of American citizens to survive in difficult conditions, giving them a much needed relief and support in times of need, and has shown how solidarity can build powerful alliances beyond the borders.

Yet, incredibly, the US Government declares us as a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the USA

In a disproportionate act, the Obama administration has declared an emergency because it considers Venezuela as a threat to its national security. (Executive Order, 09-15-2015). These unilateral and aggressive actions by the Government of the United States against our country are not only unfounded and in violation of the basic principles of sovereignty and self-determination of the Peoples under international law, but also have been rejected unanimously by the 33 countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the twelve Member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). In a statement issued on March 14, 2015, UNASUR reiterated its firm rejection of such coercive measures that do not contribute to peace, stability and democracy in our region, and demanded President Obama to repeal the executive order against Venezuela.

We reject unilateralism and extraterritoriality

The US President, without any authority to intervene in our internal affairs, unilaterally began a series of sanctions against Venezuelan officials, and opened the gate to continue this kind of sanctions, interfering in our

constitutional order and our justice system.

We advocate for a multipolar world

We believe the world should be governed by the rules of international law. Without interventions in other countries, in the internal affairs of others. With the conviction that respectful relationships between nations are the only way to consolidate peace and coexistence, as well as the consolidation of a more just world.

We honor our freedoms and will maintain our rights

Never before in the history of our nations an American president has tried to rule by decree to the Venezuelans. It is a tyrannical and imperial order that pushes us into the darkest days of US relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

For our long friendship, we alert on our American brothers, lovers of justice and freedom, on the illegal aggression being committed by the government on their behalf. We will not let our friendship with the people of the United States to be affected by this absurd and baseless decision of President Obama

We demand:

- 1- To cease the hostile actions of the US government against the people and democracy in Venezuela.
- 2- To be repealed the executive order declaring Venezuela as a threat, as requested by the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).
- 3- To be suspended the alleged and libelous sanctions against honorable Venezuelan officials who only obeyed our constitution and our laws.

Our sovereignty is sacred

The motto of the founding fathers of the US is repeated today with the same dignity by the people of Simon Bolivar. On behalf of our common love for national independence, we expect the Obama administration to reflect and rectify this misstep.

We are convinced that the defense of our freedom is a right on that we will never give up, because there also lies the future of humanity. As Simón Bolívar well said: “The freedom of the New World is the hope of the universe.”

“Venezuela is not a threat, it is a hope.”

“Independence or nothing”

-Simón Bolívar

Nicolás Maduro Moros

President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela



“Venezuela no es una amenaza, es una esperanza.”

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Carta del presidente Nicolás Maduro al pueblo de los Estados Unidos

Somos el pueblo de Simón Bolívar, creyente en la paz y en el respeto a todas las naciones del mundo.

Libertad e Independencia

Hace más de dos siglos, nuestros padres fundaron una República sobre la base de que todas las personas son libres e iguales bajo la ley.

Nuestra nación sufrió los mayores sacrificios para garantizar a los americanos del sur su derecho a elegir sus gobernantes y aplicar sus propias leyes hoy.

Por eso siempre recordamos el legado histórico de nuestro padre: Simón Bolívar; hombre que dedicó su vida para que nosotros heredásemos una Patria de justicia e igualdad.

Creemos en la Paz, la Soberanía Nacional y la Ley Internacional

Somos un pueblo pacífico. En dos siglos de independencia nunca hemos atacado a otra nación. Somos un pueblo que vive en una región de paz, libre de armas de destrucción masiva y con libertad para practicar todas las religiones. Defendemos el respeto a la ley internacional y a la soberanía de todos los pueblos del mundo.

Somos una Sociedad Abierta

Somos un pueblo trabajador, que cuida a su familia, y profesa la libertad de culto. Entre nosotros viven inmigrantes de todo el mundo quienes son respetados en su diversidad. Nuestra prensa es libre y somos entusiastas usuarios de las redes sociales en Internet.

Somos Amigos del Pueblo de los Estados Unidos de América:

La historia de nuestros pueblos ha estado conectada desde el inicio de nuestras luchas por conquistar la libertad. Francisco de Miranda, héroe venezolano, compartió con George Washington y Thomas Jefferson durante los primeros años de la naciente nación estadounidense los ideales de justicia y libertad, que fueron conceptos fundamentales en nuestras luchas independentistas. Nosotros

compartimos la idea de que la libertad y la independencia son elementos fundamentales para el desarrollo de nuestras naciones.

Las relaciones entre nuestros pueblos siempre han sido de paz y respeto. Históricamente hemos compartido relaciones comerciales en áreas estratégicas. Venezuela ha sido un proveedor responsable y confiable de energía para el pueblo norteamericano. Desde 2005, Venezuela ha proporcionado “heating oil” subsidiado a comunidades de bajos ingresos en los Estados Unidos a través de nuestra empresa CITGO. Este aporte ha ayudado a decenas de miles de ciudadanos estadounidenses a sobrevivir en condiciones difíciles, dándoles un alivio muy necesario y el apoyo en tiempos de necesidad, y ha mostrado cómo la solidaridad puede construir alianzas poderosas tras fronteras.

Sin embargo, increíblemente, el gobierno de los EEUU nos declara como una amenaza para su seguridad nacional y su política exterior

En un acto desproporcionado, el gobierno de Obama se ha declarado en emergencia porque considera a Venezuela una amenaza para su seguridad nacional (Executive Order, 09-15-2015). Estas acciones unilaterales y agresivas realizadas por el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos contra nuestro país no sólo son infundadas y en violación de los principios básicos de la soberanía y la libre determinación de los pueblos bajo el derecho internacional, sino que también han sido rechazadas por unanimidad por los 33 países de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC) y los 12 Estados miembros de la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR). En una declaración hecha el 14 de marzo de 2015, UNASUR reiteró su firme rechazo a estas medidas coercitivas que no contribuyen a la paz, la estabilidad y la democracia en nuestra región y exigieron al presidente Obama derogar su orden ejecutiva contra Venezuela.

Rechazamos el unilateralismo y la extraterritorialidad

El Presidente de los EEUU, sin autoridad para intervenir en nuestros asuntos internos, de forma unilateral inició una serie de sanciones contra funcionarios venezolanos y ha abierto la compuerta para continuar con este tipo de sanciones, interfiriendo en nuestro orden constitucional y nuestro sistema de justicia.

Abogamos por un mundo pluripolar

Creemos que el mundo debe regirse por las normas del Derecho Internacional. Sin intervenciones de otros países en los asuntos internos de los demás. Con la convicción de

que relaciones de respeto entre las naciones son el único camino para consolidar la paz y la convivencia, así como la consolidación de un mundo más justo.

Nosotros honramos nuestras libertades y mantendremos nuestros derechos

Nunca antes en la historia de nuestras naciones un presidente estadounidense intentó gobernar por decreto a los venezolanos. Es una orden tiránica e imperial que nos empuja a los días más oscuros de las relaciones de los Estados Unidos con América Latina y el Caribe.

Por nuestra larga amistad, alertamos a nuestros hermanos estadounidenses, amantes de la justicia y la libertad, por la ilegal agresión que está cometiendo el gobierno en su nombre. No permitiremos que nuestra amistad con el pueblo de los Estados Unidos sea afectada por esta decisión absurda y sin fundamento del presidente Obama

Nosotros demandamos:

- 1- Que cesen las acciones hostiles del gobierno de los EEUU contra el pueblo y la democracia en Venezuela.
- 2- Que se derogue la orden ejecutiva que declara a Venezuela como una amenaza, tal como lo ha solicitado la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR).
- 3- Que se suspendan las injuriantes y pretendidas sanciones contra honorables funcionarios venezolanos quienes sólo obedecieron nuestra Constitución y nuestras leyes.

Nuestra soberanía es sagrada

El lema de los padres fundadores de los EEUU es repetido hoy con la misma dignidad por el pueblo de Simón Bolívar. En nombre de nuestro común amor por la independencia nacional esperamos que el gobierno del presidente Obama reflexione y rectifique este paso en falso.

Estamos convencidos que la defensa de nuestra libertad es un derecho al que no renunciaremos jamás, porque allí también reposa el futuro de la humanidad. Como bien lo decía Simón Bolívar: “La libertad del Nuevo Mundo es la esperanza del universo”.

“Venezuela no es una amenaza, es una esperanza”.

“Independencia o nada”

- Simón Bolívar

Nicolás Maduro Moros

Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela

DECEPTION, LIES & BETRAYAL

Government of Canada Abandons Veterans



By Nita Palmer

continued from cover

Many of the Afghanistan veterans who took their own lives left for the mission as strong, healthy young men and women - and came back with their lives shattered, struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and substance abuse. These facts are well-documented in the military's own records. You can argue the numbers all you like, but these soldiers' lives tell a different story. As Michael Blais, director of Canadian Veterans Advocacy, points out "to compare a wound that was sustained in a military environment to the [psychological difficulties of someone in the] civilian population, that doesn't cut it" (CBC News).

DECEPTION & LIES

Growing up in a military town, you get to know soldiers pretty well. Their reasons for joining the military vary - some sign up simply to get an education or a decent job; others join up out of a desire to serve their country and make a difference in the world. I don't know any who signed up to be cold-blooded killers.

Perhaps it is knowing these soldiers and their families that makes the way the mission in Afghanistan was portrayed, particularly in its early days, seem to me to be so reprehensible. When the mission began in 2002, it was portrayed to the public - and potential recruits - as being a largely humanitarian mission. Canadians would be there to liberate the Afghan people from the Taliban, to help rebuild the country, to bring a better life to women and children. Images from Afghanistan on the Department of National Defense website largely portrayed soldiers giving candy to children, participating in elders' councils, and patrolling the Afghan countryside.

It wasn't until a number Canadian soldiers started being killed in

firefights and by improvised explosive devices that we began to see the true nature of the mission in Afghanistan. It was dangerous - far more dangerous than the Canadian public and newly-recruited soldiers had been led to believe. As images of Afghans protesting the presence of foreign troops, including the Canadian Forces, began to surface, it became more clear that it was not just the Taliban that didn't want troops there, but the Afghan people themselves. These soldiers were not sent to Afghanistan to liberate the Afghan people; they were sent to occupy and destroy a country. No amount of combat training could prepare these men and women for facing a people who were willing to sacrifice themselves to defend their country.

Is it any wonder, given the level of deception with which the government portrayed the war in Afghanistan, that so many soldiers have returned with such deep psychological wounds? I don't doubt

**Pictured from top to bottom:
Travis Halmrast, Leona MacEachern, Sylvain Lelievre, William Elliot, Michael McNeil, Justin Stark, Stéphane Legendre and Frédéric Couture**





that many are struggling to rectify their experience in Afghanistan with what they believed they were there to accomplish. Add this to the trauma of being under fire, of seeing friends and civilians alike die in terrible ways, and it is no wonder many have difficulty adjusting to "life as usual" in Canada.



BETRAYAL

These soldiers, who put their lives on the line under the auspices of serving their country, have returned home only to be abandoned by the government of Canada. In 2006, as more Canadian soldiers began to return home in caskets, the Harper Conservative government - with unanimous support from all parties - introduced the new Veterans' Charter. This new piece of legislation made fundamental changes to veterans' services which had been in place since the first world war. One of the most significant changes was ending the lifetime disability payment for seriously injured veterans (including those suffering from mental trauma), replacing it with a lump-sum payout up to a maximum of \$300,000. This amounts to a government savings of hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars per veteran in some cases. Challenged by veterans and the public alike on its attitude towards veterans, the government has cited \$11 million which has recently been added to veterans' mental health services, as well as other 'improvements' to Veterans Affairs... and spent \$4 million on advertisements to prove it. However, this does not change the fact that since 2009, nearly 900 jobs have been cut at Veterans' Affairs Canada, with the majority of cuts - 33% - coming from the disability awards department. In January 2014, veterans held a national day of protest as the government shuttered eight Veterans' Affairs offices. By the end of 2014, it was revealed that Veterans' Affairs has carried a \$1.1 billion surplus since 2006, which was returned to the government as general revenue. Of this 'cost savings' \$121 million came from the 2013-14 disability and death compensation budget.

To add insult to injury, it was revealed in January 2015 that the government has so far spent nearly \$700,000 in legal bills to



**Pictured from top to bottom:
Stuart Langridge, Shawna Rogers, Tyson Washburn, Alain Lacasse, Ronald Anderson, Jamie McMullin, Francis Roy, Stephane Beauchemin, Camilo Sanhueza-Martinez**

fight a class-action lawsuit by disabled veterans who claim the new Veterans' Charter is unconstitutional. Government lawyers have argued that the government of Canada has no 'social contract' or special obligation to provide veterans with services that have been guaranteed to them since the first world war. This government shamefully treats injured veterans as a cost to be eliminated, rather than as human beings in need to support.

While all injured veterans have been affected by this legislation, those with invisible injuries such as post-traumatic stress disorder and related mental and emotional trauma have suffered most of all. Without an obvious physical injury, many are told simply to 'man up' by their superior officers, or find it nearly impossible to be referred to get the help they need. Dozens of veterans with PTSD have come forward with stories of a system which has absolutely failed them in their time of greatest need. They face red tape and difficulty accessing services and a system which treats them as an insurance liability rather than a human being. Some have told stories of claiming to be homicidal just to get the services they need.

SUPPORT VETERANS! END THE WARS!

There can be no denying that the problem of PTSD is increasing, and will continue to increase, as long as Canada is participating in bloody combat missions overseas. Recent Department of National Defense statistics reveal that the number of soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder has nearly doubled since 2002. The growing problem of PTSD affects not only the veterans themselves, but their families, communities, and the country as a whole. A 2008 military police report detailed a dramatic increase in reports of domestic violence on or near military bases across the country. A 2012 study published in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology found that soldiers with combat-related PTSD had a significantly increased chance of being arrested for criminal activity. If we don't provide veterans with the help they need, the social and financial costs will only increase. To our representatives in government, it is beyond my comprehension how you can live with yourselves, knowing that you have deceived these honourable young men and women, then discarded them callously one your ability to use them expired. If only you could know the horrors these veterans live with daily.

To the good people of Canada: we must hold this government accountable for the blood and suffering which is on its hands. We did not choose to send troops to Afghanistan, nor Libya, nor Iraq, as polls have consistently indicated. Nor did the men and women of the Canadian Forces choose to be sent to these battlefields, where many have paid the ultimate price.

We must demand this government provide full support for veterans who are struggling to piece together their lives while still reliving the hell of the Afghan battlefields. Full funding and a much more accessible program must be provided for those veterans suffering from mental trauma. Ultimately, we must ask ourselves: what have we gained from over a decade of war in Afghanistan, from the missions in Libya, Iraq, and many other places? Is our country any safer when millions of people around the world now associate Canada with killing and destruction?

We must stand up and hold the government of this country to account for the deaths of Afghans, Iraqis, Libyans, and Canadians. We must hold them to account for the promising young lives which have been forever changed by the horrors of the battlefield. The only way to end this death and suffering will be to end these ongoing wars.

U.S. & SAUDI ARABIA IMPOSE A DEADLY WAR ON THE PEOPLE OF YEMEN*



By Jane Cutter

On March 29, Yemen suffered the fourth night of bombing by Saudi Arabia. While exact casualty figures are hard to come by, according to the Yemen Times:

"A senior source in the Ministry of Health said the government does not have reliable information regarding the number of casualties caused by the coalition airstrikes because they are taking place all around the country.

The ministry reported 25 civilians killed and another 40 injured in the capital Sana'a following the first night of attacks. By Saturday the number of civilian deaths had reportedly risen to at least 39.

News out of the Houthi stronghold of Sa'ada governorate has been limited, but a Houthi source there reported airstrikes on the Waillah and Bagim districts in the north and in Razih district in south throughout Friday night and early Saturday morning. The source reported 40 civilian deaths since Wednesday night, 15 of whom died early Friday in an attack on a busy market in Kitaf district, east of the capital Sa'ada."

Areas targeted by the Saudi's Operation Decisive Storm include the governorates of Sana'a, Sa'ada, Dhamar, Marib, Hodeida, Al-Dhale, Lahj and Taiz.

The multi-party civil war that had been ongoing between the Houthis (supported

behind the scenes by Iran and who now appear to be allied with former president Ali Abdullah Saleh); forces loyal to President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi who has fled to Egypt; Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Southern secession movement has been further complicated with the brutal open intervention of Saudi Arabia.

CNN reports:

"Saudi Arabia and Egypt have both spoken about the possibility of putting boots on the ground before. And on



Saturday, Yemeni Foreign Minister Riyadh Yaseen said he expected coalition troops to be in Yemen within days.

Saudi leaders have said that if troops do go in, they won't leave until they have degraded the Houthis' ability to do battle, CNN's Ian Lee reported. The Houthis are apt guerrillas. A fight on the ground could prove bloody and lengthy."

That last sentence is an understatement. And the Houthis are not the only "apt" fighters in Yemen. While the Houthis are not universally popular, neither are the Saudis.

As this situation unfolds, so tragic and dangerous for the Yemeni people, let us not forget that Saudi Arabia does not do anything without the go-ahead from the United States. While the U.S. has withdrawn its "training forces" from Yemen, the imperialist military retains its ability to launch drone strikes in

Yemen (and elsewhere.)

This horrible situation in Yemen is at least in part a product of the United States' heedless policies in the Middle East, in which it has overthrown or attempted to overthrow stable but independent governments and fanned the flames of sectarianism. U.S. imperialist policies laid the ground for the growth of ISIS, now found in Yemen in the form of a new group called Sana'a Province, which claimed responsibility for the deadly bombings last week.

Further complicating the role of the U.S. in these current developments, the U.S. is presently engaged in nuclear negotiations with Iran. Some elements of the U.S. ruling establishment see Iran as a stabilizing if independent force in the region, and are seeking to dial back the most extreme "Axis of Evil" rhetoric and policies towards the Islamic Republic. Other elements, most notably represented by the 47 Republican Senators who wrote an "Open Letter" to Iran, seek to continue the demonization and targeting of Iran. In any event, U.S. policy vis-a-vis Yemen and the region does not appear to be particularly well thought out, although the ends are always the same: maintenance of imperialist hegemony.

The bombardment and possible ground invasion of Yemen by an imperialist-backed foreign power is a massive violation of Yemeni sovereignty. All progressive people should stand in solidarity with the right of the Yemeni people to choose their own leaders free from imperialist intervention.

Jane Cutter is a founding member of the Party for Socialism and Liberation and is the managing editor of the Liberation News website.

*Reprinted from: Liberation News website
www.liberationnews.org*

The original title of this article is: "Deadly Civil and Proxy War in Yemen"



March 26, 2015 Yemenis Protest Saudi-Led Airstrikes in Sanaa, Yemen.

New War in Iraq Targets Syria!

Iraq. Over 3 million people have been killed in Iraq through 20 years of US sanctions, war and occupation, including 500,000 children killed by 12 years of devastating U.S. sanctions that began in the 1990's. The death and destruction of U.S. occupation has left 1.6 million Iraqi widows (March 21, 2015 United Nations Mission in Iraq – UNAMI). Iraq, which previously boasted one of the best education systems in the Middle East, now faces the complete destruction of medical, educational and civil infrastructure.



By Janine Solanki & Alison Bodine

In December of 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama announced that the war on Iraq was over and that the last of the U.S. troops that had occupied Iraq for over 8 years would be leaving. In the last 3 years since this announcement U.S. troops and mercenaries have remained in Iraq, and now U.S. bombs are once again dropping on the people of Iraq. Now, the U.S. and their allies, including Canada, have launched a new war against Iraq and have also expanded their campaign of airstrikes to include Syria.

ISIS/ISIL: Another Bogeyman excuse

Since June 2014 ISIS/ISIL (the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham) began establishing control of cities and areas of Iraq and Syria through terrorist actions directed against Iraqi and Syrian civilians. ISIS/ISIL has become the justification for the new U.S.-led war on Iraq and Syria. But where did ISIS/ISIL come from anyways?

Besides the fact that the U.S. is itself responsible for the creation of ISIS/ISIL, we can also look to the U.S. track record of “assistance” in Iraq to decide if the U.S. has anything positive to offer in their stated mission to help “defeat terrorism” in

When the U.S. began dropping 500 pound bombs on Iraq, it was only a short time before Canada joined in with almost 700 soldiers, six CF-18 warplanes, two surveillance aircraft and an air-to-air refuelling aircraft. In the first six months of “Operation IMPACT” the Canadian military conducted 693 sorties which included at least 53 airstrikes against Iraq. This mission to further destroy Iraq has cost taxpayers \$122 million dollars.

Target: Syria

As Canada’s 6-month bombing campaign in Iraq neared its end, the conservative Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper stated, “We cannot stand on the sidelines while ISIL continues to promote terrorism in Canada as well as against our allies and partners, nor can we allow ISIL to have a safe haven in Syria.” On Monday, March 30, Canadian Parliament voted to extend their war in Iraq by another year, and to expand their airstrikes to Syria.



Now the U.S. and their allies are seeking a more direct means to accomplish a take-over of Syria, and they have the excuse that they need with the “fight” against ISIS/ISIL. U.S.-led airstrikes continue to push ISIS/ISIL deeper into Syria, towards the capital and Syrian government strongholds. More directly, U.S. President Barack Obama has asked Congress to approve the Authorization for the Use of Military Force which would open the door for U.S. ground troops and a direct military intervention into Syria. Additionally, the U.S. is continuing their strategy of supporting, training and arming “rebel” forces and mercenaries to go into Syria. This includes a recent U.S. deal with Turkey and Jordan to train Syrian so-called rebels on their territory. Also, in mid-March 2015 the U.S. government announced they would be spending \$70 million on aid for so-called “moderate” rebel groups in Syria.

Imperialist End Game

In last 14 years of the new era of war and occupation, starting with the U.S. invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001, we have seen the devastating outcome of this plan. The U.S. and their allies have targeted every country in the Middle East and North Africa that has an independent government. Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya have been completely destroyed, and now Syria is currently fighting off becoming the next Libya. U.S. sanctions and threats keep Iran in the hot seat for future intervention, as the most influential independent country in the region that the U.S. has been vying to regain control of since they were kicked out after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Sanctions, war, occupation and covert and overt military operations and foreign intervention have been carried out all with the goal of establishing U.S. hegemony of the region. The human costs of this brutal war drive have been immense and we have seen some humanities oldest civilizations reduced to ruins. The war on Iraq and Syria is reaching a critical point, we cannot let the war expand deeper into Syria. Now is the time for all peace-loving people around the world to join the antiwar movement and demand:
Hands Off Iraq and Syria!

CORPORATE-FINANCIER WARS



By Manuel Yepe*

“Corporate-financier interests driving US foreign policy have long ago conspired to use Al Qaeda and other sectarian extremist forces to create a Pan-Arabian mercenary force with which to fight their enemies. Veteran journalist Seymour Hersh warned against this in 2007 in a prophetic 9-page report.

Through documented evidence over the course of the past four years, Hersh exposed this criminal conspiracy against world peace and all of humanity. Political analyst Tony Cartalucci discussed this in his article *The “Cataclysmic Conflict” Yet to Come – And What We Can Do To Stop It*, published on March 6, 2015 by the *Activist Post*.

“The war special interests in the United States along with its co-conspirators plan to wage across the planet encompasses not only the Middle East and North Africa, but also Russia, China, and beyond. It threatens the lives, peace, and prosperity of all on Earth. If it is not exposed, and the special interests driving it not undermined, uprooted, and purged from humanity, none will escape the dark days that inevitably lie ahead.”

Cartalucci holds that this is not “Obama’s” war, nor a “Republican” or “Neo-Con” war. In his view this is a war for global hegemony waged by the corporations, banks and institutions on Wall Street and in Washington which transcend elections and own parties on all sides and

in all corners of the current, prevailing political paradigm. “Appealing to a political party controlled by these interests is the very definition of futile.”

According to Cartalucci, it is not merely “Walmart,” “Pepsi,” or “Exxon” themselves as corporations, but rather the concentration

of power, wealth, and influence these corporations collectively represent. Often it is the same board members and financial interests holding stakes in each corporation. It is this handful of shareholders who, in turn, fund think tanks behind policy papers engineering wars of aggression, including the current proxy war being waged through “ISIS” and “Al Qaeda.”



Thus, While NATO is clearly threatening Russia’s borders in Ukraine; it is also creating a united front of sectarian extremists who will push through Russia’s southern region. This is essentially Adolf Hitler’s invasion of Russia, in slow motion, using the methods of 4th generation warfare, such as Operation Barbarossa and the Afrika Korps, to invade the USSR in 1941-1942.

This plan will not end in the Middle East. If successful in establishing hegemony there, the chaos will spread to all corners of the globe: first to southern Russia and western China, then beyond. “The question of whether or not one will eventually be affected by this conflict is not a matter of if,

but a matter of when,” Cartalucci predicts.

According to Cartalucci, some initiatives are emerging such as promoters of local institutions which commit their knowledge and resources in joint projects that would allow local communities to develop and use technology to face the unwarranted power and abuses of the huge corporate-financier monopolies.

“Hackerspaces” are local institutions which pool resources and knowledge together, allowing local communities to develop and employ technology. They aim at decentralizing the big-retail, big-telecom, big-pharma, and big-auto by targeting their specific monopolies.

The objective is to decentralize these vast monopolies through the creation and proliferation of local alternatives which will systematically undermine their capacity to wield the unwarranted power and influence they currently enjoy.

According to Cartalucci, there are already people working on this decentralizing effort around the world and simply need more consumers ready to become producers and to tackle all monopolies in a similar manner.

Decentralizing these vast monopolies through the creation and proliferation of local alternatives will systematically undermine their capacity to wield the unwarranted power and influence they currently enjoy.

They believe that alternative media has already proven the power of people turning from consumers and into producers, and the redistribution and balance of power and influence it creates. Imagine tackling all monopolies in a similar manner.

Obviously, Cartalucci could be discovering a new phase of the contradictions within the ultra-warmongering imperialism generated by capitalism and its progenitors.

March 12, 2015.

Reprinted from:
englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com
 A CubaNews translation. Edited by Walter Lippmann

**Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba’s ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples*

Message from Fidel to President Nicolás Maduro

Nicolás Maduro Honorable Mr. Nicolás Maduro, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:

As has been announced in the media, tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17, an ALBA Summit will take place in Caracas to discuss the weird US government policy against Venezuela and ALBA.

It was Chávez himself who came across the idea of creating that organization, for he was willing to share with his Caribbean brothers and sisters the abundant economic resources with which Nature had endowed his home country and which had ended up in the hands of powerful US companies and a handful of Venezuelan millionaires.

Corruption and squander were the main incentives of the first fascist-like oligarchy which was addicted to violence and crime. Violence and crime then became so intolerable for the heroic people of Venezuela that they could hardly ever forget about it and they will never consent to going back to the shameful past of the pre-revolutionary era that led to the storming of shopping centers and the murder of thousands of persons whose numbers no one has been able to accurately estimate even today.

Simón Bolívar fully devoted himself to the colossal task of liberating the continent. More than a half of the best sons and daughters of his people fought and died throughout many years of ceaseless struggle. With less than one per cent of the planet surface, Venezuela has the biggest reserves of hydrocarbons in the world. For an entire century, it was forced to produce all the fuel that the European powers and the United States needed. Even today, when the hydrocarbons that were formed after millions of years would be consumed in no more than a century, and we, the human beings, who are today 7.2 billion will double that figure within a hundred years time and will total 21 billion within two hundred years time, only the prodigies of the most advanced technologies could perhaps allow the human species to survive for a little longer.

Why isn't the fabulous media being used to inform and educate peoples on these realities, that should be known to every person in his or her right mind, and it is being used instead to promote deception?

An ALBA Summit can not ignore these realities that are so close to us.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has unmistakably declared that it has always been ready to hold discussions, in a peaceful and civilized way, with the US government, but it will never accept threats or impositions from that country.

I should add that I have been able to observe not only the attitude adopted by the heroic people of Bolívar and Chávez, but also the existence of a special circumstance: the exemplary discipline and spirit of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces. No matter what the US imperialism intends to do, it will never be able to count on their support to do what it did for so many years. Today, Venezuela has the best equipped soldiers and officers of Latin America.

Recently, when you met with the army officers, it was obvious that they were ready to give their last drop of blood for their Homeland.

A fraternal hug to all Venezuelans, to the ALBA peoples and to you.

Fidel Castro Ruz
March 16, 2015
11:14 p.m.

* EN ESPAÑOL *

Mensaje de Fidel al presidente Nicolás Maduro

Honorable Señor Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro:

Como ha publicado la prensa, mañana martes, 17 de marzo, tendrá lugar en Caracas la Cumbre del ALBA para analizar la insólita política del gobierno de Estados Unidos contra Venezuela y el ALBA.

La idea de crear esa organización fue del propio Chávez, deseoso de compartir con sus hermanos caribeños los enormes recursos económicos con que la naturaleza había dotado a su Patria de nacimiento, pero sus beneficios habían ido a parar a manos de poderosas empresas norteamericanas y a unos pocos millonarios venezolanos.

La corrupción y el despilfarro fueron el estímulo fundamental de la primera oligarquía de tendencia fascista, adicta a la violencia y al crimen. Tan intolerable para el pueblo heroico de Venezuela es la violencia y el crimen que se cometió contra él que no puede olvidarse, y jamás admitirá un regreso al pasado vergonzoso de la época prerrevolucionaria que dio origen al asalto de los centros comerciales y el asesinato de miles de personas, de las cuales nadie puede asegurar hoy la cifra.

Simón Bolívar se entregó de lleno a la colosal tarea de liberar el continente. Más de la mitad de lo mejor de su pueblo luchó y murió en largos años de ininterrumpida lucha. Con menos del 1% de la superficie del planeta, posee las mayores reservas de hidrocarburos del mundo. Durante un siglo completo fue obligada a producir todo el combustible que las potencias europeas y Estados Unidos necesitaban. Aun cuando hoy los hidrocarburos, formados en millones de años, se consumirían en no más de un siglo, y los seres humanos que hoy alcanzamos los 7 200 millones en cien años más se duplicarán, y en doscientos sumarán veintiún mil millones, solo los prodigios de la más avanzada tecnología tal vez permitirían la supervivencia de la especie humana un poco más de tiempo.

¿Por qué no se utilizan los fabulosos medios de divulgación para informar y educar sobre estas realidades, en vez de promover engaños, que cada persona en su sano juicio debe conocer?

Una Cumbre del ALBA no puede transcurrir sin tomar en cuenta estas realidades que nos tocan tan de cerca.

La República Bolivariana de Venezuela ha declarado de forma precisa que siempre ha estado dispuesta a discutir de forma pacífica y civilizada con el gobierno de Estados Unidos, pero nunca aceptará amenazas e imposiciones de ese país.

Añado que he podido observar la actitud, no solo del pueblo heroico de Bolívar y Chávez, sino también una circunstancia especial: la disciplina ejemplar y el espíritu de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana. Haga lo que haga el imperialismo de Estados Unidos, no podrá contar jamás con ellas para hacer lo que hizo durante tantos años. Hoy Venezuela cuenta con los soldados y oficiales mejor equipados de América Latina.

Cuando te reuniste con los oficiales en días recientes se podía apreciar que estaban listos para dar hasta la última gota de su sangre por la Patria.

Un abrazo fraternal para todos los venezolanos, los pueblos del ALBA, y para ti.

Fidel Castro Ruz
Marzo 16 de 2015
11 y 14 p.m.



WHY CUBA MATTERS

By Tamara Hansen

Based on a lecture given By Tamara Hansen at Langara College in Vancouver, Canada, in March 2015.

I- What is Socialism?

First:

Socialism is a noun. According to the Miriam-Webster dictionary it is “a way of organizing a society in which major industries are owned and controlled by the government rather than by individual people and companies.” But what does this really mean?

To truly understand I believe it is best to look at what we know living in Canada, in a Capitalist country. First, under capitalism the means of production are owned privately by companies and capitalists. Under Socialism the means of production are owned by the state which is run by the working class. This means the working class has the power to decide their own future.

Second:

Under capitalism, the economy is ruled by what capitalist economist Adam Smith refers to as the invisible hand, this means the economy has times of prosperity, depressions and crashes which are not organized or

planned. It is a system of competition. Che Guevara said “Capitalism is a contest among wolves. One can win only at the cost of the failure of others.” Under socialism, the economy is planned by the state and workers, this is in order to move towards an equal distribution of wealth and resources.

Third:

Under capitalism, there is a need for wars and imperialism for capitalists to secure new markets and resources to plunder for their own gain. We see the government of the United States for example investing heavily in war industries – making bombs, guns, jets, naval ships, drones and other high-tech devices for special operations. They have then used these weapons (even just since 2010) on the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Yemen and Pakistan. Then in places like Iraq or Afghanistan where they have had a ground presence they have offered lucrative “reconstruction contracts.” They then exacerbate differences among communities and nations with their divide and conquer tactics, which keeps people weak, divided and in a state of perpetual instability. In contrast, under Socialism, I am sure many of you have heard the Marxist slogan “workers of the world unite?” the idea is that there should be no more borders and that workers should be

internationalists, meaning support and share wealth and resources amongst communities and nations.

II- Why should you care about socialism or Cuba?

Now, you may be asking yourself if you want to keep reading this article. You may have your mind made up that you do not agree with socialism and that you believe that a more humane version of capitalism is possible, or you might consider yourself an anarchist, or you might feel this is all too theoretical. Well before turning the page to something else, I want to give you two things to think about...

Reason one:

The non-governmental organization (NGO) Oxfam International released a widely supported and sourced report in January 2015. The report explains that, “World’s 85 richest folk hold wealth equal to that of half the planet’s poorest people.”

On March 2, 2015 Forbes Magazine released an article saying there are currently 1,826 billionaires in the world. Their aggregate net worth is \$7.05 trillion and the crème de la crème of this 1,826 are the 85 richest in the world who own \$1.7 trillion.

So when we are told that capitalism is fair because the hardest workers get ahead of those who don’t work, are you really convinced that those 1,826 billionaires really have worked harder than the over 1 billion human beings world-wide who work on farms, in factories and in sweatshops for less than \$1.25 a day?

Reason two:

Reading the news in Canada, we have all both good and bad things about the Cuban revolution. Generally the story goes that Fidel Castro did a great thing, along with the people of Cuba, in overthrowing a cruel and harsh US-backed dictator in 1959. However, since then he has himself become an equally cruel dictator dedicated to this wild and impossible idea of building a socialist country. But there is a reason the mainstream media needs repeat this version of events ad nauseam. It is because



the path of the Cuban revolution, the path of trying to build socialism, is fundamentally opposed to our current world order of capitalism.

III- A Bit of History

It is true that the Cuban Revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959. It was led by Fidel Castro and with the great leadership of Ernesto Che Guevara as well as other revolutionaries such as Raul Castro, Vilma Espin, Celia Sanchez, Camilo Cienfuegos and Juan Almeida. It was a revolution supported by the masses of Cuba who wanted to see the overthrow of the despised US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista.

The July 26th Movement, which was the organization led by Fidel Castro, gained popularity because it promised jobs to the jobless, healthcare and education to those who had never been able to afford it, a proper house and electrification to many who lived in huts or were homeless, distribution of land for peasant farmers who had always worked the land of the rich landowners, nationalization of many industries previously owned by US corporations (who were stealing the wealth of the country to line their own pockets), and they created a planned economy.

Soon after the revolution triumphed the US imposed a blockade against Cuba.

On April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro declared the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution. This took place just after the US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion which attempted to overthrow the revolution and turn Cuba back into a US colony. The Soviet Union became an important ally for Cuba.

Between 1989 and 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and Cuba lost 80% of its international trade overnight. Many critics on the right and the left believed this would spell the end of the Cuban revolution and its socialist project. However, the Cuba people and Cuban government remained defiant through what was called the "special period", when the United States tightened its blockade and the average Cuban lost about 20 pounds due to food shortages, and fuel shortages (which meant lots of walking and riding bikes). However, not one school or hospital was closed in Cuba during this economic crisis. With hard work and determination the Cuban people made what seemed impossible a reality- they maintained and continued building their revolution.

IV- Cuba's Accomplishments

One: Health Care

So the Cuban revolution established free healthcare, the question remains, is it good healthcare? All statistical indicators point to 'yes'! Here is some information taken from the UNESCO website. In 2012, Cuba's life expectancy was 79.1. In the same year, Cuba's



infant mortality rate was 4 deaths per 1,000 live births. This is the lowest in the Americas, that means babies born in Cuba have a better chance of surviving their first year of life than any other country in this hemisphere – including the United States and Canada.

How has Cuba been able to achieve this? One of the fundamental principles of their healthcare system that is different than the capitalist world, is that they always put people before profit. This means making sure everyone has a family doctor, access to specialists and medical centers in rural communities to insure equality of access to medicine across the island. An important way to keep costs on the system low is to take a preventative approach to medicine. It is cheaper and easier to prevent illness than to treat it – this is a concept basically unheard of in Canada or the United States where pharmaceutical companies are making billions off of illness every year. In fact, The Wall Street Journal published an article about global sales of pharmaceutical drugs in November 2014 with the title, "Prescription Drug Spending Will Reach \$1.3 Trillion – That's Trillion – By 2018." Where is the money going?

Two: Education

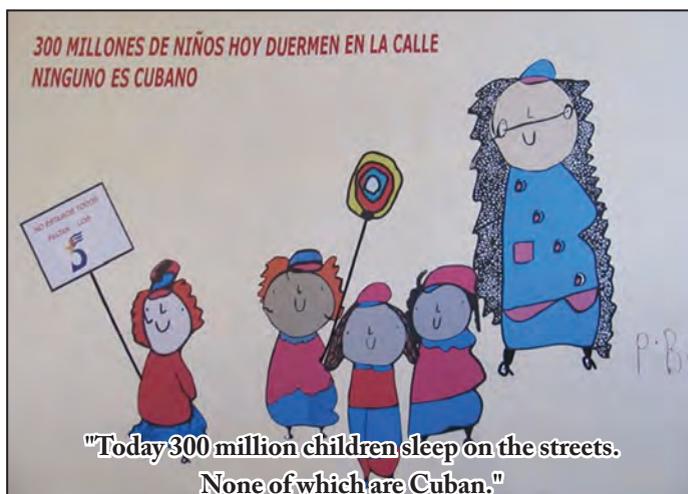
Another great accomplishment of Cuban socialism is their education system. This is a universally accessible system, meaning there is no tuition or enrollment fees for elementary, secondary and even college and university levels. The government has also worked to remove barriers on students so for example if they need to leave home for their education, their room and board will be paid for by the state. Their education system is very competitive and very diverse – where do you think the biomedical experts

come from? Or Cuba's world re-known ballet dancers, baseball players, Judo champions, Jazz musicians, salsa dancers, tobacco farmers, doctors and other medical experts come from? The Cuban education system!

Three: Women's Rights

My next example is the advances the revolution has made for women's rights in Cuba. An important aspect for women in Canada is first that the Cuban government provides universal free child care for working mothers. This is an option that is not even a part of the national dialogue in Canada today. Every major political party agrees families should pay for childcare, it is just a matter of how much or how little. A second major gain for women in the revolution is their participation in politics. First, through the Cuban Federation of Women (FMC) this boasts a membership of over 4 million women. The second, is that today 48.9% of the members of Cuba's national assembly are women. Cuba is actually in third place worldwide for the high participation of women in its parliament. To note, Canada is 55th in the world for female participation in parliament with only 25.1% of MPs who are female. Women have also made great strides in other areas of the workforce from medicine, to sciences, to the arts and beyond.

Four: Internationalism



In August 2014, I had the honour of talking with the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Julio Garmendia Peña. He used to be the ambassador for Cuba in the Ukraine. Many of you will know about the Chernobyl disaster, but in case you do not, it was a catastrophic nuclear accident that occurred on April 26, 1986 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine (then part of Soviet Union). An explosion and fire released large quantities of radioactive particles into the atmosphere, which spread over much of the western USSR and Europe. The Chernobyl disaster is to this day the worst nuclear power plant accident in history in terms of cost and resulting deaths. But did you know that over 34,000 children who have been born with birth-defects because of Chernobyl have been treated for free in Cuba? Julio was a part of working with the Ukrainian families to get their children to Cuba and to follow up with them afterwards. This is the power of internationalism and how Cuba shares the resources it has, not only within Cuba, but also with countries around the world.

I could give more examples of Cuban doctors and medical professionals in Venezuela, Haiti, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and so many other places where they are working for free to provide medical care in remote and impoverished areas. The most important internationalist work recently has been Cuba's leading role in West Africa in the fight against Ebola. However, Cuba does not just send doctors around the world, it also invites students from poor and working families around the world to come and study to become doctors in Cuba for free! The only catch is that after studying in Cuba for 4-6 years these students must commit to working in an under served region in their own country sharing their medical expertise. This is the beautiful power of revolutionary internationalism, it also has deep roots in Cuba's history, all the way back to their fight for independence against Spain, when Jose Marti wrote, "Humanity is my homeland."

Five: Championing Human and Democratic Rights

There are many other aspects of the progress Cuba has made since 1959 with its socialist model and project. I could speak about worker's participation in decision making and worker's rights, the electoral process, LGBTQ+ rights, the environment, social responsibility, and so many other aspects. However, one issue I would just like to touch on, after explaining all of Cuba's accomplishments, is that we must consistently remind ourselves that Cuba has taken these steps forward during over 50 years of blockade by the United States government.

Have you ever thought to ask yourself what Canada might look like if the US had blockaded us for over 50 years?

V- Is Cuba a Socialist Society?

At the same time that I am defending Cuba's socialist project, its socialist government and its planned economy. I would not argue that Cuba is a socialist society, nor that Cuba is a socialist paradise. Why do I make this distinction?

Because I cannot argue that Cuba has eliminated inequality or say that Cuba has eliminated prejudice, or say that there is no corruption in Cuba – all of these things would have been accomplished in a socialist society. What I can say is that Cuba has embarked on a different path since their revolution of 1959, a bold path to put humanity first before profit.

At the same time, the Cuban path towards



socialism, equality and a place where a human being is no longer exploited by another human being, cannot be fully realised until there are socialist revolutions in other countries. Cuba cannot create socialism on one Island. Cuba is a society in transition and that society does still suffer from many remainders of capitalist ideology and method. So Cuba is waiting for us to make change in our own countries.

VI- What Makes Cuba Different?

There have been other socialist projects and socialist countries. Some have failed, some are continuing on paths very different than Cuba's. Fidel Castro said, "They talk about the failure of socialism, but where is the success of capitalism in Africa, Asia and Latin America?" I think this is a key question.

One: Honest and Revolutionary Internationalist Leadership

Nevertheless, the reason I have gotten involved in Cuba solidarity and believe so strongly in Cuba's socialist model is its leadership! Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Raul Castro, Juan Almeida, Vilma Espin, Celia Sanchez, Melba Hernandez and Hydee Santamaria – These

are the names of some of my heroes who fought in the Cuban revolution.

In February 2008, after Fidel announced he would not seek or accept a renewal of his functions as President of the Council of State and Commander-in-Chief, Cuban journalist, revolutionary and a dear friend, Manuel Yepe wrote about how Cubans were feeling across the island. He wrote, "Fidel will keep leading the Revolution because it is mainly thanks to him that nowadays Cuba is a nation of educated, healthy and patriotic people, ready to cultivate unity and solidarity in order to maintain and defend their independence, their cultural identity and their social justice, achieved all along the last half century."

While Fidel Castro was and is considered "Comandante en Jefe" (Commander in Chief) of the Revolution due to the amazing role he has played as the leader of the Cuban revolution from 1953 to today. Raul Castro is now the president of Cuba and has been since 2008.

Two: Fidel and Raul

Very interestingly Raul Castro announced after the last round of elections in Cuba that he will not run again for the position of president of Cuba. This is in order to open the space for new leadership.

It is very difficult for many outside of Cuba to understand why Fidel and Raul have been leading the country for over 50 years. I believe it is partly because capitalism is a bankrupt system of competition

that nourishes the corrupt and money-hungry. I would argue that because of this, we have not found anyone we could believe in or have confidence in the same way that Cubans trust in Fidel Castro.

It is in large part due to Fidel Castro's consistent revolutionary method in approaching Cuba's challenges and his visionary leadership role that Cuba's socialist project has been such a success. Of course his leadership would mean nothing without the support, love and hard work of the Cuban people who have dedicated themselves to protecting and improving the gains of their revolution at every step of the way.

In Cuba and throughout Latin America it is common to hear people proclaim "Un mundo mejor es posible y necesario" or a better world is possible AND necessary.

I believe that the Cuban revolution shows us both, that we can do better and that we, as human beings, deserve better. The question is how to get there? Let's start by following Cuba's example, the example of a heroic socialist revolution in progress.

Por Manuel Yepe*

Los intereses corporativo-financieros que manejan la política exterior estadounidense hace mucho tiempo han venido conspirado para utilizar Al Qaeda y otras fuerzas sectarias extremistas para la creación de una fuerza mercenaria pan-árabe con la que luchar contra sus enemigos. Esta conspiración contra la paz mundial y la humanidad, expuesta en 2007 en profético informe de nueve páginas por el veterano periodista Seymour Hersch y documentada ampliamente en el transcurso de los últimos cuatro años, es citada por el analista Tony Cartalucci en artículo titulado “El cataclísmico conflicto por venir y lo que podemos hacer para detenerlo”, publicado el 6



de marzo de 2015 por el Activist Post.

“La guerra que ciertos intereses especiales estadounidenses, junto a sus socios en la conspiración, planean emprender en todo el planeta abarca no sólo al Medio Oriente y África del norte, sino también a Rusia, China y más allá. Amenaza la vida, la paz y prosperidad de todos en la tierra. Si no es expuesta y sus propósitos minados, desarraigados y purgados, la humanidad no escapará a los oscuros días que inevitablemente se avecinan.”

Cartalucci sostiene que no se trata de una guerra “de Obama” ni de una guerra “republicana”, tampoco “de los neoconservadores”. Esta es una guerra por la hegemonía mundial librada por las corporaciones, los bancos e instituciones que parten de Wall Street y Washington y trascienden las elecciones y los partidos políticos en todas partes y en todos los rincones del actualmente imperante paradigma político. “Afirmar que un partido político controla estos intereses es una definición cuando menos baladí”.

Según Cartalucci no se trata meramente, de “Walmart”, “Pepsi”, o “Exxon” como empresas, sino de la concentración de poder, riqueza e

LAS GUERRAS CORPORATIVO-FINANCIERAS

influencia que estas corporaciones representan colectivamente. A menudo se puede constatar que muchos de los nombres de miembros de las Juntas de estas corporaciones se repiten en otras Juntas de gobierno de otras corporaciones. Son los mismos intereses financieros sembrados en varias corporaciones, y es este mismo puñado de accionistas el que financia a los tanques pensantes (o “think tanks”) que están detrás de los documentos que norman la ingeniería de las guerras de agresión, incluyendo la actual guerra que se desarrolla a través de “ISIS” y “Al Qaeda”.

De ahí que mientras la OTAN está claramente amenazando las fronteras de Rusia en Ucrania, pueda también estar creando un frente unido de extremistas sectarios que presionará a través de la región meridional de Rusia. Esto es, esencialmente, el plan de invasión a Rusia de Adolf Hitler, en cámara lenta, utilizando los métodos de guerra de cuarta generación en una operación similar a la Barbarroja del Afrika Korps para invadir la URSS en 1941-1942.

Este plan no culminará en el Medio Oriente. Si logra establecer allí la hegemonía, el caos se extenderá a todos los rincones del globo. Primero al sur de Rusia y China occidental, luego más allá. “La cuestión no es si la guerra ocurrirá o si alguien se verá afectado o no. La cuestión es solo cuándo tendrá lugar”, profetiza el autor. Según Cartalucci, ante tal inminencia están surgiendo iniciativas como las de los promotores de instituciones locales que comprometen sus recursos y conocimiento en planes conjuntos que permiten a comunidades locales desarrollar y emplear la tecnología para enfrentar el poder injustificado y los abusos de los inmensos monopolios corporativo-financieros.

Los “hackerespacios” son instituciones locales que unen sus recursos y conocimientos para propiciar que las comunidades locales desarrollen y empleen la tecnología. Abogan por la descentralización de las grandes tiendas mayoristas, los grandes centros de telecomunicación, las grandes droguerías y los grandes centros de servicios

automovilísticos, apuntando a los monopolios a los que ellos responden. El objetivo es la descentralización del poder injustificado y la influencia abusiva de los inmensos monopolios

corporativo-financieros a través de la creación y proliferación sistemática de alternativas locales que socaven sus capacidades para ejercer el poder y las influencias de que injustificadamente disfrutan.

Según Cartalucci, para que esto suceda ya hay personas que trabajan alrededor del mundo en este esfuerzo descentralizador y simplemente necesitan más consumidores dispuestas a tornarse en productores y esperan abordar a los monopolios de manera similar.

Descentralizar estos grandes monopolios a través de la creación y proliferación de alternativas locales sistemáticamente socavaría su capacidad para ejercer el poder injustificado y la influencia de que actualmente disfrutan.

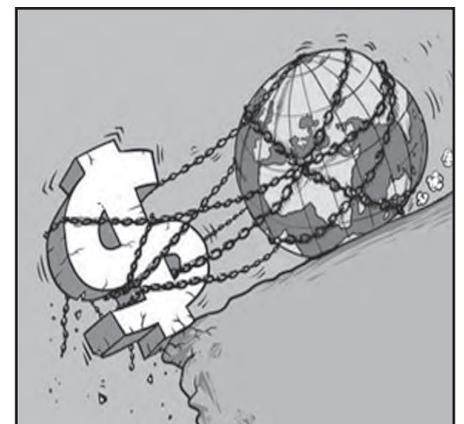
Consideran que los medios alternativos están demostrando la capacidad de la gente de convertirse de consumidores en productores, y lo que ello significa para la redistribución y equilibrio del poder y las influencias que ello crea. Imagina abordar todos los monopolios de manera similar.

Obviamente, Cartalucci pudiera estar descubriendo un fase nueva de las contradicciones entre el imperialismo ultra guerrillero generado por el capitalismo y su progenitor.

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El Salvador Elections: The People Vote for Progressive Changes

An interview with María Luisa Meléndez, FMLN Vancouver Coordinator



Fire This Time (FTT) sat down with FMLN Vancouver Coordinator María Luisa Meléndez, following her trip to El Salvador, where she participated as an FMLN organizer and elections observer for the March 2015 municipal and legislative elections.

FTT: As you know there has been a delay in the El Salvador election results due to some sabotage at the end of the election. I am wondering if the whole official election results including mayoral final results for the city of San Salvador have now been announced?

María Luisa: Well, I'll reply to your question starting by saying that you are correct about the acts of sabotage. Since the FMLN took political power, we have had to come to deal with a large amount of sabotage by the hands of the ARENA political party. In this case, the FMLN had paid a lot of attention to not just the ballot boxes but the way in which people voted. They've elaborated other systems of sabotage, we can not really call this sabotage, but at the end this system that was created in the constitutional arena is a sort

of sabotage by itself, not just for the FMLN but for the all the people as well, because there are 5 members of the electoral council, 4 of them are from the ARENA party and just 1 representing the FMLN, and because they have majority it is easy for them to sabotage the electoral process. Basically they take advantage of their position to rig the process.

About the results, when we were there, we found out that the San Salvador mayoral election had been won by FMLN, and yes, officially the FMLN candidate won, not with an big majority, but officially with a legitimate majority against ARENA candidate.

FTT: Who possibly could have benefited from election sabotage or maybe I should ask if there is any suspicions about who might have done it?

María Luisa: Yes, this is obvious; presumably the right wing opposition would like to be beneficiaries. Until yesterday, they still had not found the ballot boxes with the votes, which were hidden. Both, the FMLN and electoral council have been pending and searching, and until they have been found, It means there are still votes to be counted. From March 1st until today they have been trying to block the vote counting and for that reason the process is delayed.

So, we have a sabotage carried out by the electoral system and another one in the electoral process, in the ballot boxes.

FTT: In your opinion why was

this election, which included the legislative and municipal levels, so important for the people of El Salvador? Or better to ask, what were the most burning issues in this election?

María Luisa: Well, We know that the mayoral elections for the people in El Salvador are very important and to have the maximum numbers of mayors that we can is crucial, because the development of the social programs which are benefiting the people rely on this and to have the legislative power is still more important because that is where decisions are being made and where the FMLN has the majority better decisions in favour of the Salvadorian people will be taken, for that reason this is very important.

About the other question, you must realize that these are very important and complicated concerns. Because it was the system in itself, the way in which people voted. People were confused, despite that the FMLN was present waiting for their people that were going to vote. People started to get worried, that the election official not to open the ballot box at the stated time, so starting the process late. These were things that the right wing promoted to create this delay. From the beginning of the voting day, this was the way in which the electoral process was carried out. On the other hand the people also had problems with gangs, who were stopping people's access to voting centers. There was a fear mongering campaign made by gangs with the purpose to make people to feel afraid

to vote. In some districts it was possible to negotiate with the gangs allowing people to go to vote. But in some other districts people arrived to vote late or did not show up because of fear.

FTT: Why was the mayoral race in San Salvador so important? Obviously both ARENA and the FMLN invested a large amount of resources and focus for it, isn't this true?

Maria Luisa: Well, In San Salvador I believe it is very important to win precisely because in this district, because you know, after the end of the civil war, a lot of people

you think with an FMLN majority in the National Parliament and gaining more positions in the mayoral race that the FMLN will be more confident to proceed with more progressive measures?

Maria Luisa: Exactly, if we have the majority in the legislator, as I said before, we can make more [progressive] decisions. The government during its administration has been carrying out social programs in all different levels, in all different areas of El Salvador. This program is called "Gobernando con la gente" [Governing with the people]. In this program the government puts together all the different necessities ,

challenges for our people right now, I believe in the first place is national security, state security, economic security, healthcare, education. For instance, I believe that everyone is familiar with the problem of insecurity that Salvadorian people are living with. People turn to FMLN and the FMLN is always listening to the people. Th people asked for a demonstration for peace, and the FMLN have been doing it around the world, because people reached their limit. People in El Salvador saying that apart from street gangs, we see other gangs inside El Salvador as well, who have economic power. Although today, we are in the government, however, ARENA has the economic power.



came to San Salvador, the majority concentrated in San Salvador, for work, education, greater access to universities, and hospitals. That is why people concentrated in San Salvador. Also people who have problems with gangs or similar issues like to go to live in San Salvador and for this reason it is very important to win San Salvador mayoral election.

Overall With winning this election in San Salvador we have a green light to go ahead and to take the majority of the FMLN candidates to power, and San Salvador is the core of El Salvador.

FTT: Now, after the elections, what is your assessment of the political position of the FMLN? Do

it doesn't mean that the government is dictating what we must do, instead the government is going to the all corners in El Salvador, to the capital, in order to discuss with the people there their concerns. If we reach the majority, I think that we could meet the the needs of majority of population.

FTT: In your opinion what are the most important challenges for El Salvador right now? Some people believe that reversing the neo-liberal measures of ARENA, who were in power before 2009 is one of the most crucial steps, what is your opinion?

Maria Luisa: The most important

So, they are financing all these problems, and at the same time when FMLN took power, they attempted to destabilize the system. When we speak about private companies, we want justice for all those years of exploitation, for instance Coca-Cola and Constancia, transnational corporations who have been in El Salvador and have evaded taxes. I believe it will be a big challenge for the FMLN to bring justice. Those companies are financing gangs and taking subsidies from the state, and they are not paying taxes for financing education or hospitals, and a lot of other things. Those I believe are the most important challenges for El Salvador.

About the free market, we know and we see that neoliberalism benefits the people in economic power, people who have always had economic power, for us this is not good. However, we are trying to make some trade with medium sized companies, with people who don't want to disrupt and are looking out for the good of Salvadorian people, in this case we will go ahead with investment, of course not with Coca-Cola.

FTT: Thank you very much for granting us this interview.

Elecciones en El Salvador: El Pueblo Vota Por Cambios Progresivos

Entrevista con María Luisa Meléndez, coordinadora del FMLN en Vancouver

* EN ESPAÑOL *

Fire This Time (FTT) se reunió con la Coordinadora del FMLN en Vancouver, María Luisa Meléndez, después de su viaje a El Salvador, donde participó como organizadora del FMLN y observadora en las elecciones municipales y legislativas de marzo de 2015.

FTT: Como bien sabes ha habido demora en la entrega de los resultados de las elecciones, causado por un sabotaje al final de estas. Me pregunto ¿Fueron ya anunciados, los resultados oficiales de las elecciones, incluyendo los de la alcaldía de la ciudad de San Salvador?

María Luisa: Bueno, te contesto esta pregunta acerca de los sabotajes diciendo que estás en lo cierto. Nosotros desde que el frente tomó el poder político, hemos venido lidiando con un montón de sabotaje, de parte del partido ARENA. En este caso, el sistema, como se votó ahora, el frente estuvo muy atento en las votaciones en la urna, ellos elaboraron otro sistema de sabotaje, no se les puede llamar sabotaje prácticamente, pero en el fondo todo este sistema que se creó en la sala de lo constitucional es un (suerte de) sabotaje (en sí mismo), no sólo para el FMLN sino para el pueblo, porque en la sala de lo constitucional hay cinco personajes que componen y elaboran el sistema de votación, cuatro son de ARENA y solo uno es representante del FMLN. Podemos decir que parte de este sistema es un sabotaje, porque no lo

podían hacer de otra forma, entonces, recurrieron a la sala constitucional para hacer esta suerte de sabotaje.

En cuanto a los resultados cuando nosotros estábamos allá, ya se sabía que la alcaldía de San Salvador se había ganado, y sí, oficialmente se ganó la alcaldía, no en una cantidad inmensa pero sí se ganó legítimamente.

FTT: ¿Quién podría haber beneficiado de sabotaje electoral o tal vez debería preguntar si hay alguna sospecha sobre quién podría haber hecho esto?

María Luisa: Si, eso es obvio, que supuestamente ellos quieren ser beneficiados. Hasta ahorita el día de ayer, todavía han encontrado cajas con boletas, que se habían escondido, el frente con el consejo electoral han andado pendiente y buscando, y han encontrado, es decir todavía hay boletas por contar, te estoy hablando de que desde el primero hasta esta fecha todavía ellos están tratando de hacer algún bloqueo en el recuento, por eso se ha demorado.

FTT: En su opinión ¿por qué esta elección, que incluyó los niveles legislativos y municipales, tan importante para el pueblo de El Salvador? O mejor preguntar, ¿cuáles fueron los temas más candentes en esta elección?

María Luisa: Bueno este, ya sabemos que las municipales para el pueblo Salvadoreño son muy importantes y tener la mayor cantidad de alcaldías que se pueda, porque de eso depende los programas que van a beneficiar al pueblo, y en la legislativa es mucho más importante todavía porque es donde se toman las decisiones y mientras más mayoría tenga el frente, pues mejor decisiones al beneficio del pueblo Salvadoreño se tomarían, por eso es importante para el pueblo Salvadoreño.

Acerca de la otra pregunta, fijate que es de los temas más importantes y más difíciles, porque fue el mero sistema, como se voto. La gente se veía confundida, aunque el frente pues estuvo muy pendiente de su gente que iba a votar, la gente siempre

manifestó esa preocupación, la cuestión de que no se abrían las urnas a la hora que se había dicho, fue un retraso. Fueron cosas que la derecha también creo para qué hubiera ese retraso. Al principio del día de la votación, y el sistema como se votó. Por otro lado la gente también se encontró con el problema de que

que pandillas detuvieron el paso para que la gente saliera libre votar, hubo una campaña de miedo infundido de parte de las pandillas, para que la gente no se sintiera libre de ir



Entonces hay un sabotaje oficial llevado a cabo por el sistema de votación y además un sabotaje en las urnas.

a votar, en algunas poblaciones se logró negociar que los pandilleros dejaran votar a la gente, pero por otro lado llegó a votar la gente tarde y en otros no llegó a votar por miedo.

FTT: ¿Por qué la carrera por la alcaldía de San Salvador es tan importante? Obviamente, tanto ARENA como el FMLN invirtieron una gran cantidad de recursos y se centran por ello, ¿no es cierto?

Maria Luisa: Bueno, en San Salvador es porque, se cree bien importante ganar esa alcaldía precisamente, porque tú sabes qué en la guerra, hubo mucha gente emigro para San Salvador, y la mayoría se concentra en San Salvador, ya sea porque en los rincones de San Salvador, por cuestiones de trabajo, por cuestión de educación, hay más acceso a la universidades, este, a los hospitales, por eso la gente se concentra más en San Salvador, gente que tiene conflicto con padillas y cosas por el estilo se van a San Salvador y por eso es que era tan importante ganar esa alcaldía, porque si se ganaba eso, tenemos la luz verde para nosotros llegar y la mayoría de gente agarrar del poder, es como el corazón de El Salvador.

FTT: Ahora, después de las elecciones, ¿cuál es tu evaluación de la situación política del FMLN? ¿Crees que con una mayoría del FMLN en el Parlamento Nacional y ganando más posiciones en la carrera por la alcaldía que el FMLN será más confianza para seguir adelante con las medidas más progresistas?

Maria Luisa: Así es, este, si nosotros tenemos la mayoría como te decía en la legislatura, nosotros podemos tomar más decisiones. El gobierno en todo este tiempo que ha estado, ha estado llevando un programa a todos los sectores, a todos los rincones de El Salvador, que se llama gobernando con la gente, donde ellos están juntando todas las necesidades, no es que el gobierno diga esto es lo que vamos hacer, se ha ido a los rincones de El Salvador, a la capital, y allá han ido y dialogan con la gente de allí, si nosotros llegamos a tener la mayoría yo creo que esas necesidades serían puestas en práctica para la gran población de El Salvador para la mayoría.

FTT: En tu opinión, ¿cuáles son los

retos más importantes para El Salvador en este momento? Algunas personas creen que la inversión de las medidas neoliberales de ARENA, quienes estaban en el poder antes de 2009 es uno de los pasos más cruciales, ¿cuál es tu opinión?

Maria Luisa: Los retos más importantes para nuestro pueblo ahorita, yo creo que



en primer lugar es la seguridad nacional, este la seguridad estatal, la seguridad económica, la seguridad de salud, la seguridad de la vivienda, la seguridad de educación, te lo digo porque éste por ejemplo, yo creo que ya todos saben el problema que tenemos ahorita de la inseguridad, que el pueblo Salvadoreño está viviendo, la gente a recurrido y el frente le ha hecho caso a la gente, querían que se hiciera una marcha por la paz, es lo que se ha estado haciendo a nivel mundial, este, porque ya la gente ha llegando un límite, de qué, es como que, pues sí estamos hablando de El Salvador. Yo lo veo así desde y mucha gente lo comentaba en El Salvador, que aparte de las pandillas de las calles, contamos con una pandilla dentro de El Salvador, que es la financia y son lo que tienen la economía, porque hasta ahorita, nosotros gobernamos, pero se sabe que ARENA siempre ha tenido la economía.

Entonces, ellos financian todas estas cuestiones y ha sido precisamente cuando el frente a entrado en turno de poder, para desestabilizar al sistema,

y te estoy hablando que hay gente, te estoy hablando de la empresa privada también, porque cuando hablamos de la empresa privada, nosotros quisiéramos que se hiciera justicia, por todos estos años, por ejemplo, de verdad, cuando te estoy hablando de empresa privada, te estoy hablando de Coca Cola, te estoy hablando de la Constancia, de empresas

transnacionales que han estado en El Salvador y han evadido impuestos, eso creo que sería uno de los grandes retos para el FMLN, que esa gente, que se hiciera justicia con esta gente, aparte de la pandilla, ellos como financiadores, aparte de los impuesto que pagan, aparte de un montón donaciones que ellos agarraron y que las tiene concentradas y no pagaron la educación, los hospitales, bueno un montón de cosas, bueno eso creo que son los mayores desafíos que tenemos en El Salvador.

Con la cuestión del mercado libre, nosotros sabemos y cuando vemos neoliberalismo sabemos que esos términos son para la gente que lo maneja y la gente que ha tenido siempre, para nosotros eso no va, pero se está tratando de mediar y hacer negociaciones con la empresa mediana, verdad que este, son gente que han querido llegar a invertir, y siempre y cuando le convenga y al pueblo Salvadoreño, nosotros vamos para adelante con las inversión NO con Coca cola

¡Venceremos!

We Will Win!

OUR STRUGGLE

AROUND THE WORLD

Successful Congress of Venezuelan Women

Over 5 Million Signatures against US' Aggressions on Venezuela



9 March , 2015 (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in U.S.)

29 March ,2015 (teleSUR English)

On March 6-8, over 2500 feminists and activists from Venezuela came together for the Venezuelan Women's Congress to create a united platform of women's, feminist and progressive movements. At the conclusion of the Congress, on International Women's Day, President Maduro confirmed that 50% of PSUV candidates in upcoming primary elections will be women and announced the creation of UNAMUJER (the National Union of Women), a network of women's organizations dedicated to defending women's rights.

As of early Sunday morning, 5 million, 1,058 signatures had been collected, Mayor Jorge Rodriguez announced.

Venezuelan officials reported on Sunday that over 5 million signatures have been collected in the campaign against President Barack Obama's March 9 executive order arbitrarily declaring Venezuela an extraordinary threat to its national security to justify further aggressions against the South American country.

Bolivia's MAS Party Wins Majority in Local Governments

29 March ,2015 (teleSUR English)

According to unofficial final results, Bolivia's Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) – President Evo Morales' party – won most of the country's local governments in Sunday's elections. Just months after sweeping Bolivia's general elections, the MAS obtained victories in four out of nine provinces, while finishing first in two other provinces that are slated to go to a second round of voting.

In the provinces of Pando and Cochabamba the governing party registered victories with over 60 percent of the ballots (66.3 and 60.1 respectively), while in Oruro MAS won with 55 percent of the votes. Similarly in Potosi, the governing party won with 57.1 percent.

The provinces of Beni and Chiquisaca appear to be headed head to a second round on May 3, with MAS leading after Sunday's vote but lacking the 10 point advantage over the second place candidate necessary to be declared the outright winner. If MAS wins in a second round in Beni – a traditional opposition stronghold – it would be the first time in a decade that the province was not be ruled by the opposition. The opposition also obtained victories in La Paz, Santa Cruz and Tarija.

Speaking at a press conference, Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera recognized the defeat in La Paz. "We assess that (the defeat in La Paz) has to do with the weaknesses of formation of local leadership, both at the departmental and municipal levels," said Garcia Linera, who praised the elections as having been "peaceful, participatory and democratic."

The MAS leader added that results nationwide reaffirmed the left-wing party as the strongest political force in the country. The country's electoral authority gave preliminary numbers indicating that at least 85 percent of the over 6 million registered voters participated in Sunday's election.

Mayor of the municipality Libertador de Caracas, the country's capital, Jorge Rodriguez, who also heads the Campaign "ObamaRepealtheDecreeNow," indicated that as of this Sunday morning just over 5 million signatures had been collected.

The aim of the campaign is to gather at least 10 million signatures to be presented at the Summit of the Americas, which is scheduled to take place in Panama City next April 10 and 11.

Rodriguez told state-owned Venezuelan Television (VTV) that the campaign has been very well received by Venezuelans, who have gone to the different designated locations in the country to sign the petition.

"As of this Sunday morning, 5 milion 1,058 signatures have been collected in solidarity with the defense of the sovereignty of Venezuela," Rodriguez said.

The mayor condemned Washington's newest aggressions against Venezuela, and described them as acts of interference in the internal affairs of the country and against the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro.

The Obama executive order on Venezuela has been widely condemned around the world and by international organizations such as the Organization of American States, UNASUR, CELAC, among many others.

A recent poll showed that 92 percent of Venezuelans reject any U.S. intervention in the country, while 64 percent disagreed with sanctions imposed on Venezuelan officials by Washington, while 62 percent thought that the U.S. government's perception of what is really happening in Venezuela was wrong.

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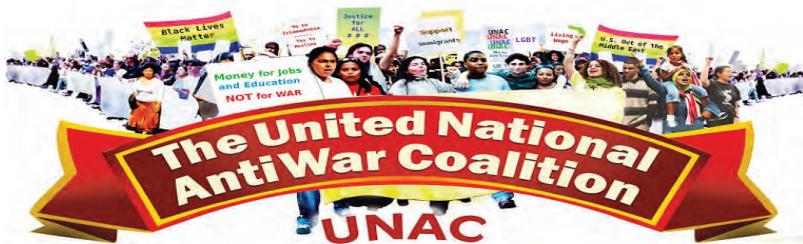
MALCOLM X SPEAKS

America is just as much a colonial power as England ever was. America is just as much a colonial power as France ever was. In fact, America is more so a colonial power than they, because she is a hypocritical colonial power behind it. [applause] What is 20th — what, what do you call second-class citizenship? Why, that's colonization. Second-class citizenship is nothing but 20th slavery. How you gonna tell me you're a second-class citizen? They don't have second-class citizenship in any other government on this Earth. They just have slaves and people who are free! Well, this country is a hypocrite! They try and make you think they set you free by calling you a second-class citizen. No, you're nothing but a 20th century slave. [applause]

When we open our eyes today and look around America, we see America not through the eyes of someone who has enjoyed the fruits of Americanism. We see America through the eyes of someone who has been the victim of Americanism. We don't see any American dream. We've experienced only the American nightmare. We haven't benefited from America's democracy. We've only suffered from America's hypocrisy. And the generation that's coming up now can see it. And are not afraid to say it. If you go to jail, so what? If you're black, you were born in jail. [applause]

When the government of South Africa began to trample upon the human rights of the people of South Africa they were taken to the U.N. When the government of Portugal began to trample upon the rights of our brothers and sisters in Angola, it was taken before the U.N. Why, even the white man took the Hungarian question to the U.N. And just this week, Chief Justice Goldberg was crying over three million Jews in Russia, about their human rights — charging Russia with violating the U.N. Charter because of its mistreatment of the human rights of Jews in Russia. Now you tell me how can the plight of everybody on this Earth reach the halls of the United Nations and you have twenty-two million Afro-Americans whose churches are being bombed, whose little girls are being murdered, whose leaders are being shot down in broad daylight?

Excerpt from speech at King Solomon Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan - April 12, 1964



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Cuban President RAUL CASTRO

Speech at the 9th Extraordinary
Alba-TCP Summit
Caracas, Venezuela
March 17, 2015

Esteemed Heads of State and Government
of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples
of Our America;

Esteemed Heads of delegations and
guests;

Compañeras and compañeros:

ALBA brings us together today to reaffirm
our firmest support for the Bolivarian
people and government in the face of
the latest interventionist measures and
threats from the U.S. government against
Venezuela.

The triumphant audacity to carry out a
socialist revolution just 90 miles from
the United States, has meant immense
sacrifices, suffering, loss of life and material
deprivation for the Cuban people, subject
to, since that very revolutionary triumph,
56 years ago, every kind of hostility,
including the support and organization of
armed bands in the mountains from the
end of that same year of 1959 – that is,
since the very year of the triumph of the
Revolution – the Bay of Pigs Invasion in
1961 and the formalization of the blockade
in 1962, all with the stated intention of
defeating the Revolution and changing
the political, economic and social order we
freely chose and subsequently confirmed
in a constitutional referendum.

The result has been a resounding failure,
the harming of our people and the
complete isolation of the United States
in its intentions, as recently recognized by
President Barack Obama on announcing
a new policy and resolving to open

change.

The triumph of the Bolivarian Revolution
was an extraordinary milestone in the
history of Venezuela and the whole region,
which had begun to awaken from the
long neoliberal slumber. An era of change
commenced in the continent and other
nations decided to embark on the path
towards full independence and integration
and again take up the flags of our national
heroes.

Alba, Unasur, CELAC were born,
which united, in their diversity, previous
groupings and initiatives of genuine
Latin Americanist and Caribbean calling,
founded on principles of solidarity,
cooperation, social justice and defense of
sovereignty.

PetroCaribe was an extraordinary,
generous and humanistic contribution of
President Hugo Chávez Frías. Now they
want to destroy PetroCaribe to threaten
its member states, submit them to the

“SOLIDARITY is the FOUNDATION of UNITY and REGIONAL INTEGRATION”

The facts demonstrate that history can
not be ignored. The relations between
the United States and Latin America
and the Caribbean have been marked
by the “Monroe Doctrine” and the
objective of exercising domination
and hegemony over our nations.

Bolívar had anticipated that the
United States, “seems destined by
Providence to plague America with
misery in the name of Liberty” and
Martí fell in combat before
concluding the letter in which he
explained the “duty of preventing
the United States from spreading
throughout the Antilles as Cuba
gains its independence, and from
overpowering with that additional
strength our lands of America.”

Later came the military
interventions, the coup d'états, the
maneuvers to overthrow nationalist
or progressive governments,
the backing of bloody military
dictatorships, the undercover
operations, the support for terrorism
and subversion, as well as the
appropriation and plundering of our
resources to perpetuate dependence
and underdevelopment.

another chapter. However, his government
spokespeople insist on clarifying that
the objectives persist and only the methods

oil multinationals and separate them
from Venezuela. They do not realize that
our peoples have decided, irrevocably,
to continue our unstoppable advance
and fight for a multipolar and just world,
where those who were historically
excluded have a voice, hope and dignity.

U.S. imperialism has attempted, without
success, practically all possible formulas
to destabilize and subvert the Bolivarian
Chavista revolution, to recuperate its
control of the largest oil reserves on
the planet, and deliver a blow to the
integrationist, emancipation process
underway in Our America.

The arbitrary, aggressive, unjustified
executive order issued by the President
of the United States regarding the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's
government, describing it as a threat
to its national security, shows that the
United States is able to sacrifice the
peace and the direction of hemispheric
and regional relations, for reasons of
domination and domestic politics.

The idea is untenable that a country
like Venezuela - which has shown
so much solidarity, never invaded or
harmed any other, and contributes in





Presidente de Cuba RAUL CASTRO

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

**Discurso en la IX Cumbre
Extraordinaria del Alba-TCP
Caracas, Venezuela
17 de marzo, 2015**

Estimados Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América;

Estimados Jefes de delegaciones e invitados;

Compañeras y compañeros:

El ALBA nos convoca hoy para ratificar nuestro más firme respaldo al pueblo y gobierno bolivarianos ante las últimas acciones injerencistas y amenazas del gobierno norteamericano contra Venezuela.

Los hechos demuestran que la historia no se puede ignorar. Las relaciones de Estados Unidos con América Latina y el Caribe han estado marcadas por la “Doctrina Monroe” y el objetivo de ejercer dominación y hegemonía sobre nuestras naciones.

Bolívar había anticipado que los Estados Unidos “parecen destinados por la Providencia para plagar la América de miserias a nombre de la Libertad” y Martí había caído en combate sin concluir la carta en que explicaba el “deber de impedir a tiempo con la independencia de Cuba que se extiendan por las Antillas los Estados Unidos y caigan, con esa fuerza más, sobre nuestras tierras de América”.

Después vinieron las intervenciones militares, los golpes de Estado, las maniobras para derrocar gobiernos nacionalistas o progresistas, el respaldo a sangrientas dictaduras militares, las operaciones encubiertas, el amparo al terrorismo y la subversión, así como la apropiación y el saqueo de nuestros recursos para perpetuar la dependencia y el subdesarrollo.

La osadía victoriosa de llevar adelante una Revolución Socialista a solo 90 millas de Estados Unidos, ha supuesto inmensos sacrificios, sufrimientos, pérdidas humanas y privaciones materiales para el pueblo cubano, sometido desde el mismo triunfo revolucionario, hace 56 años, a todo tipo de hostilidad, incluyendo el apoyo y la organización de bandas armadas en las montañas desde finales del propio año

a significant and altruistic manner to the energy security and economic stability of a considerable number of nations of the continent - could represent a threat to the security of the greatest super-power in history.

We support the honorable, valiant, constructive position taken by President Nicolás Maduro, (applause) who, despite the seriousness of this threat, has extended his hand to the President of the United States, to initiate a dialogue based on international law and mutual respect, which could lead to the unconditional revocation of President Obama’s executive order and the normalization of relations. (Applause) Alba and CELAC should join in this proposal.

Today Venezuela is not alone, nor is our region the one it was 20 years ago. We will not tolerate the violation of sovereignty or allow peace in the region to be broken with impunity.

As we have reiterated, threats to the peace and stability of Venezuela represent threats to regional stability and peace, as well.

The peace which Venezuela today demands and which we all need, a “peace with justice, with equality, the peace on our feet, not on our knees, is peace with dignity and development,” as Maduro said, is the peace to which we committed ourselves in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted by the II CELAC Summit in Havana.

Our country’s position under these circumstances remains unchanged. I reiterate the firm solidarity of the Cuban Revolution with the Bolivarian Revolution, with constitutional President Nicolás Maduro and with the civic-military union which he heads. (Applause)

I reiterate our absolute loyalty to the memory of Comandante Hugo Chávez Frías, the Cuban Revolution’s best friend. (Applause)

As has been stated, we reaffirm once again, “The Cuban collaborators present in the sister country, will continue to fulfill their duties under any circumstances whatsoever, to the benefit of the fraternal, noble, generous people of Venezuela.”

The United States must understand once and for all that it is impossible to seduce or buy Cuba, or intimidate Venezuela. Our unity is indestructible. (Applause)

Nor will we concede one iota in the defense of sovereignty and independence, or tolerate any type of interference or conditions on our internal affairs.

Nor will we cease to defend just causes in Our America and the world, nor will we ever abandon our brothers in the struggle. We have come to close ranks with Venezuela and Alba, and reaffirm that principles are not negotiable. (Applause)

To defend these convictions, we will attend the 7th Summit of the Americas. We will present our positions, with firmness, clarity and respect. We will reject with determination any attempt to isolate or threaten Venezuela, and demand a definitive end to the blockade of Cuba.

Cuban civil society will be the voice of those without a voice, and we will expose the mercenaries who will appear there as Cuba’s civil society.

We must call upon all peoples and governments of Our America to mobilize and remain alert in the defense of Venezuela. Solidarity is the foundation of unity and regional integration.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

1959 —o sea, desde el mismo año del triunfo de la Revolución—, la invasión de Playa Girón en 1961 y la oficialización del bloqueo en 1962, todo ello con la intención declarada de derrotar la Revolución y cambiar el orden político, económico y social que decidimos libremente y luego confirmamos en referendo constitucional.

El resultado ha sido el rotundo fracaso, el daño a nuestro pueblo y el completo aislamiento de Estados Unidos en sus propósitos, como ha reconocido recientemente el Presidente Barack Obama al anunciar una nueva política y proponerse abrir otro capítulo. Sin embargo, los voceros de su gobierno se empeñan en aclarar que los objetivos persisten y solo cambian los métodos.

integrador y emancipador que tiene lugar en Nuestra América.

La arbitraria, agresiva e infundada Orden Ejecutiva emitida por el Presidente de Estados Unidos contra el Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, calificándolo como una amenaza a su seguridad nacional, demuestra que Estados Unidos puede sacrificar la paz y el rumbo de las relaciones hemisféricas y con nuestra región por razones de dominación y de política doméstica.

Resulta insostenible la idea de que un país solidario como Venezuela, que jamás ha invadido ni agredido a ningún otro y que contribuye de manera sustancial y altruista a la seguridad energética y a la estabilidad económica

circunstancias permanece invariable. Reitero la firme solidaridad de la Revolución Cubana con la Revolución Bolivariana, con el Presidente constitucional Nicolás Maduro y con la unión cívico-militar que este encabeza (Aplausos). Reitero la absoluta lealtad a la memoria del Comandante Hugo Chávez Frías, el mejor amigo de la Revolución Cubana (Aplausos).

Como se ha declarado, ratificamos “una vez más, que los colaboradores cubanos presentes en la hermana Nación, continuarán cumpliendo con su deber bajo cualquier circunstancia, en beneficio del hermano, solidario y noble pueblo venezolano”.

Estados Unidos debería entender de una

“La SOLIDARIDAD es el CIMIENTO de la UNIDAD y la INTEGRACION REGIONAL”

El triunfo de la Revolución Bolivariana fue un extraordinario hito en la historia de Venezuela y de toda la región, que comenzó a despertar de la larga noche neoliberal. Una época de cambios se inició en el continente y otras naciones decidieron emprender el camino de la plena independencia e integración y retomar las banderas de nuestros próceres.

Nacieron el ALBA, UNASUR, la CELAC, que se unieron, en su diversidad, a anteriores agrupaciones e iniciativas de genuina vocación latinoamericanista y caribeña, fundadas en principios de solidaridad, cooperación, justicia social y defensa de su soberanía.

PETROCARIBE fue una extraordinaria, generosa y humanista contribución del Presidente Hugo Chávez Frías. Ahora se pretende destruir a PETROCARIBE para amenazar a sus Estados miembros, someterlos a las transnacionales petroleras y separarlos de Venezuela. No se percatan de que nuestros pueblos han decidido, de manera irrevocable, continuar su indetenible avance y batallar por un mundo multipolar y justo, donde tengan voz, esperanza y dignidad los que fueron históricamente excluidos.

El imperialismo estadounidense ha ensayado, sin éxito, prácticamente todas las fórmulas de desestabilización y subversión contra la revolución bolivariana y chavista, para recuperar el control de la mayor reserva petrolera del planeta y asestar un golpe al proceso

de un considerable número de naciones del continente, pueda representar una amenaza para la seguridad de la potencia más poderosa de la historia.

Respaldamos la posición digna, valiente y constructiva del Presidente Nicolás Maduro (Aplausos), quien no obstante la gravedad de la amenaza ha tendido la mano al Presidente de Estados Unidos para iniciar un diálogo basado en el derecho internacional y el respeto mutuo, que conduzca a la derogación incondicional de la Orden Ejecutiva del Presidente Obama y a la normalización de sus relaciones (Aplausos). El ALBA y la CELAC deberían acompañar esa propuesta.

Hoy Venezuela no está sola, ni nuestra región es la misma de hace 20 años. No toleraremos que se vulnere la soberanía o se quebrante impunemente la paz en la región.

Como hemos afirmado, las amenazas contra la paz y la estabilidad en Venezuela representan también amenazas contra la estabilidad y la paz regionales.

La paz que hoy reclama Venezuela y necesitamos todos, una “paz con justicia, con igualdad, la paz de pie, no la paz de rodillas, es la paz con dignidad y desarrollo”, como dijo Maduro, es a la que nos comprometimos en la Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz, adoptada en la II Cumbre de la CELAC en La Habana.

La posición de nuestro país en estas

vez que es imposible seducir o comprar a Cuba ni intimidar a Venezuela. Nuestra unidad es indestructible (Aplausos).

Tampoco cederemos ni un ápice en la defensa de la soberanía e independencia, ni toleraremos ningún tipo de injerencia, ni condicionamiento en nuestros asuntos internos.

No cejaremos en la defensa de las causas justas en Nuestra América y en el mundo, ni dejaremos nunca solos a nuestros hermanos de lucha. Hemos venido aquí a cerrar filas con Venezuela y con el ALBA y a ratificar que los principios no son negociables (Aplausos).

Para defender estas convicciones, asistiremos a la VII Cumbre de las Américas. Expondremos nuestras posiciones, con firmeza, claridad y respeto. Rechazaremos con determinación toda tentativa de aislar y amenazar a Venezuela y reclamaremos el cese definitivo del bloqueo a Cuba.

La sociedad civil cubana será la voz de los sin voz y desenmascarará a los mercenarios que presentarán allí como sociedad civil de Cuba y a sus patrones.

Debemos convocar a todos los pueblos y gobiernos de Nuestra América a movilizarnos y estar alertas en defensa de Venezuela. La solidaridad es el cimiento de la unidad y la integración regional.

Muchas gracias (Aplausos).

VENEZUELA IS NOT A THREAT, WE ARE A HOPE

People of Venezuela, fraternal peoples of the world, Venezuela has been unfairly assaulted. Last March 9, President Barack Obama signed an executive order declaring the homeland of Bolívar as a threat to U.S. national security. Such statements, as history shows, have had disastrous consequences on our continent and in the whole world.

Given this new aggression, we raise the flags of international law, justice and unity of our peoples. Venezuela knows it is not alone. On March 14, the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) issued an official historical statement marking the start of the construction of a doctrine in rejection of unilateral attempt to impose sanctions or threaten countries using the political, financial or military force.

As President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I have written a letter to the people of the United States and President Obama exposing the truths of Venezuela, denouncing the aggression and demanding, on behalf of the immense moral of the people of Bolívar, that the executive order which threatens our country is repealed.

The men and women of good faith, the progressive, sovereign, patriotic, nationalistic, humanist people, I brotherly call you to join us in this campaign in defense of sovereignty and to sign this letter in support of the statement of Unasur rejecting the executive order of Barack Obama and demanding its repeal.

We are a peaceful people and defend peace standing, with dignity and justice.

Our victory will always be peace!



Nicolás Maduro Moros
Presidente de la Bolivarian Republic of
Venezuela

#OBAMA
REPEAL
THE EXECUTE
ORDER

VENEZUELA NO ES UNA AMENAZA, SOMOS UNA ESPERANZA

Pueblo de Venezuela, pueblos hermanos del mundo, Venezuela ha sido injustamente agredida. El pasado 9 de marzo, el presidente de Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, firmó una orden ejecutiva declarando a la Patria de Bolívar una amenaza para la seguridad nacional estadounidense. Este tipo de declaraciones tal y como lo muestra la historia, han tenido funestas consecuencias en nuestro continente y en todo el planeta.

Ante esta nueva agresión, alzamos las banderas de la legalidad internacional, la justicia y la unión de nuestros pueblos. Venezuela sabe que no está sola. Ya el 14 de marzo, la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (Unasur) emitió un comunicado histórico que marca el inicio de la construcción de una doctrina en rechazo al intento unilateral de aplicar sanciones o amenazar a los países con el uso de la fuerza política, financiera o militar.

Como Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, he dirigido una carta al pueblo de los Estados Unidos y al presidente Obama exponiendo las verdades de Venezuela, denunciando la agresión y exigiendo a nombre de la inmensa moral del pueblo de Bolívar, que sea derogado el decreto presidencial que amenaza nuestra Patria.

A los hombres y mujeres de bien, progresistas, soberanistas, patrióticos, nacionalistas, humanistas, los llamo fraternalmente a acompañarnos en esta campaña en defensa de la soberanía y a firmar esta carta en apoyo al comunicado de la Unasur que rechaza la orden ejecutiva de Barack Obama y exige su derogatoria.

Somos un pueblo de paz y defenderemos la paz de pie, con dignidad y con justicia.

¡Nuestra victoria siempre será la paz!



Nicolás Maduro Moros
Presidente de la República Bolivariana
de Venezuela

#OBAMA
DEROGA
EL DECRETO
YA

We, the undersigned, demand that the U.S. President, Barack Obama, the IMMEDIATE REPEAL of the Executive Order “Declaration of National Emergency with respect to Venezuela” issued on March 9 2015, which declares Venezuela as an “unusual and extraordinary threat to national security” undermining the right of each and every Venezuelan to build his destiny, as well as his independence, sovereignty and Peace of his territory.

Likewise, we support all actions for the defense of the dignity of the Homeland of Simón Bolívar.

Nosotras y nosotros, los abajo firmantes, le exigimos al Presidente de los EEUU, Barack Obama, la INMEDIATA DEROGACIÓN del Decreto Ejecutivo “Declaración de Emergencia Nacional con respecto a Venezuela”, emitido el día 9 de marzo de 2015, donde declara a Venezuela como una “amenaza inusual y extraordinaria para su seguridad nacional”, por vulnerar el derecho de todas y todos los venezolanos a construir su destino, así como su independencia, soberanía y la paz de su territorio. De igual manera, respaldamos todas las acciones por la defensa de la dignidad de la Patria de Simón Bolívar.

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Please sign, cut out the petition and send to Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Canada
32 Range Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 8J4 CANADA

A Successful Month for the Ayotzinapa Campaign in Vancouver



By Janine Solanki

In the last six months "Ayotzinapa" the name of a small rural town in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, has made international headlines and become a name on the lips of millions of outraged people in

Mexico and around the world. On September 26th, 2014 students from Ayotzinapa were on their way to a protest in Mexico City, when they stopped in the city of Iguala. The buses they were on were attacked and shot at by local police and men in black masks, killing 6 people and kidnapping 43 students. Since that day local demands to find the students have grown to an international condemnation of their disappearance. While the government of Mexico claims to not be responsible for the disappearance of the 43 students, "Fue El Estado" or "It Was the State" has been the verdict from the parents of the disappeared to activists world wide who place the blame of not only the 43 missing students on the Mexican government, but also the over 100,000 murdered and 25,000 disappeared that have been the victims of Mexico's so-called "war on drugs".

Activists internationally asked the Ayotzinapa community how they could best support the cause, and the answer was to keep international pressure for the 43 students on the Mexican government, and to help them to be able to communicate between communities and to aid in getting news from the local struggles in Guerrero state to reach the international scene. As many rural communities don't have access to internet, the proposal was for an international fundraising campaign to help Ayotzinapa increase the reach of their community radio station and to establish a community radio in the town of San Luis Acatlan, also in Guerrero state.

In Vancouver, Canada these efforts were taken up by the Solidarity with Ayotzinapa Vancouver Collective, who in just four months organized nine events in solidarity with Ayotzinapa and for the radio fundraising campaign. The campaign started with an afternoon-long fundraising party on December 20th 2014, where many supporters contributed food to sell for raising funds. The campaign continued with the "Corazones Unidos por Ayotzinapa" (Hearts United for Ayotzinapa) day-long cultural event on January 24th 2015 at the Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. On January 26th Cafe Rebelde hosted the event "Connecting the Dots: Ayotzinapa and the Violence Against Women" which discussed the case of the 43 students as well as local Indigenous struggles and the fight against violence against women.

On February 14th Valentines day was marked by the dinner and DJ night "Amor Combativo" (Combative Love) which was organized by the Guatemalan and Salvadorian communities, honouring the love for the mothers of the 43 missing Ayotzinapa students. On March 14th the Left Film Night raised the issue of the missing students with a film showing of the VICE documentary titled "The Missing 43: Mexico's Disappeared Students". On March 21st a "Youth 4 Ayotzinapa" community fundraiser was held with kids activities, a presentation on the case of the 43 students, Hip Hop performances and a dinner and DJ dance night. The cause of the 43 missing students reached students at the University of British Columbia (UBC) with a Latin music concert on March 25th, which was a collaboration of the Collective Vancouver x Mexico and the UBC Social Justice Centre.

To mark the 6 month anniversary of the disappearance of the 43 students, on March 26th supporters from many communities gathered for a rally in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery to raise their voices demanding "They took them alive, we want them alive!" reflecting the determination to demand that the Mexican government provide answers to what has happened to the 43 students, and to not let the case go cold as so many others have. On March 28th the fundraising campaign was closed with the dinner and dance evening "La Noche de los DJ's" (The Night of the DJ's) hosted by DJ Carlitos G.

The fundraising campaign for the community radio transmitters was a successful community driven campaign, which was not only to raise funds but also has built a community of solidarity with the 43 missing students and with the struggle in Ayotzinapa, Mexico. For more updates and info please visit www.facebook.com/SolidaridadAyotzinapaVancouver

OUR HERITAGE



Evelyn Reed

Revolutionary leader and women's revolution theorist

What women remain unsure about, however, is whether or not their biology has played a part in making and keeping them the inferior or "second sex." Such uncertainty is quite understandable in a male-dominated society where not only is history written by those who uphold the status quo but all the sciences are likewise in their hands. Two of these sciences, biology and anthropology, are of prime importance in understanding women and their history. Both are so heavily biased in favor of the male sex that they conceal rather than reveal the true facts about women.

Perhaps the most pernicious pseudo-scientific propaganda on female inferiority is that offered in the name of biology. According to the mythmakers in this field, females are biologically handicapped by the organs and functions of motherhood. This handicap is said to go all the way back to the animal world and makes females helpless and dependent upon the superior male sex to provide for them and their young. Nature is held responsible for having condemned females to everlasting inferiority.

It is obvious that females are biologically different from males in that only the female sex possesses the organs and functions of maternity. But it is not true that nature is responsible for the oppression of women; such degradation is exclusively the result of manmade institutions and laws in class-divided patriarchal society. It did not exist in primitive classless society and it does not exist in the animal world.

Excerpt from "Is Biology Woman's Destiny?" 1971 reprinted from www.marxists.org

STOP BOMBING YEMEN! SAUDI ARABIA + IMPERIALISTS HANDS OFF YEMEN!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF YEMEN!
NO NEW US WAR ON IRAQ! NO US/CANADA WAR ON SYRIA!
STOP BILL C-51! NO TO ISLAMOPHOBIA!
US HANDS OFF VENEZUELA! END THE BLOCKADE OF CUBA!
LIFT ALL SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN! NO TO US DRONES!
END THE BLOCKADE OF GAZA! SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINE!
US/EU/NATO/CANADA: HANDS OFF UKRAINE!
FREE PRIVATE MANNING, SOLDIER OF HUMANITY!
US AND ALL IMPERIALISTS OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!
HANDS OFF NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS NATIONALS + ALL OPPRESSED NATIONALS!
MONEY FOR JOBS, HOUSING, HEALTHCARE + EDUCATION
NOT FOR WAR + OCCUPATION!
NO TO WAR + OCCUPATION! YES TO SELF-DETERMINATION!

**Monthly Antiwar
 Anti-Occupation Drive
 Rally + Petition Drive**

**SATURDAY
 APRIL 25 2PM AGAINST
 YEMEN**

**Vancouver
 Art Gallery**
 Robson st @ Hornby st
 Downtown Vancouver



Mobilization Against War & Occupation - MAWO
 @MAWOVAN 604-322-1764 INFO@MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

Wanna Volunteer in CUBA? JOIN THE CHE BRIGADE!



Info Night & Fundraiser for the 23rd Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba invites you to join us for an info night and fundraiser for the 23rd Annual Ernesto Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba. The evening will feature videos, photos, poems and stories from past "Brigadistas", as well as a chance to win some fantastic Cuban prizes in a raffle draw to help to raise money for people joining the Brigade this year!



ADVENTURE, VOLUNTEERING & FUN!

TUESDAY, APRIL 7 7PM
JOE'S CAFE (LARGE NORTH HALL)
1150 COMMERCIAL DRIVE @ WILLIAM ST.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR THE BRIGADE, CONTACT BC COORDINATORS:
 TAMARA HANSEN: 778-882-5223 THOMAS DAVIES: 778-889-7664

WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM