

New York Times laments stalled Venezuelan coup

By Bill Van Auken
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It is now over two-and-a-half months since Juan Guaidó, a barely known figure in the right-wing, US-funded Voluntad Popular party, proclaimed himself the “interim president” of Venezuela and was immediately recognized by Washington as the “legitimate” head of the country’s government.

A month later, Washington, working with the right-wing government of Colombia and the US-backed right-wing Venezuelan opposition, attempted to stage a cynical provocation, sending trucks, supposedly loaded with US-supplied aid, in an attempt to crash the Venezuelan-Colombian border. Guaidó and his backers had cast the stunt as the end of the government of President Nicolas Maduro, predicting that Venezuelan security forces would disintegrate in the face of a handful of rations offered by the USAID.

Nothing of the kind transpired, and in the intervening weeks the ability of Guaidó and his US handlers to mount anti-regime demonstrations has visibly waned, while there has been no discernable crack in the country’s armed forces.

The *New York Times*, which has served as a propaganda mouthpiece for the US-orchestrated regime change operation from its outset, published a perplexed editorial Thursday titled “As the crisis in Venezuela grows, the options narrow.” The newspaper’s editorial board offered a lament over the failure of the CIA and its Venezuelan assets to swiftly topple the Venezuelan government.

“But despite threats of intervention, calls on the military to rebel, economic sanctions, promises of aid for the long-suffering Venezuelans and long power failures, Mr. Maduro remains defiantly entrenched in the presidential palace, his corrupt generals at his side and his Russian and Cuban backers behind him,” the

editorial states.

It continues, “In effect, what was intended as a swift operation to pry out a nasty despot has turned into a stalemate while Venezuela further disintegrates ...”

Just a day before, the *Times* had posted an editorial video by one Joanna Hausmann, who bills herself as a comedian, titled “What My Fellow Liberals Don’t Get About Venezuela”. The piece, with its lame attempts at humor, defended regime change and vilified any opposition to US imperialism’s role in the country, insisting that anyone demanding “Hands off Venezuela” would have “blood on their hands”.

What the *Times* neglected to tell its readers is that Ms. Hausmann, the presenter of this propaganda piece, is the daughter of Ricardo Hausmann, a neo-liberal economist who was a minister under the Venezuelan presidency of Carlos Andrés Pérez, which oversaw the implementation of IMF austerity measures that triggered the *caracazo*, the mass uprising of Venezuelan workers and poor in which as many as 3,000 people were massacred by security forces. This is the type of “democracy” that Washington seeks to restore in Caracas.

Hausmann is now a prominent figure in the US regime change operation, who became the center of a provocation that ended up scuttling a meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank scheduled last month in China after Beijing refused to grant him a visa as the representative of Washington’s anointed “legitimate” president Guaidó, who controls absolutely nothing in Venezuela.

The *Times* editorial cites uncritically statements by Trump’s national security adviser, John Bolton, invoking the hoary principles of the Monroe Doctrine, used countless times to justify US invasions, coups and the installation of fascist-military dictatorships in Latin

America to ward off the threat of revolution. It similarly quotes Trump's declarations that "all options are on the table". It concludes that Trump is confronting his own "red line moment", comparing it to Obama's failure to launch a full-scale US war to overthrow the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

"The reality is that Mr. Trump has no real option but to wait," the *Times* concludes.

The *Times* editorial board, headed by James Bennet (a man with the closest ties to the US state, with a brother who is a right-wing Democratic senator from Colorado and a father who was a top State Department official who headed the Agency for International Development, a frequent conduit for CIA operations), knows that this is a lie.

The CIA and the Pentagon are unquestionably carrying out a wide array of operations aimed at destabilizing Venezuela and provoking a fissure within the country's military that could result in a full-scale civil war.

The *Times* is a valued partner in these operations, with a long record of service to the US military and intelligence apparatus, from its promotion of the "weapons of mass destruction" lies in Iraq to its support for the "humanitarian" intervention that laid waste to Libya.

In Venezuela, the newspaper rushed in 2002 to salute a supposedly "democratic" coup that briefly installed Pedro Carmona, the head of the Venezuelan Chambers of Commerce, as "interim president", while Hugo Chavez, who had been elected president with some 60 percent of the vote, was kidnapped and facing summary execution.

"Venezuelan democracy is no longer threatened by a would-be dictator," the *Times* declared, turning reality inside out, in order to promote the drive by US imperialism to impose a puppet regime that would ensure unfettered access by the US energy conglomerates to the exploitation of Venezuela's oil reserves, the largest on the planet.

The *Times* ended up with egg on its face as this Made in USA "democracy" proved extremely short-lived after masses of working class Venezuelans took to the streets in struggle against the US-backed coup.

If the latest attempt to restore "democracy" on behalf of Exxon Mobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips

has faltered, it is not because of Cuban or Russian support for Maduro, as the *Times* suggest, reprising similar conspiracy theories that have been discredited within the US itself.

As much as the masses of Venezuelan workers are hostile to the Maduro government, which has defended capitalist interests, diverted vital social resources to meet debt payments to world finance capital and promoted the enrichment of a corrupt ruling clique of financial speculators, top government officials and military commanders, they recognize in the forces backing Guaidó the representatives of US imperialism and its long-time enemies in the Venezuelan capitalist oligarchy that will only offer further immiseration and bloodbaths like the *caracazo* of 1989.

The lies of the *Times* cannot conceal the fact that the only progressive way out of the crisis gripping Venezuela and the threat of imperialist intervention and economic strangulation is through the independent political mobilization of the Venezuelan working class in a struggle to overthrow the capitalist system, take power into its own hands and extend its revolutionary struggle throughout the Americas.

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