



Feb 16, 2019

# Speak Out Now

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## U.S. Government - Hands Off Venezuela!

With his typical arrogant attitude, Donald Trump announced his support for Venezuelan National Assembly President Juan Guaidó, a leader of the Venezuelan opposition who has declared himself the President of Venezuela against the recently elected government of Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuela has been a thorn in the side of U.S. imperialism since 1998 when Hugo Chavez was elected, inaugurating what he called the “Bolivarian Revolution.” Chavez’s regime took advantage of the fact that Venezuela is a major oil producer, exporting large quantities to the U.S. Chavez nationalized the oil, putting it under the control of the government and taking it out of the hands of the Venezuelan elite who had enriched themselves selling off the country’s oil. With oil hitting \$161 per barrel in the 2000s the Chavez government spent a large portion of the profits from the oil on social programs, education, jobs, housing, health care and other services for poor and working people in Venezuela.

Chavez called his government “21st century socialism”. In reality it meant transferring more of the country’s wealth into the hands of the poor. This was unacceptable to U.S. politicians and businessmen. Chavez’s policies reduced their profits and control, and provided an example to other countries in Latin America and elsewhere. Both Democratic Party and Republican politicians denounced Chavez and supported the opposition parties linked to the old regime of the Venezuelan oil profiteers.

In 2002 the U.S. government under the Bush administration launched a coup against Chavez. U.S. backed agents within the Venezuelan military kidnapped Chavez and declared a new president. But when people heard about the coup, huge crowds flooded the Venezuelan capital of Caracas, opposing the attempt by the U.S. to overthrow their elected government. Faced with hundreds of thousands of protesters, the coup fell apart, and the

ranks of the military stood with Chavez. Chavez was able to rule until his death in 2013, passing power to his Vice President, Nicolas Maduro.

Since 2002, the U.S. under Obama and now Trump has pursued a policy of isolating Venezuela, letting falling oil prices do the work of undermining the country’s economy. Obama accelerated the damage by imposing sanctions in 2014. Today the lives of the people of Venezuela are being decimated by an economy with a million percent inflation, massive food and medical shortages, and crippling unemployment.

Maduro was re-elected in 2018, an election that Washington has called illegitimate. With U.S. support Juan Guaidó has claimed the presidency, but he didn’t even run in the 2018 election! Trump has cynically sent food and medical aid, which Maduro has stopped at the border. The Trump administration hopes that the population of Venezuela is starved and desperate enough to accept Guaidó and U.S. control along with the food and medicine without responding as they did in 2002.

No U.S. administration has the right to dictate to the Venezuelan people who should lead their country. Without hesitation, we should show our opposition to this attack on the people of Venezuela.

### No War On Venezuela!

Join us to protest the U.S.  
government’s attacks on Venezuela.

**Sat. Feb. 23**

**12PM**

**Oscar Grant Plaza, 14<sup>th</sup> and  
Broadway, Oakland**

Sponsored by Spring Action Antiwar Coalition  
(Bay Area)