



Venezuela resists U.S. coup Massive outpouring for President Maduro

By Scott Scheffer

On April 30, self-appointed “interim president” Juan Guaidó attempted a coup against the Chavista government of Venezuela. Support from Washington was swift, with U.S. Vice President Mike Pence immediately tweeting “We are with you!”

The coup attempt appears to have been defeated. Guaidó’s forces are scattered. Leopoldo López, a co-conspirator, is hiding in the Spanish Embassy. Calm has returned to Caracas. Hundreds of thousands gathered for a May Day show of support for the Bolivarian Revolution. But Guaidó is calling for continued attempts to force President Nicolás Maduro from office.

Guaidó’s actions this week and earlier this year were geared toward splitting the Venezuelan armed forces. On April 30, he issued another appeal — echoed by Trump administration figures — for military leaders to defect. So far, the right-wing has no significant military support.

The attempted coup began in the early morning hours.

A handful of traitorous officers together with Guaidó “freed” López, who had been under house arrest at his home in the posh Chacao district of Caracas for his role in inciting violence in 2014 that resulted in several deaths.

At least some of the troops who were initially with Guaidó had been tricked. They rejoined their comrades in the Bolivarian army as soon as it became clear what was really going on. TeleSUR tweeted video of these same soldiers excitedly testifying about how they were lied to by two commanding officers, and how they then escaped.

Most of the fighting occurred outside the La Carlota Air Base, where Guaidó announced to the privately owned, right-wing press that they had taken control of the base. That was not even close to true.

The handful of soldiers that were still participating with them fired shots into the air for the benefit of the cameras. Chavista soldiers responded with volleys of tear gas to keep them from entering the base. There were skirmishes that took place in the Altamira Highway Interchange area outside the base which were captured by the media, and supporters of Chavismo fought with right-wing coup supporters in a number of places throughout Caracas.

Chavismo’s source of strength

In the meantime, President Maduro and other Chavista government forces encouraged Venezuelans to gather near the presidential palace to show their support for the Bolivarian revolutionary process. Many thousands turned out, just as they had in response to a 2002 coup attempt against the late president Hugo Chávez.

Huge Chavista rallies at the palace have become a familiar sight in Caracas since Chávez became president in 1999. For hundreds of thousands of people in Venezuela, the changes that have been implemented by Chávez and by current President Nicolás Maduro have meant roofs over their heads, access to medical care, literacy and enough income to feed their families — in many cases for the first time in their lives. Those Venezuelans who have been lifted from poverty are the powerful base of support for Chavismo.

Many remember how in 1989, when an economic meltdown caused spiking prices of gasoline and food, a righteous rebellion of the people was met by martial law and bloody repression. Hundreds were injured and many jailed. Most Venezuelans refuse to go back to those times.

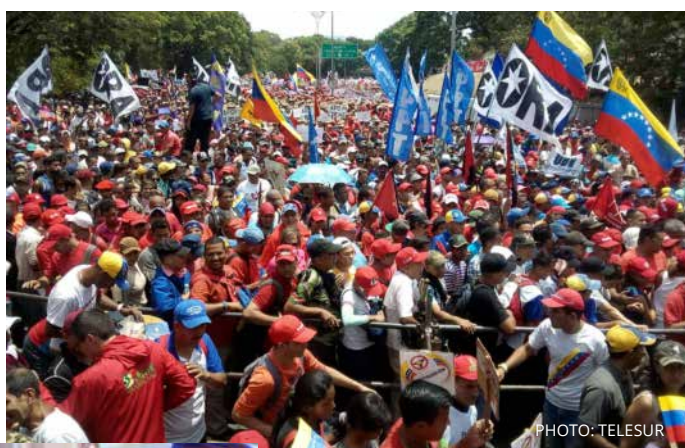


PHOTO: TELESUR



PHOTO: PSUV

Workers pour into the streets of Caracas on May Day 2019.

It isn’t the paltry gathering of the privileged in motion around Guaidó that are the real threat to the revolution. It is U.S. imperialism — with all the wealth and resources that it has stolen from around the world at its disposal — that continues to sabotage and

attack the gains of Venezuela.

According to a report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Washington’s sanctions have already caused 40,000 deaths. Now they’ve begun blocking oil shipments from Venezuela to revolutionary Cuba, which has also been targeted by a brutal U.S. economic blockade for decades.

In January, the Bank of England blocked Venezuela’s Central Bank from withdrawing its \$1.2 billion in gold reserves — 15 percent of its total foreign reserves.

In February, Citgo, the U.S.-based subsidiary of Venezuela’s state-owned oil company Petroleos de Venezuela, was seized by a U.S. board of directors. Citgo has \$23 billion in annual sales and \$500 million in cash reserves.

Sanctions, the seizure of the gold reserves and control of Citgo this year have been at the behest of Washington in order to steer the Venezuelan people’s revenue and assets into the hands of Guaidó and company.

Danger of military intervention

The U.S. ruling class has been frustrated so far in its long campaign to sink its imperialist claws deeper into the skin of Latin America by retaking Venezuela. The Bolivarian armed forces have remained loyal, and despite the hardships caused by U.S. economic warfare, the overwhelming majority of the Venezuelan people show every indication that they will fight for their sovereignty. The Chavista forces have organized a people’s militia that is growing stronger every day.

But none of that means that a military attack of some kind won’t happen. Right-wing governments of neighboring Colombia and Brazil could be used by the U.S. The founder of Blackwater, a private military contractor now known as Academi, has been lobbying for an invasion using 5,000 mercenaries. And even a direct U.S. invasion can’t be ruled out.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on May 1, “The president has been crystal clear and incredibly consistent — military action is possible — if that’s what’s required — that’s what the United States will do.”

These options are not without great risk for U.S. imperialism. Working-class people of the region have a long and proud history of resistance. And a renewed working-class, anti-war struggle in the U.S. could be triggered in the event of a U.S. military attack on the Venezuelan people.



PHOTO: TELESUR

All solidarity with Venezuela!



URGENT CALL

Protect the Venezuelan Embassy!

WASHINGTON, D.C. — May 2, U.S. Secret Service agents arrested three people defending the Bolivarian Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C. A member of Code Pink was arrested just for trying to pass food through a window to embassy protectors inside. An activist from **Struggle ★ La Lucha** was thrown to the ground, handcuffed and jailed, after being attacked by supporters of Juan Guaidó.

Right-wingers have surrounded the embassy and covered its outer walls with disgusting anti-Chavista propaganda. They are trying to starve out the embassy defenders inside. Police and Secret Service help them stage provocations and threaten those who defend the embassy, which by international law is Venezuela’s sovereign territory.

An embassy staff member said: “The best way to help is to come out to counterprotest. As far as I’m concerned, this has become bigger than Venezuela. It’s about international law and more importantly, it’s about standing up to hate, fascism and white supremacy. Also, for folks who come, imagine the vilest way a stranger can insult you. It’ll be worse. But you’ll have love and solidarity from people on our side.”

Please come to D.C. to help defend the embassy. The address is 1099 30th Street NW, Washington, DC 20007. For updates and more information on how to help, visit “Embassy Protection Collective” on Facebook or Struggle-La-Lucha.org.

Struggle wins partial victory for Renardo Lewis

By Lizz Toledo
Marietta, Ga.

May 2 — The courtroom was packed! There were barely any seating spaces left empty. It appeared as if both sides had the same amount of supporters, but when Renardo Lewis' lawyer asked for his supporters to stand up, everyone in the courtroom on both sides stood up in support of this African-American man who was unjustly arrested at an IHOP restaurant and kept in jail for 32 days without bond.

The state started their case by going all the way back to a 2001 arrest. Under this racist criminal justice system, it doesn't matter that Mr. Lewis pled guilty and paid his

debt in full. This almost 20-year-old conviction could be used by the state to pile on more charges under an oppressive repeat offender law that disproportionately affects poor people and people of color.

It was downhill after that. The state presented witnesses that appeared to lie on the stand, including a police officer who claimed that Mr. Lewis grabbed her by the throat, something that has already been proven to be false by the viral video recorded by this writer, an Atlanta People's Power Assembly activist.

Many community members testified as to the true character of Mr. Lewis, that of a mentor and a hard-working husband and father. Judge Kell reviewed the documents



and granted Mr. Lewis a \$50,000 bond. That's only a partial victory because he is not allowed to go to his own restaurant, where he works, as he is under house arrest.

The struggle continues! 📌

After winning right to appeal Community, activists demand 'FREE MUMIA!' Philadelphia, April 27

By Stephen Millies
Philadelphia

Two hundred people took to the streets of Philadelphia's Germantown neighborhood on April 27 to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners. Every year, supporters march to honor his birthday on April 24. This year Mumia turned 65.

Abu-Jamal is a world-famous revolutionary, writer and radio commentator who was framed for killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. His real crimes were to help found the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1969 and exposing police corruption in the city.

Mumia spent almost 30 years on death row before his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Two death warrants to execute Abu-Jamal were signed by former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge.

Only the power of the people — through mobilizations inside Philadelphia and around the world — saved Mumia's life.

But Mumia Abu-Jamal is still in jail. Authorities refused to treat his hepatitis C condition, and that of thousands of other Pennsylvania prisoners, until protests compelled the state to do so.

On April 17, Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner finally dropped his objection to Judge Leon Tucker's ruling giving Mumia Abu-Jamal the right to appeal his unjust conviction.

Mumia's previous appeals to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court were turned down even though its chief justice — former Philadelphia DA Ronald Castille — insisted on hearing the case. A former prosecutor like Castille, whose office tried to have Jamal executed, isn't supposed to do that.

The day after Krasner's announcement, the International Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal held an important news conference to discuss this forward step.

Murder Incorporated

People came to Germantown's Vernon Park to celebrate Tucker's important ruling, which was denounced by the racist Fraternal Order of Police. Gabe Africa of the MOVE organization chaired the rally there.

People marched down Cheltenham Avenue and other Germantown streets carrying colorful banners, including those from Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore. Drivers honked their horns and raised fists in support. On one corner, several people stood and held up their fists as the march passed.

Signs were carried for the MOVE 9; American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier; and two Puerto

Rican political prisoners, Ana Belén Montes and Nina Droz Franco.

This is the peak of the capitalist economic cycle. Yet half of the stores were shuttered in this Black neighborhood.

People proceeded to a neighborhood church, where the publication of Jamal's latest book, "Murder Incorporated, Volume 2," was celebrated. Activists took turns reading passages where Mumia detailed the crimes of Wall Street's bloody empire.

Among the readers were Mumia's nephew Wayne Cook and Mike Africa Jr., the son of Debbie Africa and Michael Africa. Mike said he was "honored and humbled" to be there.

Mike Jr. was born in a jail cell after his parents were locked up following the 1978 Philadelphia police assault on the MOVE house in Powelton Village. Police fired so many shots that they ended up killing one of their own cops, James Ramp.

The MOVE 9 were framed for this death even though the judge said that he didn't know who had killed Ramp. MOVE 9 members Debbie and Michael Africa spent 40 years in jail before being freed last year.

Other members of the MOVE 9 remain incarcerated.

Whenever you hear the Trump administration accusing Venezuela, Cuba or Nicaragua of human rights violations, remember Debbie Africa, Michael Africa and Mike Africa Jr.

Free Mumia, the MOVE 9 and all political prisoners! 📌



PHOTOS: YOUTH AGAINST WAR & RACISM

UBER DRIVERS Strike over poverty wages

Uber drivers in several cities plan a 12-hour shutdown on May 8. Drivers will log off the app in at least seven cities starting at noon. Actions are expected in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Washington, D.C., as well as other cities.

As part of the action, drivers in San Francisco have four main demands: a living wage, transparency in Uber's decision-making, employee benefits and a voice in company decisions. "As gas prices go up and wages go down, drivers are organizing," said Mostafa Maklad, a driver who has worked for Uber in San Francisco who is organizing with Gig Workers Rising.

More at tinyurl.com/y36xtuyc



TEACHERS South Carolina walkout

On May 1, teachers in South Carolina went on their first ever walkout. Seven major school districts were shut down.

Over 10,000 teachers rallied at the state Capitol in Columbia, organizers report.

"The event this morning defied expectations," John Hale, who assisted in the walkout planning, told Payday Report. "It's significant because it shows how far this very conservative right-to-work state has pushed teachers to the limit and to have teachers show up in this number suggests that teachers are willing to break the culture of fear that the state has cultivated for the last 50 years."

"This is the first time that I have seen that teachers felt empowered enough to step out and use their voice to make change," said Sherry East, president of the South Carolina Education Association.

More at tinyurl.com/yy74kr7f

POULTRY WORKERS Ratify new contract

Eighteen hundred workers at a poultry processing plant in southwest Georgia have ratified a new contract.

The contract for workers at the Equity/Tyson plant in Camilla, Ga., 30 miles south of Albany, was announced by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union on April 14.

The RWDSU represents more than 10,000 poultry workers across the southern United States, including workers at Pilgrim's Pride, Wayne Farms and Tyson locations in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi.

The dominant "crop" in Georgia is poultry; Georgia chicken farmers and processors generated \$4.4 billion from broilers, bred strictly for meat production, in 2016, according to University of Georgia data.

More at tinyurl.com/y2da8zww



U.S. activists defend Venezuelan sovereignty

By Leon Koufax with Gian Sison
Washington, D.C.

In early April, a coalition of anti-war activists called for a civilian defense of the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, located in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. This call was made in response to the attempted coup against Venezuela's democratically elected president, Nicolás Maduro.

Since late February, the U.S. and its allies have attempted to install a right-wing puppet government in Venezuela, headed by pretender Juan Guaidó. The Trump administration had supported the takeover of several Venezuelan diplomatic buildings in the U.S. by pro-Guaidó forces. Consequently, a real fear developed that U.S. law enforcement and right-wing Venezuelan elements would move to seize the Embassy of Venezuela, in clear violation of international law.

I had previously been at the embassy on Feb. 23 at a "Hands Off Venezuela" demonstration. On April 11, I stepped foot into the embassy in response to the call for peaceful embassy defense.

The scene was not particularly romantic. By this time, the vast majority of the embassy's staff had been evacuated back to Venezuela. Only one staff member and a few progressive activists remained.

The embassy is a sprawling and impressive facility. There are dozens of offices, a full fitness facility, multiple conference rooms and a large library. Even more than its amenities, though, the embassy has a unique historical and cultural voice. It ex-

presses this voice through an impressive display of artwork, political symbols and baseball memorabilia. The embassy demonstrates the Venezuelan people's pride in their nation's history: from the vision of liberation hero Simón Bolívar, to the bat of baseball legend Magglio Ordoñez.

It was evident to me then that the embassy is much more than a large building on a side street in Georgetown. The embassy is a testament to the pride and resiliency of a people's movement for freedom and democracy.

However, on this day, the impressive and once bustling complex was quiet and sparsely occupied. The task at hand may not have been particularly exciting, but it was crucial. That evening, 10 activists stood out in the rain making their voices heard. We were small in numbers, but powerful in message: any attempt by the United States to undermine the sovereignty of Bolivarian Venezuela must be met with the fiercest resistance.

Starting on that day, the defense was known as the "Embassy Protection Collective." Thankfully, April 11 was just the beginning of a movement to defend the embassy and to stand in solidarity with the democratically elected government of Venezuela.

As danger grows, so does defense

I returned to the embassy on April 15 to attend a political talk and again spend the night. The atmosphere was encouraging. The number of activists had swelled. There were more lights on, more rooms occupied, and

more voices echoing through the halls. The efforts of activists were paying off.

That evening, Pan-African Community Action gave a brilliant presentation on the oppressive U.S. military occupation throughout the continent of Africa. Prior to this presentation and discussion, a Palestinian-Egyptian family gave a musical performance. The family sang of pain, resilience and solidarity.

In between songs, the musicians spoke of the connection they felt with the Venezuelan struggle against U.S. interference.

When I next returned on the morning of April 25, the building was brimming with energy. Every room was filled with activists making plans. Dozens of dedicated people had stayed there the night before. Furthermore, a sizable crowd was gathering outside the embassy to demonstrate against any attempted U.S. government takeover.

Struggle-La Lucha was part of the coalition of organizations that stood with the people of Venezuela, President Maduro and the ongoing Bolivarian revolutionary process. It included activists and organizations from all over the U.S. and the world, including Code Pink, Popular Resistance and the ANSWER coalition. Everyone in the crowd got a chance to speak, declaring their reasons for standing in defense of Venezuela and its people.

As I write this, the embassy is still being defended. War criminal Elliott



Abrams, Trump's "special envoy for Venezuela," declared this defense illegal. Secret Service and D.C. metro police officers circle the facility. Yet the anti-coup activists at the embassy remain steadfast.

I'm proud to have been part of this effort. We stand in solidarity with the legacy of Hugo Chávez. We stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and all of their beloved institutions: from terrific education, to near universal housing, to national pride, and, as alluded to before, fantastic baseball.

Contrary to the narrative being pushed in the corporate media, totalitarianism and dictatorship do not plague Venezuela. The only plague harming Venezuela is that of U.S. economic sanctions and illegitimate, unelected shadow governments representing the wealthy. Since the election of Hugo Chávez, Venezuela has fought for the highest standard of living for all of its people. This living revolution must continue.

For those reasons, we will continue to stand in defense of the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Washington, D.C. ¡Viva la revolución bolivariana!!

Across New York, housing struggles heat up

By Anne Pruden
New York

On April 27, Bronx tenants rallied on a vacant lot owned by the city of New York along East 152nd Street. The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) was supposed to build affordable senior housing on the site. Mayor Bill de Blasio promised \$500 million for the project when he spoke to tenant activists last year.

The money, and the project, have not materialized.

The Rev. Francis Skelly, a lifelong resident of the South Bronx and pastor of the mostly Latinx Immaculate Conception Church, seemed to speak for everyone in the crowd when he pointedly asked, "Where is the money?"

Referring to the funds promised

by de Blasio, Skelly declared, "We basically are calling him a liar!"

The next day, 100 tenants of NYCHA's Fulton housing project in Manhattan gathered. Militant speakers denounced plans to sell 62,000 city-owned apartments to private realtors.

City officials call this RAD — Rental Assistance Development — and claim it would pay for many long-delayed repairs of NYCHA housing. But the working-class, mostly Black and Brown tenants see it as the beginning of privatization and the end of public housing.

Right next to the Fulton Houses, racist gentrification is rampant on Manhattan's West Side for all to see. So Fulton tenants are demanding a voice in what is decided about their homes and tenants' rights.

At the rally, some speakers proposed more taxes on big corporations to pay NYCHA costs.

Tenant representative Amelia Martinez insisted that "We are not for sale!"

The Fulton tenants know how the working class has to struggle. They announced their next protest for May 4 outside their NYCHA office on

West 18th Street.

It's no secret that rental costs across the U.S. are out of control, and out of the reach of many workers. And New Yorkers already suffer some of the highest rents.

New York's rent stabilization program, which sets a vital limit to how high rents can be raised and affects hundreds of thousands of tenants citywide, is due to expire on June 15.

Tenants groups are launching a citywide campaign to prevent the end of rent stabilization.

The struggle for housing justice continues!

Rally to prevent privatization of Fulton Houses, April 28.

SLL PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN



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RAÚL CASTRO:

‘el gobierno de Estados Unidos plantea una amenaza urgente a la paz’

Discurso pronunciado por el General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, en la Segunda Sesión Extraordinaria de la IX Legislatura de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, con motivo de la proclamación de la Constitución de la República, en el Palacio de Convenciones, el 10 de abril de 2019, “Año 61 de la Revolución”.

Hemos venido alertando sobre la conducta agresiva que el Gobierno estadounidense ha desatado contra la región de América Latina y el Caribe. Lo hace en nombre de la Doctrina Monroe, con un arrogante desprecio macartista hacia el socialismo, la libre determinación de los pueblos y los derechos soberanos de los países de la región.

El 26 de julio de 2018, al conmemorar el aniversario 65 del Moncada, y el primero de enero del presente año al celebrar el aniversario 60 del triunfo de la Revolución, advertí sobre el escenario adverso que se había conformado y el resurgir de la euforia y el apuro de nuestros enemigos por destruir el ejemplo de Cuba. En ambas ocasiones señalé la convicción de que se estrechaba el cerco del imperio en torno a Venezuela, Nicaragua y Cuba. Los hechos han confirmado aquella apreciación.

La región que Martí llamó Nuestra América había logrado en tiempos muy recientes afianzar la independencia regional, en un clima de paz, cooperación y armonía entre sus Estados miembros.

Con el precepto de alcanzar la unidad dentro de la diversidad, se avanzó sostenidamente hacia la integración, la complementariedad y el concierto entre todos para solucionar los problemas económicos y sociales de nuestros pueblos.

Se declaró a América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz y se progresó también en el propósito de alcanzar una relación más respetuosa con los vecinos del norte.

El escenario hoy es otro. El actual Gobierno de los Estados Unidos y su ambición hegemónica hacia la región, plantean la amenaza más perentoria de las últimas cinco décadas a la paz, la seguridad y el bienestar de Latinoamérica y el Caribe.

El tono del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos contra Cuba es cada vez más amenazador, al tiempo que se dan pasos progresivos para deteriorar las relaciones bilaterales.

Se culpa a Cuba de todos los males, usando la mentira en el peor estilo de la propaganda hitleriana. Jamás abandonaremos el deber de actuar en solidaridad con Venezuela. No renunciaremos a ninguno de nuestros principios y rechazaremos enérgicamente toda forma de chantaje.


El incremento de la guerra económica, con el fortalecimiento del bloqueo y la continua aplicación de la Ley Helms-Burton, persiguen el viejo an-

helo de derrocar a la Revolución Cubana por medio de la asfixia económica y la penuria. Esta aspiración ya fracasó en el pasado y volverá a fracasar (Aplausos).

Hemos hecho saber a la administración norteamericana, con la mayor claridad, firmeza y serenidad, por canales diplomáticos directos y de manera pública, que Cuba no teme a las amenazas y que nuestra vocación de paz y entendimiento está acompañada de la inmovible determinación de defender el derecho soberano de los cubanos a decidir el futuro de la nación, sin interferencia extranjera.

El socialismo, sistema que denigra el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos, lo defendemos porque creemos en la justicia social, en el desarrollo equilibrado y sostenible, con una justa distribución de la riqueza y las garantías de servicios de calidad para toda la población; practicamos la solidaridad y rechazamos el egoísmo, compartimos no lo que nos sobra, sino incluso lo que nos falta; repudiamos todas las formas de discriminación social y combatimos el crimen organizado, el narcotráfico, el terrorismo, la trata de personas y todas las formas de esclavitud; defendemos los derechos humanos de todos los ciudadanos, no de segmentos exclusivos y privilegiados; creemos en la democracia del pueblo y no en el poder político y antidemocrático del capital; buscamos promover la prosperidad de la patria, en armonía con la naturaleza y cuidando las fuentes de las que depende la vida en el planeta; y porque estamos convencidos de que un mundo mejor es posible.

Para ello es necesario que estemos alertas y conscientes de que enfrentamos dificultades adicionales y que la situación pudiera agravarse en los próximos meses. No se trata de regresar a la fase aguda del Período Especial de la década de los años 90 del siglo pasado; hoy es otro el panorama en cuanto a la diversificación de la economía, pero tenemos que prepararnos siempre para la peor variante.

En 60 años frente a las agresiones y amenazas los cubanos hemos demostrado la férrea voluntad para resistir y vencer las más difíciles circunstancias. A pesar de su inmenso poder, el imperialismo no posee la capacidad de quebrar la dignidad de un pueblo unido, orgulloso de su historia y de la libertad conquistada a fuerza de tanto sacrificio. Ya Cuba ha demostrado que sí se pudo, sí se puede y siempre se podrá resistir, luchar y alcanzar la victoria (Aplausos). No existe otra alternativa. 

‘U.S. gov’t poses urgent threat to peace’

Speech delivered by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, during the Second Extraordinary Session of the National Assembly of the People’s Power Ninth Legislature, on the occasion of the proclamation of the Constitution of the Republic, April 10, 2019, Year 61 of the Revolution.



Raúl Castro Ruz

of the Helms-Burton Law, pursue the old ambition to overthrow the Cuban Revolution through economic strangulation and hardship. This aspiration has already failed in the past and will fail again. (Applause)

We have let the U.S. administration know, with the greatest clarity, firmness and serenity, through

We have been warning of the aggressive actions unleashed by the U.S. government against the Latin American and Caribbean region. It does so in the name of the Monroe Doctrine, with an arrogant McCarthyist contempt for socialism, for the self-determination of peoples, and the sovereign rights of countries in the region.

On July 26, 2018, during the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of Moncada, and January 1, this year, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, I warned of the adverse panorama that was developing and the resurgence of our enemies’ enthusiasm and rush to destroy the example of Cuba. On both occasions I reiterated the conviction that the empire’s siege was tightening around Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. The facts have confirmed that assessment.

The region that Martí called Our America has, in recent times, been able to strengthen regional independence, in a climate of peace, cooperation, and harmony among its member states.

With the precept of achieving unity within diversity, sustained progress was made towards integration, complementarity, and the agreement among all to solve the economic and social problems of our peoples.

The scenario today is different. The current government of the United States, with its hegemonic ambitions for the region, poses the most urgent threat of the last five decades to the peace, security, and well-being of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The tone being used by the United States government against Cuba is increasingly threatening, while steps are being taken to impair bilateral relations.


Cuba is blamed for all evils, using lies in the worst style of Hitler’s propaganda. We will never abandon the duty to act in solidarity with Venezuela. We will not renounce any of our principles and will strongly reject any form of coercion.

The stepping up of the economic war, the strengthening of the blockade, and continued application

direct diplomatic channels and in a public manner, that Cuba is not afraid of threats and that our vocation for peace and understanding is accompanied by the unshakable determination to defend the sovereign right of Cubans to decide the future of our nation, without foreign interference.

We defend socialism, a system reviled by the U.S. government, because we believe in social justice, in balanced, sustainable development, with a just distribution of wealth and guarantees of quality services for the entire population; we practice solidarity and reject selfishness, sharing not what we have left over, but even what we ourselves lack; we repudiate all forms of social discrimination and fight organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, and all forms of slavery; we defend the human rights of all citizens, not of exclusive, privileged segments; we believe in the people’s democracy and not in the political and undemocratic power of capital; we seek to promote the prosperity of the homeland, in harmony with nature and caring for the resources on which life on the planet depends; and because we are convinced that a better world is possible.

Thus, we must remain alert and aware that we could face additional difficulties and that the situation could worsen in coming months. It is not a question of returning to the most difficult times of the Special Period in the 1990s. The current panorama is different, with the diversification of the economy, but we must always prepare for the worst variant.

Over 60 years, facing aggression and threats, Cubans have shown the iron will to resist and overcome the most difficult circumstances. Despite its immense power, imperialism does not possess the capacity to break the dignity of a united people, proud of its history and of the freedom conquered with so much sacrifice. Cuba has already shown that, yes, we could, yes, we can, and will always be able to resist, fight, and emerge victorious. (Applause) There is no other alternative. 

STRUGGLE ★ **LA LUCHA**
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