

Who is the US to preach “democracy” to Venezuela?

Andrea Lobo, Bill Van Auken
1 August 2024

Even as Washington and Israel set the whole of the Middle East ablaze, the Biden-Harris administration is exploiting Sunday’s presidential elections in Venezuela to instigate a coup against President Nicolás Maduro, whose government maintains close ties with China, Russia and Iran.

Across the world, US imperialism is guided by the same imperative of asserting its hegemony over the planet’s energy and strategic mineral producing regions, above all, to deny their resources to its perceived main geopolitical rival, China.

Based on preliminary results, the Venezuelan election commission declared that Maduro and his United Socialist Party (PSUV) have an “irreversible” lead of 51 percent against 44 percent for Edmundo González, a previously unknown diplomat who ran as a stand-in for the fascist leader of the US-funded Unitary Platform, María Corina Machado.

Machado and González have insisted that their coalition won and called for demonstrations to defend their supposed victory. Both sides, however, have yet to provide sufficient evidence to prove their claims.

Maduro has issued a request for the Supreme Court to settle the election dispute and vowed to present all the election data in the near future.

Not content to wait for verified results or judicial rulings, Washington issued its own judgment on Thursday.

“Given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela’s July 28 presidential election,” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

In televised speeches, Maduro has declared that he is facing a “fascist coup” orchestrated by the United States and called on the military to “remain alert and ready for anything.”

For now, the head of the armed forces, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, has reaffirmed “absolute loyalty and unconditional support” for Maduro.

Since the day of the elections, Washington’s entire political establishment has joined in seeking to create the conditions for a US-backed coup.

On Tuesday, US Vice President Kamala Harris wrote on X demanding the immediate release of polling data. She then pontificated: “Violence, harassment, and threats against peaceful protestors and political actors are unacceptable. The U.S. stands with the Venezuelan people, and the will of the people must be respected.”

What is she talking about?

The opposition has instigated a wave of riots, looting, the burning of PSUV offices, government buildings, schools and healthcare facilities.

The explicit aim of Machado has been to provoke divisions in the armed forces, aiming for a coup, civil war and a potential foreign military intervention.

This is nothing new. For more than two decades, Washington and its paid agents have repeatedly resorted to similarly reckless and lawless methods in Venezuela.

Imperialism has attempted to kidnap and assassinate the Venezuelan leadership and imposed a brutal sanctions regime that has devastated the economy, driven millions into poverty and exile and claimed countless lives—former UN Special Rapporteur Alfred de Zayas estimated over 100,000 excess deaths as of 2020, resulting from the cutoff of vital food and medical supplies.

Washington sponsored an abortive military coup that briefly ousted the late former president Hugo Chavez in 2002. It has spent millions of dollars in cultivating extreme right-wing forces like Machado and to organize violent campaigns to destabilize the government. In 2019, Washington declared as “interim president” Juan Guaidó, who had no popular support, and handed to his lackeys billions in state assets, including the gas company CITGO. And in 2020, former US military special forces operators and military contractors organized a fiasco of an invasion that was meant to overthrow the government and assassinate its leaders.

A revealing editorial published by the *Washington Post* in the immediate aftermath of the election concluded, “The United States and other democracies have invested heavily in a peaceful democratic transition for Venezuela. In that sense, this election is being stolen from them, too.” In other words, all of the money poured by the CIA and USAID into fostering a right-wing opposition and fomenting violence and regime-change must yield the desired results.

On Wednesday, finger-wagging National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby followed up, declaring: “Our patience, and that of the international community, is running out, running out. I’m waiting for the Venezuelan electoral [authority] to come clean and release the full detailed data on this election.”

What gives the US government the right to dictate the conduct of Venezuela’s elections? Dominated by two parties bought and paid for by a ruling oligarchy of billionaires, it systematically suppresses democratic rights in preparation for wars opposed by most of the population.

While US officials talk about their “patience running out” and defending the “will of the people,” US elections are not even determined by the popular vote, but by an undemocratic Electoral College. In 2000, the US Supreme Court took over a month to issue a ruling handing victory to the losing side, while in 2020, states did not resolve challenges for weeks as the Republican Party sought to

overturn its clear defeat at the polls.

Ahead of the November presidential election, the Democratic Party is spending millions of dollars to wage what it itself describes as an all-out “war” against the efforts of third parties, and in particular the Socialist Equality Party, to overcome already extreme hurdles to gain access to the ballot.

Internationally, Washington and its NATO allies are waging a proxy war with Russia by pouring billions into arming and propping up a regime in Ukraine that has indefinitely postponed elections, rules by martial law with the aid of outright fascists, and detains left-wing and antiwar opponents under fabricated charges, including the prominent Trotskyist, Bogdan Syrotiuk.

In the Middle East, US imperialism pursues its geostrategic interests by providing unlimited billions in aid and arms to the apartheid regime in Israel so that it can pursue its genocidal war aimed at achieving a “final solution” to the Palestinian “problem” by murdering, starving and displacing millions of innocent civilians.

Such are the credentials of the apostles of “democracy” and “human rights” delivering their sermons against Venezuela.

While claiming to defend democracy, Washington’s policy toward the region has been and continues to be animated by the Monroe Doctrine, which asserts US imperialism’s unfettered hegemony over its “own backyard.” Hitler, Ribbentrop, Carl Schmitt and other Nazi leaders cited this infamous Doctrine as inspiration for their conceptions underlying the Third Reich’s genocidal war for “living space” in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The Doctrine has acquired new relevance for the Pentagon as it seeks to use Latin America as a launching pad for world war, as shown by a recent forum in Washington titled “Overlooking Monroe? Protecting our Hemisphere and Homeland.” It showcased as the main panelist Gen. Laura Richardson, the head of the US Southern Command, which oversees Pentagon operations in South and Central America.

General Richardson argued that the Doctrine cannot be left on the shelf any longer. “Our strategic competitors are trying to replace us in our hemisphere,” she said, and it is time to “put our foot on the gas” in stopping the growing influence of China and Russia.

“This region is very rich in resources,” she added, listing lithium, gold, copper, soybeans, sugar, beef, corn, light sea crude and “heavy crude in Venezuela.”

For over a century, the methods employed by Washington to dominate the region have consisted of boundless aggression, including countless military invasions, military coups, and the installing of fascist dictatorships. This has continued uninterrupted, from the CIA overthrow of the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954, through the creation of fascist military dictatorships in Brazil, Chile, Argentina and most of the hemisphere in the 1960s and 1970s, the support of death squad regimes in Central America in the 1980s and the more recent support of right-wing coups in Honduras in 2009, in Bolivia in 2019 and Peru in 2022.

Today, Washington’s operation in Venezuela is straight out of the playbook of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who explained in a phone call with Richard Nixon the need to create a “coup climate” to overthrow the elected Chilean President Salvador Allende. In the immediate run-up to the coup, Kissinger infamously commented: “I don’t see why we should stand by and let a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people.”

Given this long and bloody history, the criminal role being played by US imperialism in its drive to a third world war and the blatant

rotting out of every democratic institution in the US itself, the obvious question arises: Who in the hell is Washington to preach “democracy” to the Venezuelans, or anyone else, for that matter?

The crisis in Venezuela, much of it the making of US imperialist aggression, can be resolved only by the Venezuelan working class in a common struggle with the workers of Latin America, the US and internationally.

The election last Sunday offered no real alternative. It was illegitimate from the outset, the product not of any demand by the Venezuelan people, but of closed-door talks between Caracas and Washington’s lackeys in Barbados that were organized as a means for US imperialism to advance its agenda of asserting control over the South American country’s oil reserves, the largest on the planet.

The Maduro government is seeking to turn Venezuela back to the oil conglomerates under its own terms, to benefit its faction of the bourgeoisie and secure its regime. Just last week, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Maduro is secretly promising oil executives “generous returns and operational control over joint ventures” and “no-tender contracts without environmental oversight,” as well as “future oil revenues and directly negotiating a restructuring of some \$60 billion in debt” to foreign bondholders.

The program of both Maduro and his opponent Machado, described approvingly by the Western media as “the Venezuelan Margaret Thatcher,” would equally require massive police state repression. The only significant difference is that the far-right opposition is vowing to dislodge Russian and Chinese interests, which is of strategic and pressing importance for US imperialism.

Only the Trotskyist movement, today led by the International Committee of the Fourth International, has drawn the key lesson from the tragic experiences of the betrayed revolutions and wars of the 20th century:

Workers and the oppressed masses will direct their forces entirely and successfully to destroy fascism, imperialist oppression and war only if that means fighting for better conditions of existence and control of the factories, resources and technology to secure them, i.e., in the struggle for a workers’ government and the socialist transformation of society.

This means that the urgent task today in Venezuela, the United States and internationally is to build an international movement of the working class, opposed to all bourgeois and nationalist forces, to overthrow capitalism and its nation-state system and establish a global system based on genuine social equality.



To contact the WWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)