

CIA's cover blown in Brazil, but still safe in the New York Times

Bill Van Auken
23 June 2017

The identity of the CIA's station chief in Brazil, previously a closely guarded secret of the US government, was plastered across every Brazilian newspaper and reported throughout the country's mass media earlier this week.

Duyane Norman, who had previously been working under the all-too-common cover of a "political officer" in the US Embassy in Brasilia, was listed as the "station chief of the CIA" in a public schedule released by Brazil's Institutional Security Council (known by its Portuguese acronym as the GSI) for its chief minister, Gen. Sérgio Etchegoyen.

The US Embassy refused to "confirm or deny" whether Norman headed the US intelligence agency's operations in Latin America's largest country.

Folha de Sao Paulo quoted the GSI—which oversees the Brazilian spy agency, the ABIN—as saying the public daily schedule, which is regulated by the Free Information Act of 2012, "is an active instrument of transparency" and "the names and positions of all attendees are to be registered in accordance to the principles of transparency, without exception."

That such a formal regulation would compel the secretive Brazilian security agency to blow the cover of the CIA's top man in the country strains credulity. The possibility that the incident involved some sort of "spy versus spy" frictions playing out between the two intelligence agencies, reflecting broader conflicts between US and Brazilian capital, cannot be discounted.

There is also the possibility, however, that the naming of the CIA chief was the product of incompetence and crisis within a Brazilian government confronting continuing economic crisis and mounting social unrest, while wracked by spiraling corruption scandals implicating everyone from President Michel Temer on

down.

This hypothesis gained credence when Temer's own public schedule listed his state visit to Moscow this week as a trip to the "Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic," a political entity that ceased to exist in 1991.

Whatever the reason for the public exposure of the CIA's man in Brazil, there was one quarter where his secret remained safe.

The *New York Times* published an article on the incident Tuesday under the tongue-in-cheek headline "Dagger, but no cloak: Brazil's top spy exposes CIA officer."

"Intelligence officers who think they might like to be posted in Brazil take note: A simple meeting with the country's spying hierarchy can get your cover blown," the newspaper reported.

Despite this jocular tone, the seriousness with which the *Times* editorial board takes the matter is made clear by what is not in the article. While millions of Brazilians now know from the newspapers they read and the news programs they listen to or watch that Duyane Norman was the CIA's top man in the country, the name does not appear in the *Times*.

While the newspaper's logo reads "all the news that's fit to print," this clearly does not extend to the secrets of the US intelligence apparatus, even after they have become public knowledge.

The *Times* editors have no doubt censored their own coverage in compliance with a request from the Central Intelligence Agency. While Mr. Norman's cover may have been blown in Brazil, the agency likely hopes that his talents can be put to use in pursuing US imperialist interests against the population of some other country.

This is nothing new for the *Times* which has suppressed coverage of everything from US war crimes

to wholesale domestic spying. In one analagous case in 2011, the *Times* withheld from its readers—at the agency’s request—the fact that Raymond Davis, a former US special forces soldier who shot and killed two Pakistani youth in cold blood in Lahore, was a CIA agent, even after the fact had been widely reported in the Pakistani press.

The “newspaper of record” functions as an instrument of the state, a conduit for propaganda from the CIA and the Pentagon, whose first responsibility lies with the US military and intelligence apparatus, not with its readers.

Aside from the withholding of the CIA station chief’s name, left totally unexamined by the *Times* report is what Norman was discussing with General Etchegoyen.

Etchegoyen is at the center of the increasingly repressive response of the Brazilian state to mass social opposition and the growing anti-democratic conspiracies within the country’s ruling establishment and its military and intelligence apparatus.

He was the main figure behind the brutal suppression of the May 24 “Occupy Brasilia” protest and the issuance of a “Guarantee of Law and Order” decree that sent 1,500 armed soldiers into the streets of Brazil’s capital.

The son of a former general implicated in torture and murder under the US-backed dictatorship, Etchegoyen’s power and influence have risen steadily as every bourgeois party and major political figure, from Temer and the Brazilian right to Lula and the Workers Party, have been discredited by wholesale corruption and reactionary attacks on the rights and social conditions of the working class.

The collaboration between the *Times* and the CIA in Brazil goes back a long ways. In 1964, the newspaper enthusiastically welcomed the US-backed coup that initiated more than two decades of military dictatorship.

The newspaper’s foreign correspondent Tad Szulc wrote at the time: “If the Brazilian situation now becomes reasonably stabilized, as it is hopefully expected here, a measure of relative stability will have returned to South America, from Venezuela’s Caribbean coast to the tip of the continent in Argentina. And this stability, enhanced by the ouster of the Goulart regime.” Indeed, the 1964 coup would be followed by similar military seizures of power in

Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and a number of other Latin American countries, leading to the deaths, imprisonment and torture of hundreds of thousands.

Though well aware of the fact, Szulc and the *Times* made no mention of the extensive role played by the CIA in preparing the 1964 coup. One can be sure that if it were to learn of similar preparations today, it would withhold the news from the Brazilian, US and world public.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact