

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: A petty agent for US imperialism tours Latin America

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Following a trip to Brazil, Chile and Colombia last month at the head of a US congressional delegation, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)-linked Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has confirmed that it was an operation to advance the hegemonic interests of US imperialism by offering a few cosmetic rhetorical changes.

During and since the trip, Ocasio-Cortez has repeated bromides like wanting “to learn from you” and comments based on undigested pieces of information to promote the farce that US imperialism has a “new” understanding and a democratizing mission in the region. The entire affair was a politically criminal attempt to provide a “left” cover for the ongoing policies of imperialist plunder and oppression.

The stop in Chile in the context of the 50th anniversary of the CIA-orchestrated coup that overthrew President Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973, was particularly revealing. The Richard Nixon administration played a key role in organizing the coup and subsequent bloodbath against left workers, peasants, and youth at the hands of the military-fascist junta under Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

The US congressional delegation held meetings with several top officials of the government led by the pseudo-left Broad Front coalition and the Stalinist Communist Party in Chile, including a barbecue with President Gabriel Boric. The American pseudo-lefts hailed “the efforts by Chile to defend and deepen democracy” during the anniversary and seconded an appeal by Boric for the Biden administration to declassify documents on the US participation in the coup.

Ocasio-Cortez said that such a gesture “could launch a new century in the relations between the US and Chile.”

For months before the trip, however, the Boric administration had already been using the anniversary to accommodate itself to Washington, the Chilean military and the fascistic political successors of the Pinochet dictatorship.

Throughout July and August, Boric focused on convincing the far-right parties to sign statements commemorating the coup and vowing to “defend democracy,” only to help these forces conceal their historic support for the coup and authoritarian politics. Boric joined hands with his far-right predecessor, billionaire Sebastián Piñera, in signing such a statement even though one of his campaign promises only two years ago was to prosecute then President Piñera for human rights violations in the crushing of mass protests against inequality in 2019-2020, leaving dozens dead and thousands injured.

On August 25, days after the Ocasio-Cortez trip, the CIA declassified two briefs (one partially) informing then President Richard Nixon on the actions by the Chilean military during the coup. Peter Kornbluh, the National Security Archive Chile specialist said these documents “contain not a single sentence that could compromise U.S. national security” and called upon Biden to release “all documents that, inexplicably, remain secret after all this time.”

The cynical and purely symbolic release of the documents shows that the trip by Ocasio-Cortez was part of a policy developed from the White

House and the State Department. Along the same lines, Biden has taken a much more active approach than his predecessors in meeting with “pink tide” Presidents Lula da Silva of Brazil, Gustavo Petro of Colombia, Gabriel Boric of Chile, and Argentina’s Alberto Fernández.

Biden’s National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan also announced on August 22, a day after Ocasio-Cortez’s trip ended, that the administration would urge the IMF and World Bank to offer a “positive, affirmative alternative” to Chinese credits for developing countries, which takes place amid calls for reforming those institutions by several Latin American governments.

Only last Tuesday, Ocasio-Cortez met with Alberto Fernández in New York to manifest support for his administration as it appeals against IMF surcharges and opposes a US ruling favoring a vulture capital fund demanding \$16 billion from Argentina.

“A trust problem”

In a recent interview with the *New York Times*, Ocasio-Cortez said that US-Latin America relations were characterized by “a trust problem” that her trip hoped to help fix. The *World Socialist Web Site* sharply exposed this approach in an August 30 Perspective:

This is how the CIA might describe the consequences of the mass suffering and death created by the crimes of US imperialism in Central and South America. It’s all just a “trust problem,” rather than the irreconcilable conflict between the financial interests of US corporations and the basic needs of the Latin American masses.

In her interview with the *New York Times*, Ocasio-Cortez openly declared her support for US imperialism. “I wouldn’t necessarily characterize my foreign policy goals as oppositional to the president’s or to the United States,” she said, stressing that she has “sworn an oath to this country, and I take that oath very seriously.”

The support by Ocasio-Cortez to the war against Russia in Ukraine, voting in favor of sending billions in weapons, is as much part of this “oath” to US imperialism as her work in Latin America, whose main goal is also upholding US hegemony against Russia and China.

Significantly, the avalanche of Western propaganda against Russia and China have failed to “make Washington’s adversaries their own” in much of the world. An IPSOS poll in January 2023 found that only about a fifth of those polled in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia—the region’s largest countries—support sending weapons to Ukraine, and less than a

third support sanctions against Russia.

In Colombia, Ocasio-Cortez claimed to oppose the focus of US policy on providing military aid under Plan Colombia. On the other hand, pseudo-left President Petro proclaimed a “strategic alliance” with the US delegation, which he clearly saw as representing ultimately the Biden administration. Only four months ago, Petro had vowed to “consolidate” his government’s “strategic alliance” with NATO.

In a subsequent interview with *Jacobin*, a publication associated with the DSA, Ocasio-Cortez said that Latin Americans “have dealt with decades and decades of US interventionism, which has created an enormous amount of skepticism whenever the United States is involved, but they also do not seek dependency on China or any other global power.” She continued: “When it comes to the realpolitik of the United States—let’s say you’re coming in just wanting to advocate for US interests in the region—I think, arguably, the US interest in the region would also be to rebuild those relationships and cease an interventionist stance.”

When asked directly “is the best thing the United States can do just stay the hell out?” she responded, “I do think that we have a role to play.”

What Ocasio-Cortez did not try to answer—and cannot answer—is why Washington has carried out a century of invasions, coups and other forms of political subversion across the region to begin with. Presumably, according to the world view promoted by this petty agent of imperialism, it was all based on a misunderstanding, and not the fundamental contradictions of imperialism itself.

During the past four decades, the globalization of production and finance capital has sharply accentuated these contradictions and accelerated the demise of the post-World War II order, which was rooted in the global domination of the US economy and the US dollar. It has become imperative for US imperialism to tighten its semi-colonial grip over its “backyard” in Latin America and suppress the class struggle at home and across the region to pursue its hegemony globally through economic and military warfare.

The DSA is a faction of the Democratic Party, which today oversees this imperialist strategy. This is why they seek to reconcile the irreconcilable. For millions of Latin American peasants, workers and youth who have suffered decades of super-exploitation by oligarchs, extrajudicial killings by US-trained forces, persecution, displacement and ecological destruction, it is indefensible to back the Democratic Party, Biden or the policies coming out of Washington in general while claiming to oppose “US interventionism.”

As a senator, Biden led the effort to impose, both on the ground in Colombia and in the US Congress, the most militaristic version of Plan Colombia possible. His administration continues sending a massive amount of military aid to Colombia, even after the armed forces were deployed to kill and disappear dozens during mass demonstrations against inequality in 2019-2021.

Moreover, the Biden administration backed the December 2022 overthrow and imprisonment of elected President Pedro Castillo and sent dozens of US troops to aid Dina Boluarte’s fascist regime in its continuing deadly crackdown against anti-coup demonstrations.

The coup in Peru and the recent US-backed coups in Honduras in 2009 and Bolivia in 2019 show that imperialism relies more than ever on the fascist armed forces, paramilitary groups and anti-democratic conspiracies as its principal political means to counter the relative decline of its economic position in the region.

In the context of the deepening crisis of American capitalism, the delegation led by Ocasio-Cortez emerges clearly as an exercise of throwing dust in the eyes of workers in the US and across Latin America as US imperialism prepares its next acts of aggression.

Ocasio-Cortez said after her trip, “It cannot be understated how much the U.S. far-right and fascist movements have been working extremely

hard to export many of their tactics and goals throughout Latin America.” In fact, it cannot be overstated how much the DSA and its partners across the region are consciously setting the stage for the rise of the far right in the region and within the US itself.

“Learning lessons” from the Brazilian pseudo-left

Following purely nationalist calculations, Ocasio-Cortez’s praise for opportunists abroad seeks to justify opportunism at home, especially with the DSA mired in deep crisis.

At the DSA convention last month, delegates spoke of a “crisis of waning spirit,” a “budget crisis,” an “identity crisis,” and a crisis of its youth movement, while recent articles on *Jacobin* have proposed combining a faithful “Democratic Party ballot line” with phony third-party “surrogates” based on supposedly “grassroots” and protest groups.

The DSA’s alignment with the right-wing policies of the Biden administration is undermining its fundamental role of giving a “left” gloss to the Democratic Party.

In the interview with *Jacobin*, Ocasio-Cortez highlighted the rural MST (Landless Workers Movement) and its urban counterpart MTST (Homeless Workers Movement) in Brazil as having the “biggest” impact on her. “What I found so remarkable,” she said, “was their direct action, which is part of a larger ideological and strategic vision, and their decision to engage in electoral work ... a kind of radicalism in direct action and a pragmatism in their electoral program.”

She added: “To see people in Brazil, especially in a multiparty system—Lula is part of the Workers’ Party (PT); there’s a socialist party, PSOL, which MST is a part of; there are communist parties, and many other parties—come together in a very strong program of solidarity is astounding.” One must also add to that the establishment the Unified Workers’ Central (CUT), controlled by the PT and the rest of the union bureaucracy.

Saying she and her delegation wanted to “take lessons,” Ocasio-Cortez met specifically with Guilherme Boulos, the longtime leader of the MTST, a PSOL federal deputy and a PT-backed candidate for mayor of Brazil’s biggest city, São Paulo. This year he has supported demonstrations to “strengthen” Lula and accompanied the Brazilian president this week to the UN General Assembly. As explained by the main financial paper in the country, *Valor Econômico*: “Alongside the president of the Republic, the federal deputy is trying to detach himself from his ‘radical’ image and is seeking to overcome resistance from more conservative sectors in São Paulo and open a dialogue with businesspeople.”

In Brazil, the MST and MTST also regularly appear at the PT rallies and support their candidates, including Lula. They combine this with occupations of unproductive farmland, the formation of cooperatives, housing developments and community centers. More than a radical social movement, the MST has become a lucrative capitalist business, with 400,000 families settled in 185 cooperatives and 120 agro-industries. Between 2020 and 2022, it has received 42 million reais (\$8.64 million) from the stock market through the company Finapop, formed by investors.

In sum, AOC & Co. seek to cast a similar net over workers and youth across the United States, to drag them back behind the Democratic Party.

In each of the countries visited by Ocasio-Cortez and her delegation, the democratic task of ending imperialist oppression has been continuously blocked by the political subordination of the working class to the national bourgeoisie, which ultimately depends economically and politically upon imperialism. The region’s history has confirmed repeatedly the theory of permanent revolution developed by Leon Trotsky, which established that

backward countries can only liberate themselves from imperialism through the independent and revolutionary struggle of the working class for power, leading behind it the poor peasantry, as part of the world socialist revolution.

Today, this program is defended only by the International Committee of the Fourth International, which seeks to build its sections in every country based on a careful study of all the bitter lessons of the 20th century and an uncompromising struggle against all pseudo-left organizations of the upper-middle class like the DSA and its international partners.



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