

Biden administration sets stage for ruthless escalation against Venezuela under Trump

Andrea Lobo

26 November 2024

Sources involved in and close to the transition team of fascist President-elect Donald Trump warned CNN last week that they will pursue an “aggressive strategy toward Latin America.”

This would reportedly include a reactivation of catastrophic economic sanctions against Venezuela to oust the government of Nicolás Maduro. One source said that, in order to force countries to take back migrants and otherwise comply with US diktats, “Everything is on the table. Once the president re-establishes credibility and consequences, it’s not something taken lightly”

Trump’s selection of Florida Senator Marco Rubio as secretary of state gives more than a hint of what is on the table. Under Trump’s first term, Rubio was one the architects of the “maximum pressure” campaign of sanctions on Venezuela’s oil sector that starved the country of needed foreign reserves to buy food and medicines, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees.

At the time, Rubio insisted that a US military intervention had to be considered, claiming to the fascistic publication *Breitbart* that “the Maduro regime has become a threat for the region and even the United States.”

While Trump’s cabinet is full of like-minded war hawks against China, Rubio represents a faction of the political establishment particularly concerned with securing control over the largest oil reserves in the world located in Venezuela, and other strategic resources and geostrategically vital positions in Latin America in preparation for escalating the military and economic conflicts globally.

This is what he meant when he said during a Senate hearing in 2022, “We simply can’t afford to let the Chinese Communist Party expand its influence and absorb Latin America and the Caribbean into its private political-economic bloc. That would leave our country worse off and ensnare the people of Latin America and the Caribbean into a generation of suffering and repression. So I’m hopeful that our nation will begin to address this threat head on and seriously revitalize our engagement in the region.”

More recently, Rubio was a vocal opponent of the

agreement reached between Caracas and the Biden administration to organize Venezuela’s July 28 presidential elections in exchange for temporary exemptions to sanctions, even though it was clearly a US ploy with plans to allege “fraud” regardless of the result.

Last week, rejecting the declaration of Maduro as the winner by Venezuelan election authorities, Biden’s secretary of state, Antony Blinken, declared on X that the US-backed candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, had won “resoundingly” and was “president-elect.”

The day before, the US House of Representatives approved with bipartisan support a bill banning the US government from dealing with any individual or entity with commercial links to Caracas, freezing new Venezuelan assets and imposing other sanctions. It will now go to the Senate.

These latest moves set the stage for a major escalation of the conspiracies to oust Maduro on the eve of the inauguration of Donald Trump on January 20.

In 2019, the first Trump administration had similarly declared US puppet Juan Guaidó as “interim President,” but failed to rally the Venezuelan military leadership to carry out a coup to place him in office. The CIA gang around Guaidó nonetheless stole Citgo, the valuable US subsidiary of the Venezuelan state oil company, and organized the failed landing of a mercenary force led by an ex-Green Beret to kidnap the Venezuelan leadership.

González and his Unitary Platform have failed even more miserably than Guaidó at instigating a coup; however, from Blinken to Rubio, US imperialism knows only the language of economic devastation, subversion and war to counter its falling economic hegemony.

Demonstrations of any significant size against the alleged election fraud by Maduro in July lasted only a handful of days. By September, González had signed a cowardly statement acknowledging his election defeat to avoid an arrest warrant and was allowed by the Venezuelan authorities to flee the country aboard a Spanish Air Force plane.

The fascistic leader of the US-backed opposition coalition, María Corina Machado, whose candidacy was disqualified by the courts and who also faces arrest warrants, recently told the *New York Times* that she avoids stepping outside of her hiding place supposedly within Venezuela.

The election of Trump has nonetheless emboldened the hopes of the coup plotters in Venezuela for an even more nakedly neo-colonialist approach.

Machado applauded Trump's selections of Rubio for secretary of state and representative Mike Waltz for national security advisor, indicating that their teams are in "permanent contact." Maduro's ouster, she argued, would be "an enormous foreign policy victory in the very, very short term" for the Trump administration.

Machado, who has long advocated for US sanctions and a foreign military intervention, has also been working closely with the Argentine government of fascist President Javier Milei in preparing provocations against the Maduro administration. Like Milei, she belongs to the fascistic Madrid Forum and advocates vast privatizations, social cuts and the naked rule of the financial oligarchy.

Since Saturday, Machado and the Milei administration launched a campaign claiming that the Venezuelan police sieged the Argentine embassy where six of her closest confidants have sought asylum.

González Urrutia, after being feted for two months in European capitals, announced last week that he plans to return to Venezuela to be inaugurated as president on January 10, the constitutional date for the transition of power.

For his part, President Maduro called Blinken's decision "ridiculous" and insisted that he won the elections and plans to begin his third term on January 10. As usual, reflecting the subservient interests of the Venezuelan capitalist class that he represents, Maduro has combined demagogic bluster with appeals to the incoming Trump administration.

On Thursday, Maduro said that the US-backed opposition wanted to carry out a coup and warned: "Do not underestimate the Venezuelan people because we have here in Venezuela and on this continent our popular, military and police fusion. You will regret it." The same day, he announced a "new chapter" of his government's "powerful alliance" with Iran without providing any details.

Maduro had also congratulated Trump for his victory and called "for a win-win situation," adding absurdly that "I did not hesitate for a second to solidarize myself, and to wish him good health and a long life" when the fascist billionaire faced two assassination attempts. Of course, Trump would not only solidarize himself with any assassin of Maduro but will likely raise the price on his head.

In fact, a member of Trump's inner circle is Erik Prince,

the billionaire founder of military contractor Blackwater, who launched "Ya Casi Venezuela," a fundraiser for bribing Venezuelan military officials or others to detain or kill the Venezuelan leadership. Undoubtedly this was a topic of discussion when Prince attended Trump's Mar-a-Lago Resort earlier this month for the Conservative Political Action Committee gala, which starred Argentina's Milei.

Five days later, Prince wrote on X:

Leave now criminals or face unmerciful judgment... We @yacasi venezuela are like Santa Claus. We are making a list and checking it twice. Soon the Free people of Venezuela will remember who's been naughty and who's been nice.

Important note below: after January 10 you are just criminal targets and retain zero diplomatic protection.

He tagged Maduro, his wife, Minister of Interior Diosdado Cabello, Minister of Defense Vladimir Padrino, National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez and Attorney General Tarek William Saab.

The second Trump term will be overseen directly by oligarchs who want to lift all restraints on employing the resources of the American state to recolonize the world at the service of Wall Street and crush opposition abroad and at home.

During a recent interview, Prince advocated for "putting the imperial hat back on, to say, we're going to govern those countries [incapable of governing themselves]," glorified Israel's pager explosion terrorist attack in Lebanon and denounced the American military-intelligence apparatus for becoming too "risk-averse."

Elon Musk, the main sponsor of Trump's campaign, brazenly celebrated the 2019 coup against Evo Morales in Bolivia, writing: "We will coup whoever we want." His company Tesla has major stakes in the world's largest lithium reserves in Bolivia now controlled mainly by Chinese companies.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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