

Mexico's president invites in US Marines after marking 1913 US-orchestrated overthrow of Madero

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On February 9, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum marked the US-orchestrated overthrow of Francisco I. Madero in 1913 by calling for “loyalty” against foreign intervention—only to invite US Marines into Mexico two days later, underscoring the wholesale subordination of the Mexican bourgeoisie to US imperialism.

Sheinbaum led this year's commemoration of the 113th anniversary of the “March for Loyalty” from a vehicle at the head of the column, flanked by the high command of the armed forces, in a carefully choreographed display of presidential-military unity in Mexico City's Zócalo.

In her morning press conference, she explained that the event was moved from the traditional setting in Chapultepec Castle to the central square at the request of the Defense Ministry to more closely match the original route of Madero's march.

Under her predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), the March of Loyalty was consciously elevated as a key ceremony to raise the political profile and prestige of the armed forces, especially in his final two years in office.

Unlike previous years, however, Sheinbaum placed special emphasis on the danger of foreign intervention. Referring to the 1913 coup, she directly named then-US Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson as the architect of the plot.

“But it is very important to remember this date, for the betrayal and the coup d'état, and for the interventionism that took place. We do not want any more interventionism. We do not want more interference,” she declared.

Yet within 48 hours of marching at the head of an event ostensibly condemning foreign meddling, Sheinbaum submitted a formal request to the Senate authorizing the entry of US Navy SEALs with full armament to train the Mexican Navy's special forces. The Senate—where her party Morena holds 67 of 128 seats—voted unanimously in favor, with only one abstention.

This is the first authorization for US troops to re-enter Mexico since the January 3 US attack on Venezuela, which killed at least 80 people in Caracas and culminated in the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro. The unanimous Senate vote provides a de facto political endorsement of Washington's aggressive military operations across Latin America.

The same communication from the executive also asks authorization for Mexican naval special forces to travel to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to participate in US-led exercises aimed at “Expanding the Operational Capacity of the Special Operations Unit.”

At the Zócalo event itself, Defense Secretary Gen. Ricardo Trevilla Trejo delivered the keynote speech. He solemnly pledged that the armed forces “will continue walking alongside our Supreme Commander (the President)” with “absolute loyalty.”

Symbolically, the presidents of both houses of Congress—Laura Itzel

Castillo of Morena in the Senate and Kenia López Rabadán of the right-wing PAN in the Chamber of Deputies—rode together in a separate vehicle along with judicial leaders and Mexico City's head of government Clara Brugada (Morena), staging a bipartisan bloc of the entire bourgeois political establishment behind the armed forces and the presidency.

A long history of “foreign Intervention”

In his remarks, Trevilla listed the major episodes of foreign intervention in Mexican history, beginning with the war of independence from Spain (1810–1821), in which a colonial regime based on hacienda exploitation, tribute, and caste rule was overturned, only to be replaced by a fragile national bourgeois order subject to the pressures of British, French, and later, US imperialism.

He referenced the 1846–1848 US-Mexican War, which ended with the seizure of roughly half of Mexico's national territory—including present-day California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and parts of Colorado and Utah—through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This war, rooted in US slavery expansion and Manifest Destiny ideology, marked the first great imperialist dispossession of Mexico and is now openly celebrated by Trump as a “great success” and model for the present.

Trevilla also pointed to the French intervention of 1862–1867, when Napoleon III installed the Habsburg archduke Ferdinand Maximilian as puppet emperor, an occupation only defeated after years of republican guerrilla warfare led by Benito Juárez and sustained popular resistance.

Finally, he cited the US interventions during the Mexican Revolution: the 1914 occupation of Veracruz, justified with a fabricated pretext and used by the Woodrow Wilson administration to discipline rival factions; and the 1916–1917 Punitive Expedition, a US invasion of northern Mexico under Gen. John Pershing aimed at hunting down Pancho Villa following his raid on Columbus, New Mexico. These events showed that US imperialism was prepared to intervene militarily to secure its oil, mining, and railroad interests and prevent the Mexican upheaval from threatening foreign capital.?

Trevilla claimed that the “great lesson” of all these historical events is the “loyalty of the Mexican people” behind the national state and its armed forces. This is a fraud. History demonstrates that appeals to “unity” and “loyalty” have invariably been mobilized to suppress class struggle, preserve bourgeois rule and ultimately accommodate foreign imperialist demands.

Madero, the “Ten Tragic Days” and US orchestration

The 1913 overthrow of President Francisco I. Madero, which the March of Loyalty commemorates, stands at the heart of this contradiction. Madero rose to prominence opposing the long dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. He launched the Plan of San Luis Potosí, promising political democratization and limited land reform in 1910, winning broad support from peasants, small farmers and sections of the urban middle class.

Once in power, however, Madero quickly subordinated his government to the interests of the large landowners, foreign investors and the army high command. He refused to carry out substantive agrarian reform and maintained the basic framework of the Porfirian state, including its repression of workers. This betrayal alienated peasant revolutionary forces like Emiliano Zapata in Morelos, whose Plan de Ayala of 1911 denounced Madero as a traitor for failing to restore communal lands, and Pancho Villa in the north, who broke with Madero as the latter turned his guns on insurgent peasants and workers.

This erosion of popular support opened the door for reactionary forces even more closely aligned with the landowning oligarchy and US imperialism. Gen. Victoriano Huerta, representing the old Porfirian officer corps, entered into a conspiracy with Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson and leading oligarchs to depose Madero.

In the *Decena Trágica* (“Ten Tragic Days”) of February 9–19, 1913, mutinous troops under Gen. Bernardo Reyes and Felix Díaz (Porfirio’s nephew) opened fire in Mexico City, bombarding the city center. Amid the chaos, Madero foolishly trusted in the “loyalty” of Huerta and the army command rather than arming workers and peasants. Huerta, whom Madero tapped as head of his armed forces, turned on him. He arrested both Madero and Vice President José María Pino Suárez, and, with US blessing, installed a military dictatorship. The two were murdered on February 22.

Sheinbaum’s denunciation of Wilson’s role is correct as far as it goes. But by tying the working class today to the same bourgeois state, the same officer corps and the same alliance with US imperialism—now cemented through joint training with US Marines—her government follows in the footsteps, now literally, of the deadly logic that led Madero to his doom.

The Mexican Revolution and the theory of permanent revolution

The subsequent course of the Mexican Revolution confirms this assessment. As Eric London explains in the series “One hundred years since Zapata and Villa took Mexico City,” the high point of the Revolution—the joint occupation of the capital by Zapata’s and Villa’s armies in December 1914—proved unable to break bourgeois rule because there was no revolutionary Marxist party to lead the working class independently.

In Russia, where a late-developing capitalism also coexisted with a vast peasantry, the liberal bourgeoisie first took power under Alexander Kerensky after the February 1917 overthrow of the tsar. But, like Madero, Kerensky clashed with the egalitarian aspirations of workers and peasants, including demands for land reform and ending the war. A faction closely tied to the old regime and other imperialist powers also attempted to impose counterrevolution. The existence of the Bolshevik Party, armed with a Marxist program and led by Lenin and Trotsky, allowed the Russian working class to assert political independence from the bourgeoisie, win the leadership of the peasantry, and seize power in October 1917.

In Mexico, by contrast, no such party existed. The working class was

subordinated to the “Jacobin” wing of the bourgeois Constitutionalists through organizations like the Casa del Obrero Mundial (COM), which aligned with the Constitutionalist government against the peasant armies. The COM channeled workers into “Red Battalions” used to crush Zapata and Villa. Lacking its own party and program, the proletariat could not transform the revolution into a socialist one. The Mexican Revolution thus vindicated Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution in the negative: where a revolutionary Marxist leadership is absent, the national bourgeoisie inevitably betrays democratic tasks.

Today’s Mexico—integrated as a cheap-labor platform in the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), peppered with maquiladoras, and dominated by transnational supply chains—is the historical product of this uncompleted revolution. The country’s resources and labor power are harnessed to US imperialism’s drive for global hegemony, including preparations for world war against China.

After several years of export-led expansion, the economy has begun to slow, with job losses recorded for the first time in 17 years. This will intensify pressure for social austerity and cuts to AMLO’s limited social programs. At the same time, the very sectors driving growth—near-shored automotive, electronics, aerospace and logistics tied to US capital—will demand higher productivity, automation, and harsher exploitation of Mexican workers.

Trump’s threats loom large. He has publicly threatened to use military force and punitive tariffs against Mexico under the pretext of fighting cartels; boasted of the 1846–1848 conquest of half of Mexico as a “great victory” and model; and laid out openly annexationist aims toward the Panama Canal and Greenland, combined with the attack on Venezuela and threats to impose puppet regimes across the region. This strategy is akin to Hitler’s *Anschluss*—the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany—used as a springboard for wider wars of conquest.

Under these conditions, Sheinbaum’s administration comes under mounting pressure from above by US imperialism and from below by an incomparably larger and globally interconnected working class than existed in Madero’s time. Her current high approval ratings are no guarantee of stability. The recent Constitutional reform formally reducing the workweek from 48 to 40 hours—which will not come into effect until 2030, under the next administration—is a cynical maneuver to burnish “pro-labor” credentials while postponing any real impact.

The appeals for “national unity” and “loyalty” from Trevilla and Sheinbaum signify that Morena, like AMLO before and the PAN–PRI regimes before him, will increasingly base itself on the armed forces as the principal guarantor of bourgeois rule. Under AMLO and Sheinbaum, the military has been granted control over airports, ports, highways and massive infrastructure projects, with ballooning budgets and privileges, and the creation of the National Guard as a militarized repressive force.

Facing Trump’s pressure, Sheinbaum has already capitulated. Thousands of Mexican troops have been deployed to hunt and repress migrants, helping drive arrivals at the US-Mexico border to historic lows. Most recently, her government halted oil shipments to Cuba—despite being Havana’s main supplier—after Trump threatened tariffs, turning Mexico into a key accomplice in the US campaign to strangle the Cuban economy and force complete capitulation.

Historically, the training of foreign troops has been one of US imperialism’s principal methods for cultivating loyal factions within national militaries, to be activated in future coups against “unreliable” governments—precisely the mechanism used against Madero in 1913 and replicated across Latin America throughout the 20th century.

These developments confirm that Sheinbaum’s government represents the interests of the venal Mexican bourgeoisie, bound hand and foot to US imperialism. There is nothing progressive in such a regime, whose closest historical precedent is not Madero, but Porfirio Díaz, reviving his legacy of subordination to foreign capital.

Against Trevilla's calls for "loyalty" to the capitalist state, the working class must take heed of Trotsky's insistence that workers owe no loyalty to "their" bourgeoisie in the name of national defense or anti-imperialism. Trotsky stressed that the task of the proletariat is to overthrow it and unite internationally with workers of all countries to end capitalist rule everywhere.



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