Trump Threatens Venezuela under Cover of Coronavirus

written by Marea Socialista | April 4, 2020

Although Venezuela is only reporting 153 coronavirus infections and seven Covid-19 deaths as of April 4, that is likely a radical underestimation of the contagion's spread. Venezuela's healthcare system has been pushed to the breaking point by years of U.S. sanctions and has meager means for mass testing. The collapse of world oil prices and the decision by Russia's state oil firm Rosneft to sell off its holdings in Venezuela will only compound these problems. Worse, even if the coronavirus count is relatively low today, neighboring Brazil and Colombia already have more than 10,000 cases and over 400 deaths and there is a real danger that xenophobic regimes in those nations will push to repatriate hundreds of thousands of impoverished Venezuelan migrants, opening the doors to coronavirus transmission on a terrifying scale.

And if this were not enough, this week President Donald Trump ordered the U.S. Navy Southern Command into the Caribbean to turn the screws on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's government, "We must not let malign actors exploit the [coronavirus] situation for their own gain," Trump claimed. In fact, it is Trump's administration that aims to "exploit the situation for their own gain." As Julian Borger wrote in the Guardian, "At a time when all of humanity is facing a common, invisible, enemy, world leaders have called for a suspension of economic sanctions that have increasingly become the pursuit of war by other means. The Trump administration has responded so far by ignoring those appeals and intensifying punitive measures on the two nations it has identified as America's greatest enemies: Iran and Venezuela."

Marea Socialista (Socialist Tide) is based in Venezuela and has critically championed the Bolivarian revolutionary process since President Hugo Chavez's election in 1999. Here, No Borders News publishes Luis Meiners' translation of Marea Socialista's statement denouncing Trump's latest threats and calling for international solidarity as part of our ongoing international coronavirus coverage.

Marea Socialista, which is a Venezuelan, anti-capitalist organization that opposes bureaucratic rule and a member of the International Socialist League, appeals to the solidarity of all peoples to

strongly reject the deployment of the U.S. Navy's Southern Command against Venezuela. This provocation was ordered by Donald Trump's regime in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic under the hypocritical guise of controlling drug trafficking in the Caribbean. It only goes to show the administration's lack of respect for the sovereignty of Latin American nations.

The action announced by the US government is all the more criminal and genocidal given the pandemic that people in both Venezuelan and American are suffering, especially when freedom of movement within a country is necessary to transport medical equipment, medicines, and food to its population and dedicate all possible resources to dealing with this emergency.

Trump's regime will use this siege by the U.S Navy as a lever to intensify the blockade against Venezuela and, at the same time, to prepare future military action with the aim of imposing a compliant government in a foreign country through blood and fire.

This threat must obviously be taken seriously, even if Trump's tendency to resort to farce to provide cover for his own political crises, or to use such operations to aid his electoral campaign, is also well known. He is now doing this in the midst of a terrible pandemic that is ravaging both his country and on ours.

Trump's actions not only run counter to the Venezuelan people's interests. They also constitute crimes against his own people by dedicating significant resources to military deployments, resources that are needed to respond to this disease which has taken the American people by surprise thanks to the indolence of an irrational billionaire. Unfortunately, the United States lacks the necessary means to face the pandemic. That is why we are also reaching out to the working class and ordinary people in the United States, asking them to raise their voices and help prevent their irresponsible president from committing atrocities.

Trump's meddling in our internal affairs is absolutely unacceptable for the working class and the people of Venezuela, and for people of all nationalities who value independence and national sovereignty. As is his administration's use of blackmail or military intervention to remove or install governments to its liking.

Trump's regime will find us ready and willing to defend our country and our self-determination under the banner of popular sovereignty that gives us the power to determine Venezuela's government ourselves.

We are fully aware that the Venezuelan people need to settle many scores with our own government, however, our priority at this moment must be to confront and overcome the pandemic. We have no doubt that those policies implemented by President Nicolás Maduro´s government which attack the working class and cripple democratic rights – far from being "revolutionary" or "socialist" – are equivalent to those applied by neoliberal capitalist governments. These policies have contributed to opening the door to Trump's imperialist offensive.

But it must be our own struggles and our own democratic decisions, and never Trump or any other imperialist chief or local puppet, that decide our destiny and how we deal with our governments.

We declare that, in order to genuinely exercise our sovereignty, we must preserve ourselves as an independent nation. At the same time, we must organize and develop our capacity for autonomous struggles as a people and as a working class, as well as building up the social and political instruments and organizations of our class.

Without placing any trust in the government that suppresses us, we insist on confronting the pandemic as workers and as people while, at the same time, putting an end to interventionist

threats.

Withdraw the U.S Navy’s Southern Command from Venezuela´s coast!

Oppose imperialist obstacles to Venezuela’s fight against the pandemic!

Immediate suspension of sanctions and the blockade!

Let us unite all peoples in the struggle against this global plague!

It is time for solidarity and not for war!

We condemn the local puppets of the empire lining up behind self-professed president Juan Guaidó and the national bourgeoisie!

No to coups, sanctions, blackmail, and Trump’s blockade!

No more U.S. intervention against Venezuela!