



MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

2019 August 10

Media Statement

MSJ Condemns US Blockade of Venezuela – Another Example of Trump’s Bullying

The Movement for Social Justice (MSJ) condemns the decision by Donald Trump to unilaterally impose a virtual economic blockade against Venezuela. This latest act of aggression by the Trump Administration is yet another example of his style of leadership – that is to be a bully. This bullying has been on show internally in the US as he rails against those opposed to him – be they four Democratic Congresswomen of colour or the media. The bullying style of leadership has also been very evident in how Trump conducts international relations, as for example the announcements by Twitter of unilateral tariffs imposed on other sovereign states, including traditional allies of the US; and the withdrawal from international treaties such as the Paris Climate Change Accords and the Iran Nuclear Deal.

The Trump Administration is intent on regime change by any means, mostly illegal and illegitimate, in Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela. This is part of the strategy of the neo-fascists in the Administration like John Bolton and Elliot Abrahams, who are both key senior officials of the US State Department. It must be remembered that Abrahams who is running the State Department’s Venezuela strategy was convicted and jailed for his role in the Iran-Contra scandal that hit the Reagan Administration in the 1980’s, where right wing paramilitaries and death squads were used and financed by the US to counter the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua and to repel the FMLN in El Salvador that was fighting the dictatorship.

The most recent action by Trump is to unilaterally implement an economic blockade on Venezuela in the false hope that this will bring down the democratically elected President Nicolas Maduro. What is also very disturbing and downright dangerous is that these actions taken by the Trump Administration also target third countries and companies. Thus, John Bolton a few days ago at a meeting in Lima, Peru, threatened that the US will impose secondary sanctions on any country, or company, that has economic or financial business with Venezuelan state owned companies. Such sanctions on third countries and companies is illegal in international law and the MSJ condemns it.

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We also wish to make it clear that the blockade of Venezuela by the US is also illegal and illegitimate as no single country can unilaterally impose such measures. Sanctions and blockades can only be imposed further to decisions of international bodies such as the United Nations. But the bully Trump in typical imperialist style does not care about international laws or norms, nor does he abide by the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of another sovereign state.

Recently, the US intensified the blockade against Cuba, including threatening third countries and companies that do business with Cuba. Today it is their blockade of Venezuela and the issuing of similar threats. It is clear that the mask is off – the US has reverted to the naked aggression of an imperialist power as it attempts to impose its way on other nations. Even the European Union, which opposes the Maduro government has had to object to the blockade and to the use of third country and company sanctions.

It must be pointed out that there are negotiations underway in Barbados, chaired by the Government of Norway, and in which both the Maduro government and the Opposition forces are taking part. The US blockade aimed at bringing down the Maduro government is totally contrary to peace and a negotiated resolution of the Venezuela situation. Trump, Bolton and Abrahams are not interested in peace, they are warmongers and are seeking to scuttle the Barbados peace talks in order to foment a civil war in Venezuela.

The MSJ calls on Caricom to stand firm on this issue. The blockade must be opposed because it is a violation of international law. The third country and company sanctions must be condemned and opposed because they violate every known norm in international relations. Caricom must affirm its position that the Region is a Zone of Peace and that the negotiating process underway in Barbados, chaired by Norway, which is an outcome of Caricom's own initiative such as the Montevideo Mechanism, is the only way forward towards a resolution of the Venezuelan crisis.

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