

January 25, 2003

Marxist Disinformation

The Marxist regime of Hugo Chavez Frias has orchestrated a huge disinformation campaign in the international press. To illustrate I have included a letter to the editor of *The Enterprise*, a Massachusetts newspaper, supposedly written by an American citizen outraged by the Venezuelan opposition to Chavez.

The letter was sent to me by a fellow poster at The Motley Fools message boards asking my opinion of the letter. After reproducing the letter in its entirety, I go into the analysis followed by additional comments by an American Attorney at Law who is also a frequent poster at TMF.

Hi Denny,

I would like to hear your opinion regarding a "Letter to the Editor" that I read in our local newspaper the other day. I do not know the author's background, but he seems to paint a different picture of what I thought was going on in Venezuela - and I would like to hear what you have to say about it. I searched for a link to the clip on the local paper's website, but came up empty. It follows:

To the editor of The Enterprise:

With the smoke screen of Iraq and North Korea in full effect, the White House has been plotting another regime change on the down low.

The bourgeoisie opposition-led strike in Venezuela, which most of the country does not support, has paralyzed their economy and taken the lives to two pro-government supporters. Most of us will never know the real deal, because the private elite-owned media that dominates Venezuelan television has been running opposition "infomercials" instead of advertisements, on top of the continuous slanted coverage of the protest. They are attempting to overthrow the two-time, popularly, and democratically elected president, Hugo Chavez, with the

help of our American tax dollars.

According to the Center for Economic and Policy research, just before the April 11 coup, the U.S. national endowment for democracy increased its funding six times for the opposition groups, including money funneled through the International Republican Institute. This is nothing new; in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Chile, just to name a few, Washington has instigated regime change when it simply didn't approve of the voters choice at the polls.

So predictably the Bush administration has sided with the opposition, demanding early elections, even when Venezuelan constitution specifies that a binding referendum of no-confidence cannot be held until August. President Chavez is accused of using "dictorial" powers for sending the military to recover oil tankers seized by striking capitans. But had U.S. strikers hijaked an oil tanker from Exxon Mobil here, they would all be facing hard jail time, in fact, American government workers are not allowed to strike at all, as Ronald Regan demonstrated when he fired 12,000 air traffic controllers in 1981, who were striking for better working conditions. Even American private sector workers can't strike for political demands, and if so, courts would issue injunctions against the strike and union money would be seized and leaders arrested. Employees of the state-owned oil company in Venezuela - mostly managers - will likely benefit in the event of a regime change.

This is clearly a strike of the privileged in a nation where 80 percent of the people live in deep poverty and inequity, which happens to be the top crude supplier to the United States.

What is needed is for our government to stop talking out of both sides of it's mouth with regard to "respect for the rule of law, accountability, human rights and democracy" when the only real interests being served are those of the corporate fat cats.

*Michael Miguel
Brockton*

Thoughts?
'38Packard

38Packard:

Thoughts?

This supposed American citizen does not know how to spell the last name president Reagan.

The bourgeoisie opposition-led strike in Venezuela,

The second word is the code word that gives the author of the letter away. Who but a communist would use such a word? An average American might use "conservative," "right wing," or even "reactionary" but never "bourgeoisie."

The Venezuelan labor movement, hardly a bourgeoisie organization, is solidly behind the strike. Approximately 85% of the oil workers back the strike. Roughnecks seldom form part of the bourgeoisie.

I realize that he is accusing only the leaders of being bourgeoisie but he never explains why the proletariat has joined the bourgeoisie against the tyrant. You should ask him that question.

which most of the country does not support

According to recent polls more than half the people want early elections.

has paralyzed their economy and taken the lives to two pro-government supporters.

There are close to 50 dead already. I guess the other 48 don't matter to the writer, they must be bourgeoisie opposition, hence worthless.

because the private elite-owned media that dominates Venezuelan television has been running opposition "infomercials" instead of advertisements, on top of the continuous slanted coverage of the

protest.

There is state run radio and TV that are not controlled by the opposition. The reason why there are no commercials is because the media is on strike as well. They have cut all programming except for news coverage, interviews and editorials. The private sector is losing money hand over fist in this strike.

the U.S. national endowment for democracy increased its funding six times for the opposition groups, including money funneled through the International Republican Institute.

I have no idea if this is true or not. I have never heard of the International Republican Institute.

This is nothing new; in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Chile, just to name a few, Washington has instigated regime change when it simply didn't approve of the voters choice at the polls.

Probably true but I'm not sure how much bearing it has on Venezuela. It does seem that during the events of April 11, 2002 the Americans were openly in favor of a regime change. Unfortunately, the people who took over the government that day for a few hours were a total disaster. They betrayed the opposition as much as they overthrew Chavez. These people have since fled Venezuela.

My neighbor is a keen observer of the political situation and back then he commented that the leader of our labor movement, Carlos Ortega, was not to be seen with the Carmona people anywhere. This raised a red flag for him. Clearly Ortega recognized early the betrayal of Carmona and his boss whose name I don't recall at this time (Corao?).

So predictably the Bush administration has sided with the opposition, demanding early elections, even when Venezuelan constitution specifies that a binding referendum of no-confidence cannot be held until August.

The American Ambassador has stated that Venezuelans must resolve their own problems. This is hardly siding with the opposition. On an ideological level, clearly not just Bush but most Americans would side against a dictator who accused America of being the real terrorist back on 9/11. The Americans would not back a

buddy of Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein.

President Chavez is accused of using "dictatorial" powers for sending the military to recover oil tankers seized by striking captains. But had U.S. strikers hijacked an oil tanker from Exxon Mobil here, they would all be facing hard jail time, in fact, American government workers are not allowed to strike at all, as Ronald Regan demonstrated when he fired 12,000 air traffic controllers in 1981, who were striking for better working conditions.

This is a clever twisting of the facts.

First. - In theory PDVSA is NOT a government office but a public company owned by the government. This was an effort to keep politics out of the oil business. This means that PDVSA employees are not government workers as were the air traffic controllers.

Second. - The striking workers did not hijack the ships. They anchored the ships and they offered to turn them over to properly qualified personnel when requested to do so by the ship owners. This was a clever game of cat and mouse. They knew full well that there are no such people available because not only did the law require the certified people to be technically proficient but they also had to be Venezuelan nationals. Chavez could not bring in foreign workers to take over the ships without breaking or changing the law.

Third. - There is no law that can force a person to work if the person does not wish to work. Forced labor is anticonstitutional. You can fire a person for not working but slave labor is not legal.

Fourth. - The opposition bases its activities on article 350 of the constitution which I have not read but which authorizes civil disobedience under certain circumstances.

Even American private sector workers can't strike for political demands, and if so, courts would issue injunctions against the strike and union money would be seized and leaders arrested.

You are going to have to ask an American lawyer if this is true or not.

Employees of the state-owned oil company in Venezuela - mostly managers - will likely benefit in the event of a regime change.

That may or may not be so but it is irrelevant as to the legality of the strike

This is clearly a strike of the privileged in a nation where 80 percent of the people live in deep poverty and inequity, which happens to be the top crude supplier to the United States.

This is a bunch of bull. The great majority of Venezuelans are on strike and we are not all privileged. If 80% of us are poor, why has Chavez not solved the problem during his three years in government. He has visited half the world. He bought himself a brand new presidential plane. He changed the constitution and even changed the name of the country.

He has not repaired the damage from the torrential rains that fell while he was being elected. He has not solved a single problem in Venezuela. He has brought in Cuban advisor that we don't need or want.

He sells cheap oil to Cuba and Caricom when we need those funds to feed our 80% poor. If this were such a paradise there would be no general strike. We are used to bad government but this disaster is more than we are willing to live with.

What is needed is for our government to stop talking out of both sides of it's mouth with regard to "respect for the rule of law, accountability, human rights and democracy" when the only real interests being served are those of the corporate fat cats.

I'll leave this point for you guys to decide.

Denny Schlesinger
Caracas - Venezuela
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Hi Denny,

Thanks for your response and your "on the ground" reporting. The most critical

portion of your response to me was:

This is clearly a strike of the privileged in a nation where 80 percent of the people live in deep poverty and inequity, which happens to be the top crude supplier to the United States.

This is a bunch of bull. The great majority of Venezuelans are on strike and we are not all privileged.

My impressions are that Chavez has completely mismanaged the government and this has affected all Venezuelians - not just the privileged. That is why there are such large demonstrations in the streets.

According to recent polls more than half the people want early elections.

This confirms my understanding of the situation. I was not aware that the PDVSA was a private company owned by the government - a wise decision.

Thanks again for our response. I may just write to the editor of the local paper and challenge this person's editorial.

Be Safe!

'38Packard

What follows is the opinion of TinkerShaw, an American Attorney at Law and a frequent poster at TMF

Even American private sector workers can't strike for political demands, and if so, courts would issue injunctions against the strike and union money would be seized and leaders arrested.

Hey Denny,

As you so well surmise, this is a bogus letter. The above quote is so flagrantly erroneous to be nothing but a propoganda letter.

Labor law in the U.S. provides striking workers protection from retaliation, such as being fired, if the strike is a legal strike. It does not forbid people to strike in ways not protected by the labor laws, and it does not make it illegal to strike in ways that are not protected by labor law. It just simply means, if you strike in a manner that is outside the protection of America's labor laws, your employer can fire you without violating the law. You are still free to strike, and no one is going to arrest someone for refusing to work. They might get arrested for trespassing if they picket inappropriately, or damage property, et al., but not for refusing to work.

And btw, union money would never be seized and union leaders would not be arrested for an "illegal strike." America is not Cuba, we are free to choose not to work and no one can force us to work. If we choose to strike, and do so in a manner not protected by labor law, you can be fired, PERIOD.

It takes someone who thinks that the U.S. is a police state to assume that **"union money would be seized and leaders arrested."**

No, that is what happens in Marxist and fascist states.

Tinker

Tinker:

Thank you for your input. If you have no objections, I will use your post at Software Times where I will expose the Chavez disinformation campaign.

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You are welcome to it, always happy to expose Marxist disinformation.

Tinker