

Forum: Security Council (SC)

Issue: The question of preventing further national destabilizing in Venezuela and the spreading of instability to South America

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Introduction

The 20th century saw many US interventions throughout Latin America. In 1948 the administration of President Harry Truman supported a military coup in Venezuela led by Marcos Perez Jimenez which ousted then President Romulo Gallegos – Venezuela's first democratically elected leader. From the 1950s onward various US administrations were involved in campaigns to rid Latin America of nationalist and populist leaders, especially those who did not embrace the economic policies championed by the US.

In 1992 future Venezuelan president Colonel Hugo Chavez attempted to overthrow the government, but failed and was jailed for two years. Following his release from jail and after a series of government failures in the mid-1990s Chavez was elected president in 1998.

When George W. Bush came into office in 2001, US relations with Venezuela became increasingly tense. The US government saw the leader and his ideology as a threat to US hegemony in the region, and to US access to Venezuelan oil - one of its top five suppliers. US-Venezuelan relations deteriorated further after an attempted coup in 2002, which Caracas accused Washington of supporting. Since then, the US has stayed involved in Venezuelan affairs by funding opposition parties and distributing anti-Chavez propaganda. However, two reelection victories for Chavez have affirmed his legitimacy as leader of the country. Following the 2006 presidential elections, the Venezuelan National Assembly – controlled by Chavez supporters – gave the leader, at his request, the power to rule by decree for a period of 18 months – in effect suspending democratic processes in the country. As Chavez continues to consolidate power and nationalize key industries, tensions with Washington may increase.

Definition of Key Terms

“Colectivos”- Militant groups known as *"colectivos"* attacked protesters and opposition TV staff, sent death threats to journalists, and tear-gassed the Vatican envoy after Hugo Chávez accused these groups of intervening with his government. Colectivos helped assist the government during the protests. Human Rights Watch said that "the government of Venezuela has tolerated and promoted groups of armed civilians," which HRW claims have "intimidated protesters and initiated violent incidents".

Organization of American States- The Organization of American States, or the OAS or OEA, is a continental organization founded on 30 April 1948, for the purposes of regional solidarity and cooperation among its member states. Headquartered in the United States capital Washington, D.C., the OAS's members are the 35 independent states of the Americas.

Constituent assembly- A constituent assembly or constitutional assembly is a body or assembly of representatives composed for the purpose of drafting or adopting a constitution. As the fundamental document constituting a state, a constitution cannot normally be modified or amended by the state's normal legislative procedures; instead a constituent assembly, the rules for which are normally laid down in the constitution, must be set up. A constituent assembly is usually set up for its specific purpose, which it carries out in a relatively short time, after which the assembly is dissolved. A constituent assembly is a form of representative democracy.

History

In 2014, a series of protests, political demonstrations, and civil insurrection began in Venezuela due to the country's high levels of urban violence, inflation, and chronic shortages of basic goods attributed to economic policies such as strict price controls. While protests occurred in January 2014, after the murder of actress and former Miss Venezuela Mónica Spear, mass protesting began in earnest that February following the attempted rape of a student on a university campus in San Cristóbal. Subsequent arrests and killings of student protestors spurred their expansion to neighboring cities and the involvement of opposition leaders. The year's early months were characterized by large demonstrations and violent clashes between protestors and government forces that resulted in nearly 4,000 arrests and 43 deaths, including both supporters and opponents of the government. Toward the end of 2014, and into 2015, continued shortages and low oil prices caused renewed protesting. By 2016, protests occurred following the controversy surrounding the 2015 Venezuelan parliamentary elections as well as

the incidents surrounding the 2016 recall referendum. On 1 September 2016, the largest demonstration of the protests occurred, with over 1 million Venezuelans, or over 3% of the entire nation's population, gathered to demand a recall election against President Maduro, with the event being described as the "largest demonstration in the history of Venezuela". Following the suspension of the recall referendum by the government-leaning National Electoral Council (CNE) on 21 October 2016, the opposition organized another protest which was held on 26 October 2016, with over 1.2 million Venezuelans participating.

Key issues

The key issues which may occur are mostly the same as with any other political protests or revolutions. These are corruption, economic problems and violent crimes.

Appendices

- I. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014%E2%80%932017_Venezuelan_protests
- II. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/18/americas/venezuela-protest-explainer/index.html>
- III. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19652436>