



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 5, 2017

Trump Considering Oil Sanctions Against Venezuela

Senior White House officials, [speaking anonymously to Reuters on Sunday](#), said that the Trump administration is considering various potential sanctions against the socialist Venezuelan regime headed up by Marxist Nicolas Maduro. Reuters assured its readers that the administration is just considering them, and there is nothing imminent planned — at least for the moment.



The present “package” of possible sanctions includes preventing the country’s oil company, PDVSA, from doing business in the United States, including bidding on government oil contracts, as well as preventing the company from exporting its crude to the United States (PDVSA owns the Citgo gasoline brand). At present Venezuela is the third-largest supplier of crude to the United States, after Canada and Saudi Arabia. The United States is Venezuela’s largest customer, and so such sanctions could apply pressure on Venezuela’s most vulnerable spot: Maduro’s government is almost totally dependent upon oil revenues, accounting for 95 percent of its total income.

The administration could ramp up sanctions further against high officials in Maduro’s regime, including the vice president, the chief judge, and seven other Supreme Court justices. It could also apply more pressure on the Organization of American States (OAS) to adopt similar measures.

Those anonymous high officials said nothing to Reuters about the possible use of military force in efforts to relieve the suffering in the South American country. *The New American* has written extensively about that suffering, which as of this writing has cost the lives of more than 60 people protesting the totalitarian regime over the last two months.

For several reasons, not everybody is on board with the idea of sanctions to bring about desired change. First, constitutionalists protest such actions because nowhere in the Constitution is such foreign interventionism allowed.

Pragmatists question how effectively such sanctions have worked in the past to bring about political change. They also wonder if political change is effected, what guarantees would exist that the change will be an improvement, rather than just result in a replacement of one Marxist regime for another? Would intervention set a dangerous precedent for future interventions if the first round doesn’t accomplish the goal? If regime change is desired in Venezuela, what about other South American dictatorships? Too, why limit sanctions just to South America — the African continent is populated with Marxist and socialist dictatorships? And why limit sanctions just to the southern hemisphere? What about North Korea? Once Pandora’s Box is opened, there’s no closing it.

Tim Worstall of *Forbes* made perhaps the best suggestion of all: Let the Maduro regime collapse of its own weight! That would have a number of advantages:

We should and must let the nonsense that is Bolivarian socialism run its course.... The disaster that is befalling the country ... [is] an inevitable outcome of the economic system that was put in place first by [Hugo] Chavez and then Maduro....



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Leave it be [and] show that [socialism] just does not work ... [that] it fails on its own for its own internal reasons.

There would be another advantage, too:

We should not let it be said that it was [U.S. sanctions] which caused Bolivarian socialism to plunge the nation into penury [instead of the socialist system itself].

Blatant U.S. interventionism would give the enemies of freedom reason to attack the “bully from the north” and potentially neuter any movement toward freedom by Venezuelans themselves.

First president George Washington was right once again. In his Farewell Address to the nation, he said:

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop....

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing.

Maduro is already doing the best job he knows how in destroying Venezuela’s economy. He’s doing Trump’s work for him. Let’s not let have the Trump administration get in the way of Venezuela’s inevitable collapse.

Photo of Citgo sign: [wikipedia](#)

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