

Alejandro Peña reveals who and why of the assault on Venezuela

The following is the presentation given by Alejandro Peña Esclusa, secretary general of the Venezuelan Labor Party, at a May 17, 1994 press conference held in Caracas.

I have called this press conference to make two revelations: First, there is a plan orchestrated with national and international backing, whose purpose is to destabilize the Venezuelan government and overthrow President Caldera during the third quarter of this year. Second, I have been informed that the Cisneros Group intends to have me imprisoned as of next Friday. We will see this afternoon how both things are intimately related.

Operation Pincers

On Feb. 21, I wrote a letter to Dr. Rafael Caldera, in his dual role as President of the Republic and as commander-in-chief of the National Armed Forces, warning of a “pincers” operation designed to destabilize his government.

I explained that a Reuters news wire, published on Feb. 18 of this year, reported on a meeting of bankers held in New York—specifically at the Americas Society—where they practically demanded that the Venezuelan government continue the IMF [International Monetary Fund] measures of Carlos Andrés Pérez, threatening that, should it not do so, there would be an economic debacle in Venezuela. The wire story referred to the speech of a U.S. citizen named William Perry (not to be confused with the defense secretary of the same name).

After investigating Mr. William Perry, the Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV) concludes the following: First, that Mr. Perry has been carrying out a campaign since August of last year against Dr. Rafael Caldera; second, that Mr. Perry, who has held important positions in the Bush administration, has been pressuring Venezuela to adopt the program of the International Monetary Fund; third, Perry falsely insists that the intervention of the Banco Latino is a maneuver to persecute adversaries of the government; fourth, Mr. Perry was the one who invited Vice Adm. Radamés Muñoz León to the United States; and fifth, Mr. Perry is linked to Mr. Gustavo Cisneros.

Perry is not the only one who is attacking the Venezuelan government. We have evidence that important spokesmen of the international financial community want to force the

Venezuelan government to its knees before the IMF. I assure you that the resignation of Ruth de Krivoy from the presidency of the central bank was not the only cause of the recent capital flight and subsequent devaluation of the bolivar. During that same period, there was an international campaign against Venezuela which contributed greatly to the financial destabilization of the country. In this sense, I want to accuse the newspaper the *Financial Times* [of London] of participating in the pincers campaign against Venezuela.

Why attack President Caldera?

We have previously documented that the U.S. banks, including Chase Manhattan Bank (the coordinating bank of the Venezuelan foreign debt) are having serious problems. During the next 12 months, a speculative financial bubble much larger than that of the 1930s is going to burst. I can assure you that the leading U.S. banks are technically bankrupt.

As has been fully detailed by Nobel Prize-winning French economist Maurice Allais, neo-liberal euphoria has led international bankers over the past 20 years to invest their capital in speculative activities, instead of directing it toward productive activities. The result is that production has fallen drastically. That is, what has happened to the U.S. banks is similar to what has happened to the Venezuelan banks.

Given this situation, the strategy of the Anglo-American financial and banking elites is the following: First, to prevent at all cost that any country suspend its foreign debt payments and abandon the parameters of the IMF, since such an action would precipitate the collapse of the creditor banks; second, to eliminate national defense capabilities, reducing the National Armed Forces and promoting the creation of a supranational army capable of intervening militarily in any country which refuses to follow IMF dictates; third, to promote population reduction, falsely alleging that the economic crisis is not the result of usury and speculation, but of “overpopulation.”

It is a fact that the Venezuelan government is not obeying the orders of the international bankers on these three fronts. Dr. Caldera is not prepared to continue with the economic “package” of Carlos Andrés Pérez and the IMF. An EFE news wire published April 11 in *El Diario de Caracas* says that “an official spokesman reports that Venezuela will not sign a letter of intent with the IMF, since that would mean betraying the people on the part of the Caldera government.”

That same day, April 11, it was published that Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas declared, “It is wrong for the OAS [Organization of American States] to have an armed wing to intervene in regional conflicts.” Carlos Andrés Pérez [CAP], on the other hand, has repeatedly proposed the creation of a supranational Latin American army. That is why Luigi Einaudi, an official of the U.S. State Department and known detractor of the Latin American

armed forces, wanted CAP to be the next president of the OAS, but since CAP was “burned,” he went with César Gaviria; that is, they wanted any politician who is a follower of the IMF and is prepared to reduce the Armed Forces. Evidently, Burelli Rivas would not serve their purpose.

Finally, an EFE news wire published April 27 in *El Nacional* reports that Venezuela “figures among those nations that will not sign the document on population growth at the next United Nations Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo.” It is our opinion, in

. . . highly credible sources have informed me that a “judicial bounty” has been offered for my head. I have been informed that a lot of money has been offered if the arrest warrant hanging over my head is ratified.

fact, that Venezuela should not even attend that conference, where the parameters for reducing the population by inhuman methods contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church will be set.

I insist, therefore, that the international attacks on President Caldera stem from those sectors which do not tolerate nationalism, which do not respect the concept of independence and sovereignty. They fear that Dr. Caldera will dare to question the legality of the foreign debt, as he has already done as a candidate, and as he has done more recently in an article published in Mexico. They fear that Dr. Caldera will suspend payment on the debt and implement economic measures different from those of the IMF. But most of all, they fear that the Latin American countries—and even those of eastern Europe—will follow Venezuela’s example.

Why does Gustavo Cisneros want me imprisoned?

Moving to the second issue I would like to address this afternoon: I want to report that a second phase of the Cisneros Group’s suit against me is coming. As you know, the Cisneros Group brought a suit against me which many, both within and outside the country, have described as the most serious violation of the freedom of expression in recent years. An arrest warrant was issued against me and I am currently free on bail, given that the decision is being appealed. Now, highly credible sources have informed me that a “judicial bounty” has been offered for my head. I have been informed that a lot of money has been offered if the arrest warrant hanging over my head is ratified.

This information is serious if one considers the article

published by *El Diario de Caracas* on May 8, which reveals that in the *Cisneros v. Peña Esclusa* case, there were “costs . . . which, according to two independent sources in the judicial arena, amount to \$600,000.” I don’t know if this is true or not, but I believe that it is a very delicate matter that must be seriously investigated.

But, why does Gustavo Cisneros want me imprisoned? Simply, because I dared to question the Cisneros Group. If I am imprisoned, this will serve as a warning to anyone who dares to question Gustavo Cisneros or who tries to request, as I did, the confiscation of the assets of Banco Latino’s directors. If, on the other hand, the arrest warrant against me is revoked and the inquiry declared terminated, then many will lose the reverential fear they have had for Gustavo Cisneros. It is that simple.

Further, they want to oust me from the political scene because I am presenting solutions for the current economic crisis. In the PLV, we have studied the proposals of Lyndon LaRouche, proposals which are definitely not to the liking of the international bankers. In a certain sense, what has happened to me is the same as has happened to my friend, U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. They have persecuted him in the courts and, as with me, they have tried to discredit his economic proposals because they are opposed to the policies of the IMF.

But the truth will always out. I have the satisfaction of reporting to you that the candidates movement which LaRouche leads obtained votes of 40% last week in the primary elections in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio. The previous week LaRouche was invited as a guest of honor to Russia, where he held meetings at the Economics Ministry, at the Academy of Sciences, and in other extremely important forums.

In his role as U.S. presidential candidate, LaRouche has proposed the elimination of the IMF and the reform of the international financial system so that it can be oriented to production and not to the speculation that characterizes it today. As you know, the Russians have expressed their disagreement with the policies of the IMF; LaRouche’s proposals have widely circulated in that country, LaRouche’s books are circulating there in the Russian language. I can tell you that the international bankers fear that Russia will adopt his proposals. After all, Russia is a power with the capacity to have its sovereign decisions respected.

The importance of Venezuela’s implementing nationalist economic measures, such as those proposed by the Venezuelan Labor Party, lies in the fact that this could detonate a successful economic change worldwide. Dr. Caldera has the prestige and the ability to make himself heard not only in Latin America, but in other parts of the world. That is why the U.S. banker friends of Gustavo Cisneros attack Caldera, that is why they want to see me behind bars, and that is why they want to prevent our program from being heard in Venezuela.