

THE IGNOMINIOUS BIRTH, DISASTROUS LIFE, QUESTIONABLE FUTURE AND DESIRABLE DEATH OF THE LIMA GROUP

Alan Freeman Monday, November 8, 2021

Talk given at an informal policy meeting of the Green Party of Canada (GPC), together with background information from a variety of news sources

Rationale

The main reason I tabled this motion is to start a discussion about the way Canada's interferes in other countries, especially when it does so by trying to overthrow foreign governments by force.

This is the intention of the Lima Group, originally containing 14 Latin American countries and now 11, because three countries have withdrawn: Argentina, St Kitts and ironically Peru, where it was founded.

I offer four reasons the Party should adopt this proposal, all flowing from the party's values. These are

- The environment: we should reign in Canadian Mining interests who are destroying natural resources all over the world and who want to get rid of foreign governments that stand in their way
- Justice; peoples outside Canada should be free to pursue their lives and run their countries without interference from abroad
- Peace: The Canadian government should stop trying to overthrow other governments by force and violence
- Democracy: Canada's actions against Venezuela have never been put to the vote in parliament or even transparently explained. We should be responsible for atrocities abroad that we have never been even told about, let alone allowed to decide on

When Peru left the Lima Group, its Foreign Minister stated:

"The Lima Group must be the most disastrous thing we have done in international politics in the history of Peru"

When St Lucia left, its Minister for Foreign Affairs said

"We are going to get out of the Lima Group arrangement – that morally bankrupt, mongoose gang, we are going to get out of it because this group has imposed needless hardship on the children, men and women of Venezuela".

"The prime minister [of Saint Lucia] further confirmed that his government's position on Venezuela will be consistent with the official position of [the Caribbean Community] CARICOM of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state".

When Argentina left, it stated:

"The best way to help Venezuelans is by facilitating an inclusive dialogue that does not favor any particular sector, to achieve elections accepted by the majority with international oversight," the foreign ministry said in the Wednesday statement.

“In a context where the pandemic has wreaked havoc across the region, the sanctions and blocks imposed on Venezuela and its authorities, as well as the destabilization attempts made in 2020, have than nothing but worsen the situation for its people and, in particular, the most vulnerable sectors. It should be highlighted that those sanctions have affected the enjoyment of human rights by the Venezuelan people, as stated in the report by the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights.”

“In this spirit, Argentina will maintain its commitment to stability in the region and will seek to facilitate peaceful and democratic solutions that respect the sovereignty and domestic affairs of each State.”

I travel a lot. To meet people, and to enjoy the civilizations and natural habitats of other places. I find the debate on Canadian Foreign policy is often, in my experience, very uninformed and very confused. So I want to clear away some simple confusions.

Firstly, the issue is not what we think of the Venezuelan government but whether Canada has any right to try and overthrow it. I would be as opposed to any attempt by Canada to seek to overcome or coerce the government of Saudi Arabia, a country whose policies I completely disagree with, as that of Venezuela. All I would ask is that my government stops selling Saudi Arabia arms.

The purpose of The Lima Group is to overturn the government of Venezuela. Its founding principle is non-recognition of the Venezuelan government. It was put together to subvert the legal provisions of the United Nations and the OAS and create a coalition whose purpose was to replace the government of Venezuela with a different government. This is regime change. It is illegal, and wrong.

It is a direct violation of the Charter of the UN adopted in 1948 which clearly sets out that nations have the sovereign right to govern themselves.

It also conflicts directly with the Charter of the Organisation of American States, where Canada ignominiously failed to secure a commitment to overthrow the government of Venezuela, because it is contrary to the OAS charter.

We may – either from ignorance or from genuine concerns – not like what they do, but it’s not our job to impose a different government on them. Once we throw that principle away then the any country can attack any other and we are on the road to war – this time with technology that could easily destroy the planet.

NOT HUMAN RIGHTS BUT MINERAL RIGHTS

A second confusion is the illusion that Canada and the Lima group are concerned with Human Rights and democracy. Actually this totally hypocritical. The group includes Brazil, Honduras, Colombia, Chile, Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador whose governments are best described as a collection of murderous ecocides. One quote, about Colombia, suffices – I have many more examples in the link I have given.

“During the past month [Colombian] security forces have killed at least 50 and probably dozens more. Over 300 individuals are missing, according to Colombia’s National Movement of Victims of State Crimes, in a country with a history of political disappearances.”

Not only that but Canada has no qualms about selling arms to Saudi Arabia, which it uses to suppress all dissent and to wage an illegal war against the people of Yemen.

So the Lima Group is clearly nothing to do with human rights or democracy.

The Reality is that the Lima Group is about Venezuela's reserves of oil, gold, and minerals, which Canada's mining companies want to exploit and desecrate without any governmental interference and without any regard either for the rights of the people or for nature. It is therefore of deep concern to Greens

I recommend an excellent article by Yves Engler on this, in the background. I'll just give you two quotes that give us a flavour:

"Benefiting from the privatization of state-run mining companies and loosened restrictions on foreign investment, Canadian mining investment in Latin America has [exploded](#) since the 1990s. No Canadian mining firm operated in [Peru](#) or Mexico at the start of the 1990s yet by 2010 there were nearly 600 Canadian mining firms in those two countries"

And in 2007, Peter Munk told Barrick's shareholders he'd prefer to invest in the (Taliban controlled) western part of Pakistan than in Venezuela or Bolivia. "[If I had](#) the choice to put my money in one of the Latin American countries run by Evo Morales or Hugo Chavez — I know where I'd put my buck,"

THE RIGHT TO CRITICISE

Finally, there is an issue of 'who has the right to criticise?' The residential school system has uncovered a side of Canada's 'human rights' record which is cause for all of us to reflect.

I live in Manitoba, site of Canada's only Civil War in which Meti leader Louis Riel was murdered by the British. The stink of colonialism is everywhere. Our water comes from Shoal Lake, where the indigenous people are still under boil water advisories. Our electricity, supposedly 'clean' Hydro has been secured by converting the entire Churchill-Nelson river system into a giant Storage Battery, destroying the whole natural habitat of the peoples who first lived here. This destruction of an entire vast natural habitat is ecocide on a scale of watonness that deserves comparison with Bolsonaro's destruction of the Amazon

The anger of indigenous people led, on 'Canada Day' to the statue of Victoria which dominated the legislature being pulled down.

Yet Chretien, and our own unlamented Provincial Prime Minister, either claim that 'it was all for the good' or 'We did not know'. And the Canadian government still drags out every dispute with indigenous people through the agony of endless court battles, fighting every just claim to the bitter end, and sends in the police against brave protestors trying to stop the oil pipelines and the destruction of old growth forests.

We have not earned the right to tell anybody else what to do. If Canadians cannot even recognise the damage they have done to this land, let alone not make just natural and indigenous restitution, we have no right whatsoever to tell any other country what to do.

The Lima Group is a shameful, hypocritical, destructive episode in Canadian history of which we will be ashamed for decades if not centuries. It is time to bring it to a decisive end.

BACKGROUND

<https://newcoldwar.org/the-death-of-the-lima-group-and-re-birth-of-the-latin-american-anti-imperialist-left/>

Created to unite countries committed to regime change

<https://orinocotribune.com/peru-on-the-lima-group-the-most-disastrous-thing-we-have-done-in-international-politics>

The Lima Group represented an attempt to bring together countries that did not recognize Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro as the rightful head of state of the Bolivarian Republic.

Membership (today):

Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay

PERU LEAVES (AUGUST 5TH 2021)

<https://orinocotribune.com/peru-on-the-lima-group-the-most-disastrous-thing-we-have-done-in-international-politics/>

Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Héctor Béjar:

"The Lima Group must be the most disastrous thing we have done in international politics in the history of Peru"

ST LUCIA LEAVES (AUGUST 9TH 2021)

<https://www.caribbeannewsglobal.com/st-lucia-recommits-to-venezuela-prepares-to-exit-lima-group/>

St Lucia Minister for foreign affairs Alva Baptiste

"We are going to get out of the Lima Group arrangement – that morally bankrupt, mongoose gang, we are going to get out of it because this group has imposed needless hardship on the children, men and women of Venezuela".

"The prime minister [of Saint Lucia] further confirmed that his government's position on Venezuela will be consistent with the official position of [the Caribbean Community] CARICOM of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state".

ARGENTINA LEAVES (MARCH 21ST 2021)

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-argentina-limagroup-idUSKBN2BG2VA>

Argentina's foreign ministry said it agreed with the group's mission but said that the "participation" of the Venezuelan opposition, led by Juan Guaido, in the bloc had "led to the adoption of positions that our government has not and can not stand by."

"The best way to help Venezuelans is by facilitating an inclusive dialogue that does not favor any particular sector, to achieve elections accepted by the majority with international oversight," the foreign ministry said in the Wednesday statement.

“In a context where the pandemic has wreaked havoc across the region, the sanctions and blocks imposed on Venezuela and its authorities, as well as the destabilization attempts made in 2020, have than nothing but worsen the situation for its people and, in particular, the most vulnerable sectors. It should be highlighted that those sanctions have affected the enjoyment of human rights by the Venezuelan people, as stated in the report by the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights.”

“In this spirit, Argentina will maintain its commitment to stability in the region and will seek to facilitate peaceful and democratic solutions that respect the sovereignty and domestic affairs of each State.”

ILLEGALITY

Chapter 4, Article 19 of the 1948 [OAS Charter](#) explicitly says, “*No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State.*”

The UN Charter, in its Article 2(5) [states](#), “*All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state*”.

CORRUPT ORIGINS

Orinoco Tribune (op cit):

The “Lima Group” was formalised by Peru’s former President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (2016-2018). After a series of scandals and facing a second impeachment vote, Kuczynski resigned the presidency on March 21, 2018 following the release of videos showing alleged acts of vote buying.

He is currently under house arrest.

MINING INTERESTS: THE REAL CONCERN BEHIND CANADA’S ROLE

Yves Engler <https://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/14310>

Benefiting from the privatization of state-run mining companies and loosened restrictions on foreign investment, Canadian mining investment in Latin America has [exploded](#) since the 1990s. No Canadian mining firm operated in [Peru](#) or Mexico at the start of the 1990s yet by 2010 there were nearly 600 Canadian mining firms in those two countries.

Alongside Canadian mining growth, Canadian banks expanded their operations in a number of Latin American countries to do more business with Canadian [mining clients](#). More generally, Canadian banks have benefited from the liberalization of foreign investment rules and banking regulations in the region. A few days after Chavez’s 2013 death the *Globe and Mail* Report on Business published a front-page story about Scotiabank’s interests in Venezuela, which were acquired just before his rise to power.

It noted:

[“Bank of Nova Scotia \[Scotiabank\]](#) is often lauded for its bold expansion into Latin America, having completed major acquisitions in Colombia and Peru. But when it comes to Venezuela, the bank has done little for the past 15 years – primarily because the government of President Hugo Chavez has been hostile to large-scale foreign investment.”

A number of Canadian companies clashed with Hugo Chavez’ government over its bid to gain greater control over gold extraction. Crystallex, [Vanessa Ventures](#), [Gold Reserve Inc.](#) and Rusoro Mining all had prolonged legal battles with the Venezuelan government. In 2016 Rusoro Mining won a [\\$1 billion](#) claim under the Canada-Venezuela investment treaty. That same year Crystallex was awarded [\\$1.2 billion](#) under the Canada-Venezuela investment treaty. Both companies continue to pursue payments and have [pursued](#) the money from Citgo, the Venezuelan government owned gasoline retailer in the US.

In a further sign of the Canadian mining sector’s hostility to the Venezuelan government, Barrick Gold founder Peter Munk wrote a 2007 letter to the *Financial Times* headlined “Stop Chavez’ Demagoguery Before it is Too Late”: “Your editorial ‘Chavez in Control’ was way too benign a characterization of a dangerous dictator... Let us not give President Chavez a chance to do the same step- by-step transformation of Venezuela.”

A year earlier, the leading Canadian capitalist told Barrick’s shareholders he’d prefer to invest in the (Taliban controlled) western part of Pakistan than in Venezuela or Bolivia. “[If I had](#) the choice to put my money in one of the Latin American countries run by (Bolivian President) Evo Morales or Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez — I know where I’d put my buck,” said Munk, referring to moves to increase the public stake in resource extraction to the detriment of foreign investors.

A COALITION OF MURDEROUS ECOCIDALS: THE HYPOCRISY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE

<https://newcoldwar.org/trumps-coalition-of-the-willing-against-venezuela-has-legitimacy-issues-of-their-own/>

Brazil

“Headed by Jair Bolsonaro, he came to power in an election that was of questionable legitimacy because they excluded the most popular politician in Brazil, Lula da Silva, the former president. And they put him in jail so he couldn’t run. They also made a separate court decision that he couldn’t run from jail. But he was jailed and convicted without any real material evidence against him. It was all based on one plea bargain—the whole case was based on one plea bargain witness who was convicted of corruption. And his plea bargaining was cut off until he changed his story and supported the investigating, prosecuting judge’s view, what he wanted.”

Colombia

“During the past month [Colombian] security forces have killed at least 50 and probably dozens more. Over 300 individuals are missing, according to Colombia’s National Movement of Victims of State Crimes, in a country with a history of political disappearances.”

Honduras

<https://jacobinmag.com/2019/10/tony-hernandez-cocaine-honduras-venezuela>

There is no better contrast that demonstrates the contradictory nature of Trump’s foreign policy than that of Venezuelan and Honduras. What makes the comparison so compelling is the four principal accusations that Washington hurls at Maduro to justify the imposition of crippling economic sanctions: drug trafficking, violation of democratic norms, violation of human rights and widespread corruption. All four could well be cited to justify international measures against Honduras.

DRUGS

The recent [conviction](#) of Tony Hernández for massive cocaine smuggling in a federal court case in which his brother, Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández, was an unindicted co-conspirator demonstrates one thing beyond a doubt: Honduras is a narco-state. The equally compelling evidence of widespread corruption, electoral fraud, and savage repression confirms Honduras’s status as a rogue state and begs comparison with Venezuela, which has faced similar accusations.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The UN’s Human Rights Council (UNHRC) [report](#) issued in March stated: “Impunity is pervasive, including for human rights violations, as shown by the modest progress made in the prosecution and trial of members of the security forces for the human rights violations committed in the context of the 2017 elections.”

DEMOCRACY

The November 2017 presidential election suffered a thirty-six-hour delay in ballot counting when center-leftist candidate Salvador Nasralla had taken a decisive lead. When the process resumed, the election swung in favor of Hernández, the incumbent.

Nasralla noted that a rectification of the fraudulent results was unlikely given the fact that the nation’s supreme court and electoral tribunal were in Hernández’s camp. In contrast to many governments throughout the region as well as the Organization of American States, Washington immediately recognized Hernández’s presidency as legitimate and called on Nasralla to do the same.

Chile

https://fair.org/home/media-conceal-chiles-state-criminality-delegitimize-bolivian-democracy/?awt_a=spTQ&awt_l=K..Q8&awt_m=hpJcJ6W4mYR.TQ

October 25's historic 1.2 million-person march in Santiago—the largest since the end of the dictatorship—has forced some outlets to begin to acknowledge state violence. But corporate journalists continue to largely overlook the Piñera government's mounting atrocities.

The government of billionaire Sebastian Piñera has deployed the army to crush nationwide demonstrations against inequality sparked by a subway fare hike.

Over half a dozen people had already been killed since the protests began on October 16, and at least [1,420](#) detained at the time, according to Chile's National Human Rights Institute (known in Spanish as INDH). [Graphic videos](#) of [abhorrent state repression](#) were already circulating widely on social media.

By October 21, the news had broken in the Chilean press that Ecuadorian national Romario Veloz, 26, had been shot dead by state security forces while taking part in a protest in northern Chile the previous evening.

Chile's [National Human Rights Institute](#), as of October 23 2019, had recorded 173 people shot and 18 dead, among them at least [five](#) presumably at the hands of authorities.

Ecuador

<https://towardfreedom.org/story/ecuador-after-a-blaze-of-protests-grey-days-on-the-horizon/>

During the recent 11-day uprising that shook Ecuador, parts of the capital Quito looked like a battle scene as police drove armed trucks through protest zones and fired tear gas and pepper spray at protesters, many of whom were women and children. The demonstrators wore gas masks laced with vinegar to filter the air, hid behind makeshift shelters and responded by throwing rocks and Molotov bombs.

In total, eight people were confirmed killed, 1,340 injured and 1,192 arrested, according to the Ecuadorian Ombudsman. The economy had also lost an estimated [\\$3 billion](#), with two major export industries — flowers and broccoli — calling a state of emergency for their losses.

The United Nations human rights body, UNHCR, arrived in Quito this week to begin investigations into human rights abuses during the October protests.

Paraguay, Guatemala

... hardly paragons of virtue.

here is link to greensconnect re Lima Group

https://greensconnect.ca/processes/Policy2021/f/275/proposals/2298?filter%5Bcategory_id%5D%5B%5D=19&per_page=100&locale=en

Motion Mondays: <https://www.motionmondays.greensconnect.ca/>